Ethics and the Event in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Sketch of the Project

The rethinking of ethics and the ethical has occupied a number of twentieth century

philosophers from Moore and Ayer to Habermas and Foucault,[1] and it falls to their readers to

determine the motivations, shape, and outcome of that rethinking. For the lineage of thinkers

influenced by Heidegger—Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou chief among them—a concern with

what is alternately called 'the event,' 'an event,' or 'events' constitutes an important site for the

reconfiguration of ethics. To determine the motivations, shape, and outcome of the rethinking of

ethics enacted by this lineage would require studying Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou together

rather than in isolation from each other. However, no such study of that sort has yet been

produced.

A specific type of investigation would be needed to determine the general features of the

thinking of the event and of ethics found in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. Its basic

methodological move of would be to interrelate the three philosophers somehow, drawing

comparisons and contrasts between them. The central concern of the investigation would have to

be what the three thinkers, taken together, suggest about the character of the event and what that

character means for the nature, status, and purview of ethical philosophy. It would need to

outline what their work means both for one's sense of one's ethical life and for one's sense of

what ethical inquiry is about. So, the investigation would need to examine how Deleuze, Derrida,

and Badiou each think the event and its relation to ethics, then draw together those ways of thinking and consider where it is that they lead or in what direction they point.

To accomplish these ends, the chapters below begin by studying Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou individually, delineating each of their conceptions of the event and its bearing on their ethical thinking. Then, attention is given to the ways in which the three philosophers do and do not converge with each other and with their main historical predecessors. One way of taking up and continuing the sort of thinking found in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou is then evaluated, and an alternative route forward is suggested. But before this process can be completed, it must be at least provisionally defended. Why undertake such an investigation?

First, as has already been mentioned, secondary literature on Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou presents no substantial work on their interrelations, despite the fact that they all inhabit roughly the same historical and sociological orbit of the elite French universities in the 1960's and find common influences in 19th and 20th century French and German philosophy. At the very least, some consideration of their interrelations would be needed to explain why such an absence is justified.

Secondly, an investigation of the event in its relation to ethics in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou is necessary for a rich and fully informed understanding of their thinking as a whole. As will no doubt become clear from later chapters, 'ethics' and 'the event' are crucial concepts for each of these authors. To the extent that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are worth understanding at all—and that they are seems a safe assumption—it is necessary to grasp this specific aspect of their work. To not do so would be akin to claiming, say, to have understood Plato without attempting to grasp the idea that virtue is a type of knowledge, or that knowledge is recollection.[2]

Thirdly, ethics matters. Ethics is the branch of philosophy which, more than any other, bears most directly on issues of concern to non-philosophers: how could my life be different?, what are the main ethical challenges I face?, and so on. If, as has been indicated, the conceptual shape of ethical thinking—its central concerns, purview, methods, and the like—might well need to be altered in light of ethics' confrontation with events, what exactly is the outcome of that confrontation is something worth knowing. Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are each prime sites for that confrontation, and thus provide windows into its outcome.

Finally, the indirect stakes of thinking through ethics' confrontation with events are themselves ethical in nature and thus concern how a life might be lived. The concept of the event, to anticipate slightly, covers some of the most overwhelming and significant moments of a life, both the best things and the worst things that can happen to a person. These are occurrences the responses to which will radically affect the shape and quality of the life they constitute. Here again, then, information about the types of response to events available to the one to whom they happen, and what the features of those responses are, seems worth having. And, as before, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are key places to find it.

The next few sections are, partly, a further defense of these provisional points in favor of the project of collectively studying Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. In the next section, an historical survey of philosophical discussions of the event, and of related or similar notions, is given. The reasons in favor of examining Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou rather than other authors are then explained. Section III presents a review of literature on each of the thinker's concepts of the event in its relation to ethics. Finally, Section IV provides a preview of later chapters.

Events in the History of Ethics

Considerations of something like what Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou will call the event are present in philosophy as far back as the Ancient world. From a synchronic perspective, some of those considerations examine the event—or some similar item under a different name—in its connection to ethics, while others do not. From a diachronic perspective, the history of those discussions can be roughly divided into a pre- and a post-Heideggerian phase. Briefly mapping some of the points within these divisions will help explain why Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are the figures whose work needs investigation.

Both before and after Heidegger, some philosophical discussion of the event or its analogues seems unconcerned with its connection to ethical issues. In the Ancient period, Epicurus' *clinamen*, or chance swerving of atoms, seems one case of this. Such a chance occurrence might be called an event, though it would not seem to play any direct role in Epicurus' ethics, for Epicurus' ethics does not concern how one might respond or should respond to the *clinamen*. Rather, his ethics concerns how to achieve a state of tranquility given the state of the present world to which the *clinamen* has led.[3]

In Medieval Christian theology and religious thought, considerations of the creation of the universe *ex nihilo*, of revelation, of Christ's resurrection, and of the apocalypse could all be understood as being about events, these being understood as moments in which an infinite, transcendent being intervenes in the finite world. Nonetheless, medieval ethical thought seems more concerned with conceptual analysis of notions of sin and natural law which grow from the sacred texts describing those moments.[4] That is, though the Medieval Christian thinker would admit that there are events in which a transcendent being breaks into the finite world, it is not the

intervention itself that is of ethical concern, but rather the will, commands, or plans of the being who intervenes.

During the Modern period, Hume's discussion of miracles in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* might be taken to suggest that any miracle, in being a violation of the laws of nature, would be an event.[5] Of course, Hume denies the existence of miracles, so his ethical theories seem unconcerned with anything like what Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou would call the event. And, indeed, modern ethics seems much more concerned with the project of rationally grounding common moral principles and intuitions, as can be seen in both Kant and Mill.[6]

Hegel's *Phenomenology* might be read as describing a succession of events, each of which is the breakdown of a prior form of consciousness.[7] In other words, each leap forward in the dialectical progression of Spirit would constitute an event. On the other hand, it is exactly the dialectical nature of the progression that could be thought to undercut this reading of the *Phenomenology*, for if the leap of Spirit is logically and causally determined and guaranteed by what preceded it, no genuinely radical change has occurred and it may then seem unwarranted to describe each leap as an 'event' in a strong sense. In any case, such shifts in forms of consciousness seem to bear only indirectly on Hegel's ethics. As with Epicurus' swerve, Hegel's dialectical shifts are ethically important not because they directly call for response, but because they lead to forms of life within which ethical relationships and duties arise, these latter being the real matter of ethics.

In contrast, there are also those who do not leave unrelated the theme of the event and the theme of ethics. It is with the Ancient Stoics and in post-Heideggerian twentieth century

Continental philosophy that the thinking of the event is most closely tied to the thinking of ethics.

Discussions of fortune and its reversals appear in frequently in Ancient ethics. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, for instance, Aristotle famously argues that happiness consists in a type of life filled with virtuous activities of the soul.[8] When it comes to considering the role of fortune in a good life, Aristotle rejects the idea that happiness arises from fortune alone.[9] And though he does note that major turns of fortune can increase or reduce the 'blessedness' we attribute to even a virtuous life, he also adds that a virtuous person "bears fortunes most finely…".[10] Though this discussion of Aristotle's is found at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, its importance to his overall argument seems relatively minor, taking a back seat to what Aristotle seems to think are more pressing matters, like the nature of specific virtues.

For the Stoics, though, the importance of reversals of fortune and other events seems much greater. Though the Stoics will be considered at greater length in Chapter Four and Chapter Five below, for the moment it suffices to note in a general way how and why they differ from Aristotle. For the Stoics, whatever happens is determined or fated by the rational order of the universe, and therefore happens for the best. Thus, the task of the Stoic sage (who embodies the perfection of the virtues) is to bear or even welcome what happens and to continue on his moral path despite it. As Epictetus puts it, "whatever happens, if it be outside the sphere of choice, is nothing to me."[11] In this way, the Stoics are less inclined than Aristotle to say that happiness or virtue can be negatively affected by sudden reversals of fortune.

It is not until late in the 19th century, with Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, that a move beyond the Stoics begins to take shape. Nietzsche's genealogical method and Kierkegaard's concept of the leap can be taken as, each in their own ways, conceiving the self as a collection of

events or as the result of events rather than as a substance.[12] Nietzsche's concept of the death of God could be understood as naming one event that has occurred in the history of culture and which creates difficult ethical and political challenges.[13]

The innovations of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard set the stage for Heidegger's thinking, in which those innovations are developed in their fullest form. Though Heidegger will also be discussed more in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, for now it is enough to say that Heidegger's attempt to think Being within the horizon of temporality leads him eventually to formulate the notion of the event, *ereignis*, and to give it a key place in his work. For Heidegger, Being itself is must be thought as event and the event must be thought as the happening of Being. His concept of *ereignis*, then, is a way of formulating the ontological question to which all his philosophical efforts are devoted. At the same time, Heidegger also reconfigures the concept of ethics. Rather than a conceptual analysis or grounding of moral notions or a defense of specific normative propositions, Heidegger sees ethics as the pondering of man's—or, rather, Dasein's—dwelling in Being, the same Being which the concept of *ereignis* helps one think of or from. In Heidegger, then, rethinking the event and rethinking ethics are combined and each is done in a radical and novel way. Heidegger appears to both move beyond a Stoic conception of the event and beyond the usual humanistic foci of ethics, and neither move is unrelated to the other.

Hence, it is Heidegger's work that has most strongly the spurred other twentieth century European philosophers to turn to the event and that has most strongly influenced the ways in which they do so. Imagine, then, what it would mean to take up and carry forward Heidegger's innovations in their fullness. It would mean to draw on Heidegger's concepts of *ereignis* and his ethics of dwelling while yet going beyond them. More specifically, that would mean responding to Heidegger's thinking of *ereignis* in a rich way which doesn't backslide into pre-Heideggerian

ways of thinking the event. It would also mean putting forward a conception of ethics which isn't about grounding or justifying ethical concepts, but which instead adopts the step past such an ethics which Heidegger's notion of dwelling helps achieve. And, of course, it would require tightly linking the notion of event with the notions of ethics, for the lack of a clear link between ethics and event would mean that Heidegger's thinking had been taken up in only a fragmented or partial way. So, to determine which thinkers require investigation, one would need to look for which potential candidates for inclusion meet this description and which do not. What is suggested below is that of post-Heideggerian European philosophers who provide some discourse on the event,[14] Foucault, Levinas, Marion, Dastur, and Romano do not meet this description, while Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou do. This makes Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou the proper figures to investigate.

Foucault seems a good candidate, but his conception both of ethics and of the event lack a clear relation to Heidegger's work and, in any case, it seems that his conception of the event is only indirectly tied to ethical concerns.

Ethics, in Foucault's words, concerns "how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions."[15] When he was asked whether his *History of Sexuality* constituted an ethics, he appealed to this meaning of the term when he answered

> If you mean by an ethics a code which would tell us how to act, then of course *The History of Sexuality* is not an ethics. But if by ethics you mean the relationship you have to yourself when you act, then I would say that it intends to be an ethics, or at least to show what could be an ethics of sexual behavior...[16]

Here, ethics concerns the relationship one has to oneself in acting, rather than actions or codes which would recommend specific courses of action. One could understand this way of thinking

8

ethics as a novel adaptation of a concept of ethics as concerned with man's dwelling in Being. It could be argued that ethics in Foucault's sense concerns one aspect of man's dwelling in Being—that aspect that involves his self-constitution and self-relation. Such an argument would be controversial, or at least not obvious, for Foucault makes no effort to explicitly deploy Heidegger's sense of ethics—even if in a transformed way—nor to explicitly distance himself from it.

When it comes to the event, two distinct senses of 'event' can be located in Foucault's description of his archaeological and genealogical methodologies. Only one of those senses can be plausibly linked to Heidegger's *ereignis*, but neither is directly tied to Foucault's sense of ethics.

Concerning the first sense, Foucault's genealogy, like Nietzsche's, reads history not as a linear progression toward an end or goal, but as "a profusion of entangled events," and we who inhabit those histories as "among countless lost events, without a landmark or point of reference."[17] It would appear that 'event' is used here in a relatively straightforward and commonsense way as referring to anything that happens—the speaking of a word, the signing of a document, and so on. This appears to be unrelated to the sense in which Heidegger would use the term.

The second sense in which Foucault uses the term is less closely related to its everyday use. Foucault frequently refers to discontinuities that involve radical and unexpected shifts between epistemes. Of such a "substitution of one discursive formation for another," Foucault says "These events, which are by far the most rare, are, for archaeology, the most important: only archaeology, in any case, can reveal them."[18] In this passage, 'event' would seem to indicate a large-scale historical discontinuity, rather than a single occurrence within a discourse or set of

practices. One might understand this sense of the word 'event' as a proliferation or multiplication

of Heidegger's *ereignis* though, as above, a lack of direct textual engagement with Heidegger

might make such a reading hard to defend.

But in any case, this sense isn't directly tied to the shape of Foucault's concept of ethics.

For Foucault, the historical discontinuity that leads into a new discursive regime is not itself an

object of ethical concern. Rather, the new discursive regime into which the discontinuity places

one creates dangerous power relations and it is these power relations that are the direct object of

ethical concern. In this way, Foucault's concepts of ethics and of the event, even if taken to be

influenced by Heidegger, seem disconnected enough from each other that his ethics is not an

ethics of the event—rather, events are only conditions of historical possibility for specific ethical

problems.

Things are somewhat different with Levinas. His conceptions of the event and of ethics

are closely interwoven. However, despite his engagement with Heidegger it does not seem that

either his notion of ethics or the event takes up Heidegger's. Further, the residual humanism in

Levinas' notion of the event seems to constitute something of a turn away from Heidegger

altogether.

In *Time and the Other*, Levinas considers the event of death, concluding "an *event* can

happen to us that we no longer assume…An event happens to us without our having absolutely

anything 'a priori,' without our being able to have the least project, as one says today."[19] He also

describes "this event as mystery, precisely because it could not be anticipated—that is,

grasped…"[20] These features of the event of death become the model for the encounter with the

Other, which is Levinas' real interest. Of that encounter, he writes "The relationship with the

Other, the face-to-face with the Other, the encounter with a face that at once gives and conceals

the Other, is the situation in which an event happens to a subject who does not assume it, who is utterly unable in its regard, but where nonetheless in a certain way it is in front of the subject."[21] The encounter with the Other, then, is an event much like death, though it is not an event which stamps out my existence completely. But it is this encounter and the relation between myself and the Other that characterizes it which Levinas calls 'ethics.'

One could say of Levinas, then, that for him 'ethics' is the name for one dimension of a particular type of event wherein I encounter the Other. Still, one should be cautious of imputing much Heideggerian influence to Levinas here. In an interview, Levinas states that "For me, Heidegger is first and foremost the author of *Being and Time*."[22] That text, though, is prior to *ereignis* becoming a theme for Heidegger. Later in the same interview[23], Levinas briefly mentions the concept of *ereignis*, but his comments are extremely brief and reveal little about his understanding or evaluation of the concept. Further, the fact that Levinas' conception of the event is oriented toward the encounter with an Other who is most often taken to be human suggests that his concept of the event is not a radicalization or reorientation of Heidegger's *ereignis*, since for Heidegger *ereignis* is an inhuman event.

Marion, Dastur, and Romano, though, do each seem to offer rich phenomenological investigations of the event which are more closely related to Heidegger's *ereignis*. However, they do not attempt to reshape the meaning of ethics. Instead, in their work, ethics is an attempt to ground and justify specific moral concepts on their phenomenological bases—a conception of ethics in many ways closer to Kant or Mill than to Heidegger. These points will require some detailed elaboration.

In all three phenomenological thinkers, the same three elements can be found: first, a view of the nature of phenomenology itself; second, a view of the connection between

11

phenomenology, rightly understood, and the thinking of the event; and third, a phenomenological conception of the event. A fourth element is present in Marion and Romano, though not Dastur; namely, an indication of the possible ethical relevance of the views given. There is also a good deal of similarity between how Marion, Dastur, and Romano construe each of these elements. In all three cases, the notion of phenomenology adhered to is not one that calls upon much Husserlian machinery, but rather follows a wider definition closer to that of Heidegger. Further, in all three cases, it is argued that phenomenology as such and in its core concepts and commitments, not only is capable of thinking the event, but also either necessitates or is necessary for a thinking of the event. There is also significant, but not complete, overlap in the phenomenological descriptions of the event offered by Marion, Dastur, and Romano.

Consider first Jean-Luc Marion, the most prominent of the three. For him, phenomenology is the description of the phenomenon, or that which shows itself in giving itself, and the 'self' that gives itself here is of the nature of an event. Marion writes

The *self* of the phenomenon is marked in its determination as event. It comes, does its thing, and leaves on its own: showing *itself*, it also shows the *self* that takes (or removes) the initiative of giving *itself*. The event, I can wait for it (though most often, it surprises me), I can remember it (or forget it), but I cannot make it, produce it, or provoke it.[24]

In a sense, then, all phenomena are evental.

But what exactly does that mean for Marion? Generally speaking, Marion tends to most often describe the event in three ways: as an exception to Kantian categories; as a 'saturated' phenomenon; and in contrast to objects.

One of the more crucial of Kant's categories—crucial because it makes possible the claims of the empirical sciences—is the relation of cause and effect.[25] In relation to that category, Marion writes that

> phenomena as such, namely as given...let themselves be understood all the better as they slip from the sway of cause and the status of effect. The less they let themselves be inscribed in causality, the more they show themselves and render themselves intelligible as such. Such phenomena are named events…[26]

A non-evental phenomenon would be a phenomenon with respect to which the usual categories of cause and effect could be effectively employed; one could understand that phenomenon by pinning down the causes that preceded it and led to it. But an evental phenomenon is one for which this is impossible. For Marion, "Inasmuch as it is a given phenomenon, *the event does not have an adequate cause* and cannot have one. Only in this way can it advance on the wings of a dove: unforeseen, unusual, unexpected, unheard of, and unseen."[27] Marion draws similar conclusions with respect to other Kantian categories.

This leads to the second description of the event as a 'saturated' phenomenon. A saturated phenomenon, as Marion has it, is a phenomenon in which the intuition overwhelms or overflows the concept[28], as opposed to one in which the subject's concept can properly constitute the intuition as a phenomenon. Because the event exceeds the concepts and categories which would be deployed to make sense of it, there is, so to speak, 'too much' showing of the phenomenon for my subjective machinery to do the work of constitution. Rather, things are exactly reversed: "We never put into play the event (nothing is more ridiculously contradictory than the would-be 'organization of an event'), but, itself, at initiative of its *self*, it produces us in *giving itself to us*. It

produces us in the scene that opens its givenness."[29] That is, a saturated phenomenon constitutes me; I do not constitute it.

In this way, events are contrasted to objects by Marion. He writes that

The object appears according to four basic characteristics: (1) it is predictable; (2) it is reproducible; (3) it results from a cause acting as an effect; and (4) it always inscribes itself within the conditions of possibility for experience. The event appears as a reversal of these characteristics: (1) it appears without warning; (2) it appears once and for all, that is, without the possibility of repetition or reproduction; (3) it appears without any assignable or anterior cause; and finally (4) it appears in defiance of the conditions of the possibility for experience—as the impossible made possible.[30]

So, if the event is that which breaks with Kantian categories and constitutes me in undermining my constituting capacities with its overwhelming and surprising phenomenality, the object is exactly that which does not do so.

For Françoise Dastur, phenomenology is defined as returning to the things themselves. On her view, accounting for time and its discontinuity and contingency is the most important philosophical problem, and this means accounting for events, which only phenomenology can do.

On Dastur's view, "a phenomenology which obeyed its own injunction to return to things themselves could not be content to remain an 'eidetic' phenomenology—the thinking of what remains invariable in experience," for experience also presents us with radical variability.[31] For her, "the most difficult philosophical problem" and "the most important task of philosophy" is to account for the hanging-together of the different parts of time, while at the same time "account[ing] for the discontinuity of time…"[32] Some reflections of Husserl and Heidegger form

the basis of a way of doing so, a way according to which the event is what accounts for the combined continuity and discontinuity of time. As Dastur has it, the event is

> what was not expected, what arrives unexpectedly and comes to us by surprise, what
>
> descends upon us, the accident in the literal meaning of the Latin verb *accido* from which
>
> the word accident derives. The event in the strong sense of the word is therefore always a
>
> surprise, something which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without
>
> warning, and which brings us towards an unanticipated future.[33]

But exactly insofar as the event is this surprising "impossible which happens"[34], it actually "introduces a split between past and future and so allows the appearance of different parts of time as dis-located. The event pro-duces, in the literal meaning of the word, the difference of past and future and exhibits this difference through its sudden happening."[35] The event comes 'before' time, one could say.

> In saying this in a phenomenological register, Dastur is suggesting that, as she says,
>
> a phenomenology of the event constitutes the most appropriate accomplishment of the
>
> phenomenological project. It is not the destitution or the impossibility of
>
> phenomenological discourse, as some thinkers of the radical exteriority of the Other—I
>
> mean Levinas, but also Derrida in his last writings—seem to believe.[36]

In other words, the event is not somehow resistant to phenomenological description or contrary to phenomenological suppositions, but in fact "There can be no thinking of the event which is not at the same time a thinking of phenomenality."[37]

Turning finally to Claude Romano, phenomenology is for him beginning from things themselves as they give themselves. He distinguishes two senses of the event, and claims that

what he calls the 'evential' sense is primary. For him, the event is the first or primary phenomenon.

Romano describes his project as "a *phenomenology* that, beginning from 'things' as they give themselves, enquires into the mode of appearing of events as such."[38] That examination leads him to a key distinction between what he calls "innerworldly facts" and events in the 'evential' sense. Romano writes:

> innerworldly facts do indeed have a *privileged* subject of ontic assignation, who alone
> can make them appear as showing themselves in and of themselves—and who I will call
> *advenant*—even if they do not *in general* have a univocal subject of assignation (the
> lightning happens *just as much* to the sky that it lights up as it does to the walker who
> observes it); it will be quite a different matter with those events that happen
> *unsubstitutably* to me, by completely upending my essential possibilities articulated
> among themselves in a world and so upsetting my own adventure: events in the properly
> evential sense…[39]

The distinction employed here is elaborated by referring to four distinct properties of events in the evential sense. First, "*an event is nothing other than this impersonal reconfiguration of my possibilities and of the world—a reconfiguration that occurs in a fact and by which the event opens a fissure in my own adventure.*"[40] As above, an even in the strong, 'evential' sense is that which radically alters my possibilities as a whole, rather than simply realizing or crowding out one of them. Second,

> *an event, in the evential sense, illuminates its own context, rather than in any way
> receiving its meaning from it.* It is not a consequence of this context that could be

explained in light of preexisting possibilities, but it reconfigures the possibilities that

precede it and signals the advent of a new world for an *advenant*.[41]

So, rather than being bound and explained by the situation within which it occurs, with an event

the situation is reversed. Events are, as Romano puts it, 'world-establishing'.[42] Third, "An event

is marked off from all prior facts by its very arising—coming about from itself, free of any

horizon of meaning and any prior condition. *…an event opens to itself, gives access to itself, and,*

far from being subjected to a prior condition, provides the condition of its own occurring."[43]

Similarly to the previous point, an event breaks with the conditions which would seem to explain

its arising, while an innerworldly fact does not. And finally, "events are not datable: they are not

so much inscribed *in* time, as they are what *opens* time or *temporalizes* it."[44] If events are not

bound by their contexts or conditions, then they are also not subject to the regimes of temporality

that hold sway within those contexts or conditions. On their own, these points merely elaborate a

difference between two senses in which one might speak of events. But Romano goes further,

arguing that the evential sense of event is primary because evential events establish the worlds

and temporalize the times within which events in the innerworldly sense are possible, and are

thus conditions of possibility for the latter.[45]

And much like Marion and Dastur, Romano claims an intimacy between events and

phenomenology. He argues:

if a fundamental requirement of phenomenology is that it takes appearances as being the

source for description by right, without presuming in advance about the meaning of these

appearances, then the first phenomenon, the one that is primary by right, is precisely the

one that is the source of all meaning and right for itself (and hence also for us), the one

that illuminates itself and is brought about in light of its own manifestation: the pure *montrance* of events.[46]

In other words, the primary position of events as conditions for other phenomena means that events should be the main focus of phenomenological description. Romano himself is providing this phenomenological description of events in the passages cited above.

Now, both Marion and Romano tie their thinking to ethics by suggesting that their phenomenological investigations can reveal the experiential grounds for key aspects of ethical life, though the aspects they focus upon differ. For Marion, the ethical consequences of his views, he thinks, can justify and improve upon a Levinasian ethics of otherness. For Romano, decision and responsibility start to look like ways of relating to events in his evential sense.

Consider Marion again. Toward the end of *Being Given*, he asserts that his examination shows that "in the realm of givenness, the phenomenon of the Other, for the first time, no longer counts as anything like an extraterritorial exception to phenomenality, but belongs to it officially, though with the title paradox (saturated phenomenon)."[47] As he sees it, this has consequences for ethics. Marion writes

> This situation, still unspoiled by exploration, not only allows and requires reconsidering the thematic of ethics—of respect and the face, obligation and substitution—and confirming its phenomenal legitimacy. It would also perhaps authorize broaching what ethics cannot attain: the individuation of the Other. For I neither want nor should only face up to him as the universal and abstract pole of counter-intentionality where each and every one can take on the face of the face. I instead reach him in his unsubstitutable particularity, where he shows himself like no other Other can. This individuation has a name: love.[48]

The target to whom Marion's criticism alludes here is Levinas, whose conception of the Other Marion worries strips particular others of their particularity. The positive suggestion here would appear to be that Marion's own phenomenological investigations of saturated phenomena both 1) provide grounding for ethical concepts of responsibility and 2) go beyond a Levinasian concept of Otherness by providing a concept of Otherness in which concrete particularities are included. Though Marion does provide a more thorough examination of the experience of love in his *The Erotic Phenomenon*,[49] there appear to be no texts in which he fleshes out in more detail the points he makes here about ethics.

Romano employs his own phenomenological investigations to reveal certain features of the concept of responsibility. After considering what selfhood is like from the perspective of his phenomenology, he gives us the definition of

> the unitary phenomenon of selfhood, in its properly evential characterization: *the possibility for an* advenant *to be open to events, thereby responding to what happens to him, and appropriating the possibilities that events assign to him, so as to be able to advene himself singularly across a destiny.* I will call this capacity of responding to events in their impersonal occurring *responsibility*, in a sense that should not be confused with ethical or juridical imputability. Here, 'responsibility' signifies the possibility of an *advenant* to be open to events and to relate himself to this openness by answering for his history.[50]

Though Romano denies that he means responsibility here in an ethical sense, it does seem that his evential sense of responsibility grounds that more usual ethical sense. Romano writes, for instance, that "The evential concept of responsibility (I am responsible for my acts, as *facts* of which I am the *agent*) is therefore founded in its evential concept."[51] In other words, the

19

distinction between evential and innerwordly senses of events can be applied to responsibility, showing the former to be the condition for the latter.

With these features of Marion, Dastur, and Romano laid out, it seems clear that their concepts of the event are closely connected to Heidegger's *ereignis*—where Heidegger might say that Being happens as *ereignis*, Marion, Dastur, and Romano could each say that some or all phenomena show themselves as *ereignis*. Indeed, the methodological understandings of phenomenology from which such conclusions grow are indebted to Heidegger as well.

However, the way in which Marion and Romano construe the nature of ethics seems in certain ways closer to Kant and Mill than to Heidegger. To the extent that the ethical relevance of the phenomenological thinking of the event were drawn at all by Marion and Romano, it seemed as though the upshot was to reveal the experiential ground of key ethical notions like Otherness or responsibility. An outcome of that sort would, it seems, provide justification and explanation for common moral experiences and ideals like respect, love, and so on. In this way, philosophy would, to use Wittgenstein's phrase, leave everything where it is.[52] But one of Heidegger's contributions was to reshape ethics in such a way that it ungrounds and opens up ethical concepts more than grounds and justifies them. In this way, Marion and Romano do not appear to take up Heidegger's innovations as fully as they would need to speak directly to the issue of how ethics must be reshaped in light of a thinking of the event.

Further, the influence of Derrida on Marion, Dastur, and Romano suggests that interpreting his way of thinking the event would need to be done prior to an investigation of theirs. The reader might notice certain commonalities between the ways in which Marion, Dastur, and Romano describe the event and the ways in which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou do so—Derrida especially. This is no coincidence, for there is a line of direct influence identifiably

at work in this case. Marion studied at the ENS with Derrida[53], and Romano wrote his dissertation under a committee on which both Marion and Dastur—who has also written extensively on Derrida[54]—sat as members.[55]

This institutional and historical fact suggests a conceptual point. Before the significance, innovation, and other features of Marion's, Dastur's, or Romano's works could be properly understood, they would need to be read in light of Derrida and brought into relation with his writing on the event. But for that project to be possible, an interpretation of Derrida's work would already need to be in hand. In a sense, then, one needs to deal with Derrida first, for any attempt to determine a phenomenological ethics of the event would rest upon an investigation of his thinking.

And in particular, the institutional and historical fact just mentioned can be taken in concert with an exchange between Derrida and Marion to suggest that, to the extent Marion's, Dastur's, and Romano's phenomenological investigations reflect or repeat some of Derrida's insights, they questionably reinsert Derrida's insights into a phenomenological framework with which he is not necessarily comfortable.

In a conversation with Derrida on the gift, Marion states

Other phenomenologists [besides Husserl and Heidegger], Levinas, for instance, and Jacques Derrida, and Michel Henry, are interested in the fact that a phenomenon cannot be seen as only and always either an object (which was roughly the position of Kant and to some extent of Husserl) or a being (which was in the main the position of Heidegger). Rather something more genuine, or poorer and lower, perhaps more essential (if essence here is a good word, which I doubt) can appear as *gegeben*, as given.[56]

21

Notice that Marion reads Derrida as performing a specifically phenomenological investigation in his questioning of presence. Similarly, when discussing in more detail the aporias that arise in light of the gift, in which both he and Derrida are interested, Marion states that "we remain in the field of phenomenology,"[57] when thinking them through.

But for his part, Derrida himself does not seem to fully accept Marion's characterization. As he sees it, "The event called gift is totally heterogeneous to theoretical identification, to phenomenological identification. That is a point of disagreement."[58] On his own view, "An event as such, as well as the gift, cannot be known as an event, as a present event, and for the very same reason."[59] This means that Derrida disagrees with Marion's take on a specific 'phenomenon' on which Derrida has written, but at the same time there is also a more general disagreement at work. Derrida insists that phenomenology requires the deployment of certain axioms and concepts such as intuition, meaning, and so on[60] and that rests on a notion of presence[61]. He sees his own work as trying "to think the possibility…of phenomenology, but from a place which is not inside what I try to account for."[62] Along similar lines, he says:

> When Levinas refers to the excess of the infinitely other, he says that the other, the face, precisely does not appear as such. He says many times that he wants to find within phenomenology the injunction to go beyond phenomenology. There are many places where he says that we have to go phenomenologically beyond phenomenology. That is what I am trying to do, also. I remain and I want to remain a rationalist, a phenomenologist. …I would like to remain phenomenological in what I say against phenomenology. Finally, what leads me in this manner about the non-phenomenality of the gift is also the non-phenomenality of the 'other' as such, which is something I learned from Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations.* Husserl says that in the case of the alter ego we

cannot have pure intuition, an originary perception of the other; we have to go through appresentation. That is a limit of phenomenology that appears within phenomenology. That is the place where I work also.[63]

Thinking the possibility of phenomenology from outside it, going beyond phenomenology due to its own injunctions, and exploring the limit of phenomenology which appears within it are very complex relationships to take toward its axioms and methods, and all suggest that Derrida does not see himself—or his conception of the event—as simply phenomenological.

What Derrida's identification of a non-phenomenological element or residue in his own work means is that, to the extent Marion, Dastur, and Romano offer a notion of the event similar to that of Derrida, Deleuze, or Badiou, what they are accomplishing is the reinsertion of a not-simply-phenomenological concept back into a phenomenological framework with which it was partly meant to break.

At the same time, a fuller and more detailed consideration of whether Marion is right, in the end, to read Derrida's view of the event as a phenomenological one would, once again, rest upon an already-in-hand interpretation of Derrida. The exchange with Marion, then, serves to reinforce the point that an investigation of Derrida and company would need to be completed prior to considering the details of the phenomenological thinkers in relationship to him.

Given all this, there are both negative and positive reasons for investigating only Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. The negative reason is that once Foucault, Levinas, Marion, Dastur, and Romano are put aside, no other candidates remain.

Positively, though, it can be said that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each have the characteristics which one would imagine would be had by thinkers who fully and richly respond to Heidegger. To anticipate the results of later chapters, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each

tightly link their conceptions of ethics and of the event. Each of their concepts of ethics can be read as intentionally torsioning Heidegger's emphasis on man's dwelling in Being, but without reverting to an ethics which grounds ethical concepts. Each of their concepts of the event can be read as a thorough response to Heidegger, but none of them have essentially humanistic conceptions of the event.

This suggests both that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are the figures that require investigation and that each of the three should be interrelated so that any common features and divergences within this second group can emerge.

Secondary Literature

The total body of secondary literature on Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou is vast, but the subsection of that literature dealing specifically with the intersection of their thinking of the event and their thinking of ethics is more manageable. After first examining secondary literature on that aspect of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou individually, a brief look will be taken at what small amount of work there is on all three authors together. Throughout, the goal is to highlight points of consensus and lines of disagreement in the secondary commentary.

As will be pointed out in Chapter One, Deleuze thinks of philosophy as the creation of concepts, and two of his own concepts—'counteractualization' and 'being worthy'—tend to appear repeatedly in his discussions of the event. And, indeed, there is agreement in commentary on Deleuze that these are two crucial concepts in his work. At the same time, there is agreement about the influence of the Stoics and of Nietzsche on his thinking, and that the event is an ideality or virtuality, one that is distinct from what Deleuze calls 'states of affairs'. Beyond that, there is disagreement about how exactly to understand counteractualization and the notion of

'being worthy', about how to flesh out—beyond simply 'a virtuality'—what the event really is for Deleuze, and about how to exactly connect the event to the other concepts that also play a role in his work.

The Stoic influence on Deleuze has been noted by Colombat, Patton, Buchanan, Bowden, and Sellars, the last of whom has explored it in an article dedicated to the theme. Colombat notes that "The Deleuzean concept of event is directly inherited from Emile Bréhier's essay *La Théorie des incorporels dans l'ancien stoicisme.*"[64] Though Patton does not refer to this specific textual influence on Deleuze, he agrees in broad strokes when he writes that "Deleuze's concept of the event has several components. Foremost among these is the Stoic conception of events as incorporeals."[65] Buchanan, relatedly, seems to think there is a link between Deleuze's 'Stoic' ethics and his philosophical method, for he reads Deleuze as saying that creating concepts is a type of ethical necessity[66] or an important way of counteractualizing events.[67]

For Bowden, though Deleuze does not emphasize the Stoic concern with 'virtue' and the proper natural functioning of a human being,[68] he nonetheless is interested in what Bowden calls the "Stoic 'moral imperative'" of living in accordance with what happens by nature, which for Deleuze means "'living in accordance with the event which never finishes coming about'."[69]

Sellars, whose has given the most extended discussion of the Stoic influence on Deleuze, traces the popular image of Stoicism as a philosophy of grim endurance to Justus Lipsius's 1584 work *De Constantia.*[70] On his view,

> For Lipsius and Seneca, then, Stoicism involves an ethic of heroic endurance that is quite different from Deleuze's Nietzschean and Bousquetian reading of Stoicism as an ethic of *amor fati*. At this point, it may be helpful to label these two competing conceptions of Stoicism—I shall call them 'human' and 'cosmic' Stoicism, respectively.[71]

The latter version of Stoicism is associated by Sellars with Epictetus and Aurelius.[72] And he claims that Deleuze's more Nietzschean, less popular view of the stoics is legitimate.[73] He concludes that "We can see, then, an affinity between Deleuze, Nietzsche, and Cosmic Stoics such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius on the question of affirming fate."[74] Sellars does additionally make it a point to highlight some differences between Deleuze and the Stoics, saying "It goes without saying that neither Nietzsche nor Deleuze would identify fate with providence in the way that the Stoics do. For Deleuze, the affirmation of the event is the affirmation of the aleatory event…"[75] But despite these differences, Sellars and the above mentioned scholars agree generally that there is a certain kind of Stoicism in Deleuze's way of thinking the event.

That this Stoicism is inflected through Nietzsche raises the issue of Nietzsche's influence on Deleuze. Bogue agrees with Sellars in noting Nietzsche's influence on Deleuze's thought. As he puts it, "Deleuze's version of Nietzsche's *amor fati* is an ethic of willing the virtual, of willing the virtual 'event,' which is immanent within the actual and which impinges on us in moments of disequilibrium and disorientation."[76] And indeed, the general fact of a connection between Deleuze and Nietzsche is not hard to spot given Deleuze's sympathetic book-length study of Nietzsche's corpus.[77]

The fact that a large proportion of the literature on Deleuze discusses counteractualization and Deleuze's avowal that we must 'be worthy' of the event suggests that these two notions are recognized as a core part of his thinking on the event. However, their exact meaning is a matter of some dispute. Patton, Buchanan, Hawkins, Bogue, and Bryant each have slightly differing interpretations of the idea of counteractualization.

For Patton,

> Deleuze and Guattari's realism with respect to events is a necessary presupposition of the
> ethical and political dimensions of their conception of philosophy. They acknowledge
> that, in a material sense, events are indistinguishable from the bodies and states of affairs
> in which they are effectuated. What philosophy achieves when it extracts an event from
> the clashes of bodies and things is the 'counter-effectuation' of the event: the elaboration
> of an event enables us to become conscious of the dynamics in which we are engaged,
> and to act in awareness of the becomings to which we are subject…However, it is not just
> any event which philosophy seeks to extract but those hitherto unconceptualized events
> which shape our present reality…[78]

That is, counteractualizing events means makes one aware of the processes in which one was
already engaged, with philosophy itself being part of what can give one this awareness.

As was already noted earlier,[79] Buchanan thinks that creating concepts is a type of ethical
necessity or important way of counteractualizing, but this is not all. After talking about how
"extracting sense…the first step in producing a concept…means raising the attribute of a state of
affairs to a higher power, making attribution an active rather than a passive process," he goes on
to say

> Deleuze calls this process counter-actualisation. It is, I will suggest, the practical basis of
> a transcendental empiricist ethics; it is what one does if one is ethical, if one is worthy.
> Becoming worthy of what happens to us amounts to reaching a detached perspective on
> things where what happens to us is willed by us, not merely endured. …The event is the
> sense *we make* of what happens. …To the extent we take charge of events we counter-

27

actualise what occurs, we see beyond actions and live the purity of the event, the crystal of sense awaiting us in all phenomena.[80]

Elaborating the connection to transcendental empiricism, he also writes "How the subject *transcends* the given is perhaps the most vital question we can ask of Deleuze's version of empiricism. It is the process of counter-actualisation, I would argue, which enables the passively synthesized subject to become active—to self-fashion, as it were."[81] So on Buchanan's reading, counteractualization is not so much becoming aware of the processes in which we are already engaged as it is actively attributing a certain sense to what happens to us.

For Hawkins, however, "To counter-actualise an event is to own up to what 'happens' to oneself. It involves the apprehension of the transformation or event that has taken place, and the recognition that one *belongs* to that event unless one can act in accordance with the new field of relations…"[82] So on this view, counteractualization is a type of recognition of what has happened, rather than the more active kind relation to what has happened which it seems to be on Buchanan's reading.

Bogue interestingly identifies the concept of vice-diction from *Difference and Repetition* with counter-actualization.[83] On his view,

> Vice-diction is the process whereby one identifies and engages the virtual events immanent within one's present world…One task of vice-diction is to respond to this moment of disequilibrium, this unsettling 'event,' first by undoing conventional representations of our situation, and second by teasing out the proliferating interconnections among self-differentiating differences that are enveloped in this particular moment of disequilibrium.[84]

But this is not all, for it also involves "a second moment as well: a condensation of singularities whereby one experiments on the real."[85] In sum, then, "Vice-diction thus entails both a process of exploring and hence constructing connections among differences, and a process of undoing connections in an effort to form new ones."[86] So, counteractualization would be a process of being unsettled by an event and working out this unsettling by refiguring our conceptual and practical interactions with the real.

On Bryant's view, Deleuze sees events as a kind of agent.[87] In discussing counter-actualization and actualization, Bryant writes "The first moment refers to the manner in which the event is purified and transformed into an actor in its own right, while the latter movement from counter-actualization to actualization refers to the life this new actor subsequently enjoys within the collective."[88] For Bryant, then, counter-actualization consists in our coming to identify the previously suppressed or ignored agency of the event.

In short, the range of interpretations of counter-actualization is quite wide. There are nearly as many ways of fleshing out the crucial concept of 'being worthy of what happens to us.' Here, Buchanan, Bryant, and Gilson each have views differing from each other's significantly.

Buchanan's view that counter-actualization is what the worthy person does, and that becoming worthy consists in making sense of what happens, was already mentioned in connection with the passage from his article cited above. And here, as before, Bryant's view is different from Buchanan's. Bryant writes

> When Deleuze speaks of events overthrowing worlds, individuals, and persons, when he
> speaks of the ground literally dissolving us, the point is that we find ourselves thrown
> into a problematic field, a genetic field, that calls for new actualizations and
> developments…Being worthy of the event and willing the event consist in affirming this

labor or work of actualization, this inventiveness proper to the ethical, and undertaking

the genesis that the event calls for.[89]

And since Deleuze distinguishes true and false problems,

To be worthy of the event, to affirm the event, to be equal to the event, is to engage in the

work of tracing the true problems. This consists in tracing the differential relations,

intensities, and singularities that haunt a collective in a moment of perplexity proper to a

situation and assisting in the birth of new solutions. The evaluation of true and false

problems will be the ethical work that, in Deleuze, replaces the logic of judgment in our

decision-making process.[90]

Putting these points together, Bryant's view would seem to be that being worthy means accepting

the task of finding out which problems are real given the circumstances that come to pass when

something happens.

Gilson's view is different again. Her claim is that "there are two aspects to not being

unworthy of what happens. Not to be unworthy is both to refrain from *ressentiment*, instead

affirming each event, and to refer 'that which occurs' back to the potential for change inherent in

the incorporeal event…"[91] With the description of these two aspects in hand, she writes

the event or the problem calls for creation and activity. It demands not passive acceptance

of what happens but engagement with the sense of what occurs in such a way that out of

an understanding of this sense one creates something new that speaks to what has been.

To express the power of the event, one cannot merely repeat what has happened. To do so

is indeed to be unworthy insofar as it is to reject the generative aspect of the event, to

ignore the opening onto the future that it entails. Therefore, an ethical relation to the

event is a responsive one precisely because not being unworthy can be defined as creating

a new mode of living that grows out of and speaks to the event in its duality.[92]

What the two aspects of being worthy have in common, so to speak, is that they are both

creative, sensitive responses to the event.

But it seems all of these discussions rest on a certain understanding of Deleuze's notion of

the event, so what exactly *is* an event for Deleuze? Here, there are also many different positions

on offer from those scholars who look to the event with an eye to Deleuze's ethical thought, for

Colombat, Patton, Buchanan, Hawkins, Sellars, Bogue, Bryant, and Gilson give a family of

related but differing interpretations when it comes to this question.

Colombat suggests through an example some features of the event—specifically

incorporeality, virtuality, or ideality—which other commentators will also point out. He writes

that, for Deleuze,"'to die,' is the Event par excellence, an incorporeal, an infinitive impossible to

actualize, real but not possible, always virtual."[93] Patton seems to agree when he says that

> Deleuze argues that all events are incorporeal transformations: not just institutional
>
> events such as becoming a university graduate or a convicted felon, but also physical
>
> events such as being cut or becoming red. The state of being cut or being red is an
>
> attribute of bodies, whereas the event of becoming cut or becoming red is a change of
>
> state or 'becoming' which does not insist in the bodies but is attributed to them.[94]

Patton adds, in addition, another property of events also mentioned by others when he draws

attention to "another component of Deleuze's concept, namely the distinction he draws between

its incarnation in bodies and states of affairs and the pure event…"[95] One can find the same

features pointed out by Hawkins, who writes that "the 'event' becomes the name for the

transformation of differential relations that takes place at the virtual, or what Deleuze often calls

'ideal,' level."[96] Like Patton, Hawkins adds that "The event is not itself a 'state of affairs'—if by this is meant the sum total of physical bodies and their spatio-temporal coordinates."[97] Gilson too appears to agree with when she writes that "The event is here understood in its duality: it is both what happens, the actual event, and it is the event of sense, a virtual or incorporeal event, not an actual state of affairs or 'that which occurs,' but that from which 'that which occurs' derives its meaning."[98]

But these agreed-upon properties of events are not the only ones that scholars of Deleuze's work have focused upon. Buchanan, Sellars, Bogue, and Bryant each point out addition features Deleuze attributes to events.

Buchanan's reading is that "The event is the sense *we make* of what happens. …the crystal of sense awaiting us in all phenomena."[99] In this passage, the tight linkage, or even identity, between sense and event is not a point of overlapping consensus in the literature.

Sellars connects the event to chance, rather than sense, when he said, as quoted earlier, that "For Deleuze, the affirmation of the event is the affirmation of the aleatory event…"[100]

Bogue, instead, writes that "Deleuze's version of Nietzsche's *amor fati* is an ethic of willing the virtual, of willing the virtual 'event,' which is immanent within the actual and which impinges on us in moments of disequilibrium and disorientation."[101] The idea that the event involves disequilibrium and disorientation is unique to Bogue.

Bryant, who examines the notion of the event at somewhat greater length, agrees with the earlier descriptions in saying that "For Deleuze, the event is a *bifurcated* structure, divided between its spatio-temporal localization in a state of affairs and an ideal structure in excess of any of the entities that embody the event."[102] He adds, though, that Deleuze treats "the event as something that 'hovers over' the bodies that it expresses…"[103] and that "Deleuze will perpetually

32

emphasize the manner in which the event is *indifferent* to determinations such as the universal and the particular. …it is able to move fluidly among these determinations in drawing together actors or elements in a collective."[104] On his view, then, "Events are thus something that actors in a collective find themselves *in*, not something that is *in* the actors."[105] That is, events are a type of agent[106] and have a problematic nature.[107] Bryant's emphasis on the agential and problematic features of events is unique to him.

Despite the apparent family-resemblances between these different interpretations of the basic features of the event, there is not so much overlap and agreement between commentators about how precisely Deleuze's concept of the event is linked to other concepts in his thinking, nor to which exact concepts it is so linked.

Patton's point that Deleuze and Guattari's view of events is "a necessary presupposition of the ethical and political dimensions of their conception of philosophy"[108] was already mentioned earlier in another context. But at this point it should also be noticed that this thought seems to link Deleuze's concept very tightly to philosophy itself.

But for Bornaetxea, though, the link is really to the concept of knowledge, which for Deleuze is not a procedure or result of reflection, but rather "l'expression des événements faites nôtres."[109]

Hawkins, however, clearly takes a different view when he writes that "Deleuze's theory of event is thus intricately intertwined with his theory of action. Acts are born of events: they are not freely decided by a transcendent agent, but the gradual emergence into actuality of a brewing potency."[110] The link here is to the concept of action, rather than to philosophy or to knowledge.

And as already cited passages from Bryant suggest, he would more closely link the event to the concept of the problem. Indeed, for Bryant, "In many respects Deleuze's account of

problems is the single most important feature of his ontology and is crucial to understanding his conception of ethics."[111]

As with Deleuze, secondary literature on Derrida also displays a set of patterns, though it is, expectedly, different from that seen with Deleuze. With respect to points of consensus, there is agreement on the importance of Heidegger's influence on Derrida's work, though there is also disagreement on what other influences are observable in his thinking. At the same time, though, there is no consensus as to what Derrida's exact relationship to Heidegger really is. Concerning Derrida's work independently of its relation to other philosophers, there is some consensus on the points that actions and decisions are evental for Derrida; that singularity and iterability are interrelated in his concept of the event; and that responsibility is a key notion in his ethical thinking. On the other hand, there is no such consensus about what the most central features of the event are for him, or what the most telling examples of events are for Derrida.

Concerning Heidegger, Habermas, Raffoul, and Gasché each point to his influence on Derrida, though in different ways. Lotz points to both Kant and Kierkegaard as additional influences.

For Habermas, Derrida "adopts Heidegger's attitude toward the 'arrival of an event,'"[112] but without fully rejecting all aspects of humanism, in the way that Heidegger does. In light of this, he asks

> Can Derrida leave the normative connotations of the uncertain 'arrival' of an indefinite 'event' as vague and indeterminate as Heidegger does? And moreover, what burden of justifications would follow from our accepting the demand to make those normative connotations more explicit, whatever they might happen to be?[113]

The partly rhetorical nature of these questions indicate that Habermas' own position is that the level of indeterminacy in Derrida's thinking on the event is in some way problematic, and that serious burdens of justification would in fact follow if the level of indeterminacy was reduced. In other words, it seems that Heidegger's influence on Derrida leaves Derrida with a way of thinking that does not have a clear set of consequences for how we should act, nor a set of reasons in support of those consequences.

For Gasché, Heidegger's and Derrida's thinking on responsibility and affirmation are linked. He writes that, concerning Heidegger's *zusage*,

> This Heideggerian thought of an affirmation that precedes all thinking and acting, all question and response, foregrounds the origin of responsibility. Prior to all response to and hence to all responsible thinking and acting in the classical sense, a consentment must have taken place to that which addresses itself to us and which subsequently is to be addressed by us. In the aftermath of Heidegger, Derrida has analyzed this…in terms of the 'sometimes wordless word which we name the 'yes'.'[114]

However, the work one sees Derrida doing in his piece on James Joyce, *Ulysses Gramophone*, breaks quite a bit with Heidegger, for whom "Responsibility thus becomes defined by thinking's adequate corresponding to Being. The analyses performed in *Ulysses Gramophone* serve, however, to cut the essentializing link between response and Being…"[115]

For Raffoul, Heidegger's influence on Derrida can be seen in the connection between *ereignis* and key themes in Derrida. Raffoul writes that "Derrida finds here access to his own thinking of the impossible in Heidegger's thought of the event, of *Ereignis* and of death. But also to his own reflection on ethics."[116] And, he continues,

35

One could indeed, within certain limits, discern in the Heideggerian text a thinking of responsibility, of being-responsible, which opens onto Derrida's understanding of aporetic ethics. For Heidegger, as for Derrida, responsibility cannot be conceived of as the imputation or ascription of an act to a subject-cause, but, rather, is conceived as the encounter and exposition to an event as inappropriable (which Derrida will seek to grasp as aporia).[117]

So, the way in which Heidegger explicitly thinks *ereignis* and perhaps implicitly thinks responsibility both have their effect on Derrida.

For Lotz, though, it is not Heidegger who forms the main influence on Derrida, but rather Kant and Kierkegaard. For Lotz, "some of the most pressing contemporary philosophical questions are situated within, or find their genealogy in, Kantian moral philosophy and Kierkegaard's concept of decision." This includes "what Derrida has in mind when he analyzes concepts such as forgiveness."[118]

And for both Raffoul and Lotz, actions and decisions count as events on Derrida's view. During a discussion of Derrida's reading of Kierkegaard, Lotz writes

Derrida's strategy culminates in his claim that Abraham's situation should not be seen as something exceptional; rather, *every* situation in which an agent is forced to decide is exceptional. Abraham's situation, in other words, is our situation; it is, as Derrida puts it, 'the most common thing'. What Kierkegaard reserves for the religious act and the leap of faith is, in Derrida's interpretation, just the expression of the general situation of an agent.[119]

The consequence, for Lotz, is that for Derrida "Decisions are beyond a full rational insight…"[120] and thus are evental in nature.

Raffoul identifies a number of aporias explored in Derrida's ethical thinking, including one that bears directly on the nature of decision. He writes that

> For Derrida, there is no decision and no responsibility without the confrontation with the aporia or undecidability…A decision, he continues, must decide without rules to follow, to apply, to conform to, and this is why it is each time (the singularity of an each time) a decision as an event, an event that Derrida calls 'impossible' because taking place outside of any possibilizing program.[121]

Notice that in this passage, too, the idea that a decision is evental in nature appears.

Many commentators identify responsibility as a key piece of his ethical thinking. This can be seen in both Raffoul and Gasché. One may have already gotten the sense that this is so for Gasché in the citation given above,[122] but the point is more clear where Gasché writes "What is at issue in 'Ulysses Gramophone' is nothing less than how a response is possible to such an event as *Ulysses*, in other words, a singular event. It is the question of responsibility itself that this text thus attempts to elaborate."[123] And in the passage already cited in which Raffoul links Derrida's ethics to a Heideggerian thought of responsibility[124], it also seems clear that responsibility is considered to be, in Raffoul's view, a central notion for Derrida.

Also noticeable in the literature is the point that, though the event is singular, it also is conditioned by iterability or has an additional iterable structure. On Ma's view, the event in Derrida has the same paradoxical 'singular but iterable' quality as the sign. For her,

> Precisely when the saying of an event lends itself to the alleged purity of every 'event' of discourse, or performative statement in J. L. Austin's well-known analysis, Derrida shows, in the 1972 essay 'Signature Event Context,' that the singular 'occurring' or the eventhood of a performative statement can in itself only be of a repetitive or citational

structure, which dissociates from itself the pure singularity of the event. Far from thereby

dismissing the originality of Austin's analysis, Derrida underscores how it is instead a

matter of rethinking the nature of an "occurring' or the eventhood of an event,' of a form

of iteration that is in fact the condition of possibility for the singular event.[125]

On this view, the event is indeed singular, but that singularity is predicated upon a structure of

repeatability. Gasché makes a similar point, when he writes that for Derrida, "any event,

however singular, and it is an event only if it is singular, requires repetition in order to be what it

is…"[126]

There can also be noticed in secondary commentary on Derrida some differences in the

main examples of events that different authors focus upon, even beyond the cases of action and

decision that have already been discussed. Naas focuses on 9/11; Lotz on forgiveness; Poché on

promising, and Ma on death.

Naas indicates that the September 11th attacks constitute an example of a Derridean

event when, introducing his essay, he says "I thus propose to take up some of these clues from

Derrida's *The Work of Mourning* in order to think precisely about how we should mourn and

remember in the wake of the event—or the events—of September 11."[127] Lotz, though, mentions

"Derrida's thesis, namely, that forgiveness can not be predicted, from which it follows (as I

explained above) that forgiveness is an *event*."[128] Poché on the other hand, focuses on the

promise being an event because it interrupts the normal course of history when it occurs.[129] Ma,

still differently, says of Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play" and *Speech and Phenomena* that

Insofar as both of these texts radically transform the relation between the event and the

sign, something like death happens there…However precisely because the two texts make

possible a thinking of death as something which happens to and with signification, such

38

an event can indeed happen to anyone and it will not stop happening until the limit

between life and death itself, between the phenomenological conception of the 'living

present' and 'transcendental life,' and a nonlife, a nonpresence or nonself-belonging is

radically de-limited.[130]

The thought here is a complex one, but part of it is that death, even if it is not the physical death

of a human being but rather a textual death of signification, constitutes an example of the event.

But as with Deleuze, these discussions amongst scholars of Derrida's work assume views

of what the event is really like for him. And as with Deleuze, there is again considerable

disagreement. As one may have already noticed based on passages examined earlier, Lotz

suggests unpredictability and unconditionality are the event's key features; Poché and Raffoul

both tie the event to the impossible; Poché additionally suggests that the event interrupts history;

Gasché emphasizes singularity.

When Lotz asks 'what is an event?', the answer given, relating to the example of

forgiveness, is that

An event must be conceived as something that is *unconditional*. But what does

unconditionality mean? It means (1) that forgiving is not only given for hypothetical

reasons (for instance, *if* the guilty person changes and becomes a new person), (2) that it

would not be given *for* something or *to* someone (this presupposes language and

exchanges), but rather, (3) that it would just be given, *for no reason at all*. In the case of

an unconditional forgiveness it would not even be allowed to say that it would be given

by someone, especially because this would presuppose an intention and an expectation in

that person. We must therefore conclude—if we think the concept of forgiveness as an

39

event—that the event of forgiving would just 'happen,' unexpectedly, without any intention and unforeseeably…[131]

Aside from reinforcing the sense that forgiveness is the primary example of the event for Lotz, this passage also suggests that the event is characterized mainly by its unconditionality and by the fact that its occurrence cannot be expected or predicted.

As an earlier citation suggested, Poché thinks of the event as an interruption in the course of history. At the same time, he characterizes the event as impossible.[132] Raffoul seems to agree, for the theme of impossibility which he traces throughout Derrida's work is closely tied to the event. He writes that

> impossibility does not mean: that which cannot be, but rather: that which *happens* outside of the anticipating conditions of *possibility* of the egological subject, outside of the horizons of expectation proposed by the subject, outside of transcendental horizons of calculability. One can calculate up to a point, but: 'The incalculable happens'. Derrida writes 'impossible' as 'im-possible' in order to underscore the excess with respect to the horizon of the conditions of *possibility* of the subject, and in so doing, in order to free (outside of these conditions of possibility) the possibility of the event.[133]

On the other hand, Gasché emphasizes the singularity of the event in saying, as quoted earlier that something "is an event only if it is singular," however based on iterability this singularity may be.[134]

Rather unlike Deleuze and Derrida, with Badiou there are a set of specific criticisms and worries about his views which have emerged in secondary literature. Specifically, there is a widespread sense that Badiou may not be able to distinguish between true and false events and that he may not be able to offer enough normative guidance. In addition to these criticisms and

worries, there is agreement that his work tends toward formalism, and there is some tendency to see a shift between the ways in which his earlier and later works approach events. The biggest disagreements are about his influences and, again, how to flesh out the exact nature of the event in his work.

> Many of these trends and tendencies are present in Laclau's article. There, he asks
>
> Is an event, which defines itself exclusively through ability to subtract itself from a situation, enough to ground an ethical alternative? Is the distinction void/fullness a solid enough criterion for discriminating between event and simulacrum? Is the opposition situation/event sufficiently clear-cut as to ascribe to the eventual camp everything needed to formulate an ethical principle? My answer to these three questions will be negative.[135]

Elaborating these points leads him to first notice Badiou's formalism in saying both that "the fidelity to the event (the exclusive content of the ethical act) has to be, as well, an entirely formal ethical injunction," and at the same time that "the distinction between event and simulacrum has also to be a formal one—i.e. it has to emerge from the form of the event as such independently of its actual content."[136] From this, Laclau argues that Badiou cannot be "true to his own theoretical presuppositions" on the grounds that "the distinction truth/simulacrum cannot ultimately be formulated because it does not have any viable place of enunciation within Badiou's theoretical edifice…There are only two places of enunciation within Badiou's system: the situation and the event," and neither can be a "possible locus" for discriminating truth and simulacrum.[137] As a result, Laclau suggests, Badiou can't really give normative guidelines or concrete ethical advice. As Laclau sees it, "it is impossible to ground ethical options at the abstract level of a theory dominated by the duality situation/event, and …these categories—whatever their validity in other spheres—do not provide criteria for moral choice."[138]

Turning to Critchley reveals a similar worry. He writes that

If the event is the consequence of a decision, namely the decision to define one's

subjectivity in terms of a fidelity to the event, then this event is true only in the sense that

it is true *for* a subject that has taken this decision… Now, if that argument is valid, then

how and in virtue of what is one to distinguish a true event from a false event? That is, I

do not see how—on the basis of Badiou's criteria—we could ever distinguish a true event

from a false event.[139]

Here again, the worry is that Badiou can't really describe how a true and a false event are

different.

Though Taubman mainly aims to apply Badiou's ethical thought to pedagogical

situations, he nonetheless raises three worries about it, one of which squares with Laclau's and

Critchley's concerns. Taubman's first worry

centers on how Badiou distinguishes between a *simulacrum* and an authentic truth event.

Let me provide an example of what concerns me. It is not clear to me how Badiou's

ethics of commitment to a particular truth would not include the Bush administration's

policy in Iraq. If we think of 9/11 as constituting an event for the administration, one

which they renamed as the war on terror, the war for democratizing the Middle East and

the movement to bring democracy for all, and one whose dire consequences they have

been faithful to no matter what the cost materially, psychically or politically, can we not

consider this an authentic event rather than a *simulacrum*?[140]

Notice that the question raised by Taubman concerns the same distinction between types of event

mentioned in Laclau's and Critchley's articles.

Pluth, however, seems to disagree with all three of the preceding authors. He writes

Another aspect of ethics involves the status of the event itself: the event's relation to the situation needs to be treated correctly. Mistreatment of this is called by Badiou a simulacrum of an event, and also a terror. Some commentators have taken this to mean that there are possible false events, or that we may be mistaken in thinking something is an event. This is not how Badiou's position should be understood. The point, rather, is to consider how an event's effects on a situation are handled—since that is all we ever have to deal with anyway. …There are neither true nor false events, and there is no question of judging whether something is an event or not: judging, truth, and falsehood will occur at the level of the naming of an event…[141]

In this passage, Pluth shows his understanding of the idea of the event's simulacrum to be quite different from Laclau's, Critchley's, or Taubman's, for he does not agree that there is really the potential for a false event in Badiou's thought. As a consequence, the worry that Badiou cannot rigorously distinguishing between true and false events is misplaced.

Laclau and Critchley, along with Norris, also point out Badiou's tendency to focus on form rather than content in discussing ethical matters. Since evidence for Laclau's conviction that Badiou's ethical thought is formalistic was already given before[142], the point here is just reemphasize that such evidence exists and also applies to other commentators.

For Critchley, "Badiou's ethical theory is highly formalistic, it only takes on flesh in relation to specific and by definition variable situational conditions."[143] And even more strongly, "Badiou's ethics is an entirely formal theory, a grammar of ethical experience, and not a specific determination of the good."[144] For Critchley as well, then, Badiou puts form over content.

The same seems true for Norris. Throughout his article, Norris emphasizes Badiou's respect for mathematician-like rigor in ethical decision making and mentions some other analogies between the mathematical and the ethical as Badiou sees them. Toward the end of the article, Norris writes "If there is, as I have argued, an ethical core to the work of this philosopher who has set his face so firmly against most varieties of present-day ethical thought it is to be found in just that remarkable combination of high formal rigor with strength and depth of political commitment."[145] At least in part, then, the ethical core of Badiou's work is seated in his performative emphasis on formalism.

Turning to another point of relative consensus, both Noys and Pluth suggest that Badiou's views on the event, and on its relationship to the subject, have shifted over time.

Noys points out that Badiou has reworked his concept of fidelity, as is shown by the preface to the English edition of *Ethics*.[146] On Noys' reading, Badiou switches from saying that infidelity only comes on the heels of fidelity, as its betrayal, to allowing that fidelity and infidelity both become possible together as soon as there is an event.[147]

Commenting on the shift from there being a single type of subject in Badiou's earlier work to their being multiple types of subject in *Logics of Worlds*, Pluth similarly writes "Despite the increased variety of forms for the subject posited by Badiou, it is still the case that one of them seems to be somehow basic, and that is the faithful subject."[148] But Pluth does nevertheless write that "this does mean that there is no longer only one form for the subject…"[149]

When it comes to Badiou's influences, Noys and Dews both identify a religious heritage, with Dews also pointing to German Idealism as an influence.

Noys admits some influence of religious traditions on Badiou's concept of fidelity, in trying to deal with objections to that heritage. He aims to deal with the worry raised by some

44

(Noys cites Lecercle, Critchley, and Dews) that Badiou has been unable to truly break free from the religious heritage of his concept. On Noys view, supported by close readings, the objection does not succeed.[150]

Dews, for his part, points out the "weaving of religious motifs into the fabric of Badiou's ethical thought," and goes onto note that

the invocation of the notion of grace by Badiou is not at all capricious—since it provides an answer to what Badiou presents as *the* central question in his ethics of truths: 'how will I, as some-one, *continue* to exceed my own being?' Furthermore, Badiou is far from being the first modern ethicist to seek to reconfigure the notion of grace. For the tradition stretching back to Kant, which spurns happiness as the direct goal of ethics and proposes a notion of the good that transcends human powers, yet also rejects any assurance of divine moral assistance…is necessarily forced into some such reworking.[151]

The passage both indicates Badiou's religious heritage in considering him as a thinker who reconfigures a notion of grace, and spots some idealist influence in aligning Badiou with Kant.

With Badiou, as with Deleuze and Derrida, there is no real agreement about how to really understand what his position is on the main features of events. Noys interprets the event as an exception to a normal state of affairs; Dews likens it to a 'moment of inspiration'; Laclau thinks it is a making visible of what a situation conceals; and Norris offers a complex description in which the event is both where thinking hits a limit, a crisis point where an anomaly comes to light, and at the same time a challenge to preexisting norms.

Noys indicates his sense of the key features of Badiou's concept of the event when he presents his interpretation of Badiou's related ideal of fidelity, saying that "fidelity is an experience that comes about as a result of an *exception* to the normal state of affairs, or of how

we respond to the exception that is an event."[152] The event is this exception. Dews, similarly,

indicates his own reading of the main features of Badiou's event when discussing fidelity. As

Dews sees it, "In brief, to behave ethically, for Badiou, is to remain faithful to a moment of

inspiration or insight and to pursue whatever line of thought and action is required to sustain this

fidelity."[153] The event, on this view, is the 'moment of inspiration or insight' Dews describes.

Laclau's understanding is a bit different. He writes that for Badiou

The event is grounded on that which is radically unrepresentable within the situation, that

which constitutes its *void*…The event is the actual declaring of that void, a radical break

with the situation that makes visible what the situation itself can only conceal. …The

event is, thus, incommensurable with the situation, its break with it is truly foundational.

If we tried to define its relation with the situation we could only say that it is a

subtraction from it.[154]

The event, then, is the presentation of the situation's void.

For Norris, "the 'event' in Badiou's strongly qualitative sense of that term is just what

transpires at the critical point where existing conceptual resources run out or where thinking

confronts problems so far beyond its power to contain or comprehend that they must be taken to

herald some imminent challenge to its most basic structures and presuppositions."[155] This more

intellectual description of the event is paired with a more political one when Norris continues by

saying

An event in this authentic or qualitative sense is what typically occurs when some

existing situation is suddenly brought to crisis-point by the coming-to-light of a hitherto

suppressed anomaly, injustice, conflict of interests or case of exclusion from the tally of

those who properly, legitimately count according to prevalent (e.g., liberal or social-democratic) notions of inclusivity.[156]

These statements suggest a view of the event in which it is a multifaceted type of political, social, and/or intellectual crisis point.

As with the event itself, there are different takes on what Badiou means by a 'fidelity' to the event. Some of these have already been mentioned: Dews, for instance, interpreted fidelity to mean pursuing a moment of inspiration and took this pursuit to constitute what it means to act ethically.[157] On the other hand, Laclau thinks that fidelity means sticking to the visibility that the event opens. Pluth, interestingly, argues that fidelity is not a fidelity to the event at all, but to our seizure by the event.

Since Laclau's view of the event is a bit different than Dews', his interpretation of fidelity turns out to be slightly different as well. He writes

Once the event takes place, the visibility that its advent makes possible opens an area of indeterminacy in relation to the ways of dealing with it: either we can stick to that visibility through what Badiou calls a *fidelity* to the event—which involves transforming the situation through a restructuring which takes the proclaimed truth as its point of departure—or we can negate the radically evental character of the event.[158]

Fidelity, on this reading, is a 'sticking' to the visibility brought about by the event.

Pluth's view is different again. He notes, disagreeing with a presupposition of both Dews and Laclau, that Badiou's fidelity "is not a fidelity to the event proper but fidelity to having been seized by an event, to the fact that it has done something to you and your situation."[159] In other words, the object or target of fidelity—that to which fidelity is faithful—is different on Pluth's

47

view than on the others. One is not faithful to the event itself so much as to its way of affecting one.

So far, the books and articles mentioned have largely focused on only a single member of the triad of philosophers whose thinking will be at issue in what follows. Though there are a good number of texts which cover more than one member, only some of those deal with the event or with ethical themes. And unfortunately, a search for texts describing all three authors together will turn up nothing larger than fragments. Tarby is the main instance. In a brief paragraph, Tarby compares Deleuze and Badiou to Hegel and Derrida to Kant: the first group "restore to thought its right, which is to legitimately think being," while the second group is associated with a kind of idealism which cannot think being.[160] But this mention is clearly quite brief and doesn't directly concern the question of the relationship between ethics and the event.

Throughout the following chapters, specific points from these secondary sources will be touched upon in footnotes, but a few global points can also be drawn at this juncture. Firstly, though there are considerable areas of agreement among some of the commentators referred to, there is nevertheless no general consensus about how exactly Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou really think events. Secondly, it seems clear that there exists no extensive study of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou together in which the main concern is their ethical thinking on the event. And finally, it would also seem that any relationships that exist between those ways of thinking the event in its relation to ethics have not been considered in any but a passing way in the available literature.

In light of these points, it becomes more evident what a contribution to the conversation represented by this literature would be like. Since there is debate about the details of the specific ways of thinking of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, their work would first need to be considered individually and in separation from the others. But, further, such a contribution would also need

to place Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou together in a more thoroughgoing way than has hitherto been accomplished, so that their interrelations could emerge more clearly.

Plan of the Work

The plan of a two-part consideration in which individual studies are supplemented by an inclusive approach will be followed below. The individual studies constitute Part One, with Deleuze, Derrida, and then Badiou each being the focus of Chapters One through Three, respectively.

The ordering of these chapters is based on chronological considerations. If one examines the original publication dates of the main texts in which each author considers the event in its relation to ethical questions, one will find a certain rough succession of overlapping periods. Deleuze's work deals with the event explicitly from 1969's *Logic of Sense* through to his late *What is Philosophy?*, originally published in 1991. Though it could be argued that Derrida's work concerns itself with the event from its beginnings in the early 1960's, that theme is not made explicit until the 1970's, through to Derrida's death in the 2000's. Badiou's work did not begin to think through the event in a systematic way until 1988's *Being and Event*, and his work continues such thinking through to the present. The chapter order in Part One follows this chronological ordering.

In each of these chapters, a methodology with two specific features has been followed. First, it is bottom-up rather than top-down. That is, each chapter was composed by beginning with close readings of specific textual passages, rather than by beginning with a self-consciously presupposed concept or grid of intelligibility which would then be imposed on the texts. This methodological feature is crucial for this sort of study, for a major concern in bringing multiple

thinkers into relation with each other is that their singularities will be suppressed or covered over in a pernicious way. Beginning with the exact wording of specific passages, while not ensuring that no such homogenizing goes on, acts as a preventative measure which at least makes it less likely. In performing these readings, standard available translations into English have been used alongside the French originals.

Second, the method is 'tropic', meaning that the ethical thinking with respect to the event that arises from the interpreted texts is condensed into an image or 'trope'. In each case, the trope or image is one pulled from within the thinker's writing itself, but which has not been given much attention in secondary commentary. The justification for the choice of image or trope in relation to an individual thinker is that it can be drawn out from that author's writing through close reading and that the image thus extracted helps to illuminate that work. This sort of justification should also allay any worry that these tropes aim to simplify a thinker's work by reducing it to a single idea. Instead of reductive simplification, the aim of these tropes is a helpful condensation which will provide a comprehensive and compact way of grasping the main thrust of each author's thinking.

Chapter One argues that the thinking of ethics and the event found in Deleuze is best captured by his image of the mime. For Deleuze, the event is not simply a shift in states of affairs, but is a 'haecceity' which cannot be fully instantiated or incarnated by any one of its instances. In this way, the event is inexhaustible, able to withhold itself from ever being fully actualized. At the same time, Deleuze distinguishes ethics from morality. Morality centers on the obligations and responsibilities by which a subject is bound, while ethics is a non-normative interpretation of how different modes of being which might underlie a subject stand in relation to the haecceity of the event. Deleuze suggests the possibility of a mode of being—which he calls

'counter-actualizing'—in which the inexhaustibility of the event is highlighted and intensified, contrasting this mode with others, like *ressentiment*, in which the event is treated as being totally absorbed in a single state of affairs. The mime provides a concrete image of a counter-actualizing mode of being because the mime's stage performances make evident the ways in which the events the performer embodies can be extracted and re-actualized outside of the original circumstances in which they first occurred.

Chapter Two argues that the image of turbulence captures the way in which Derrida thinks ethics and the event. For Derrida, the event is that which resists identification even by its own concept—it is that which is inappropriable by the structures with which one might grasp it and which therefore subverts those structures. The structures that are thus subverted include both the constituents of traditional ethics—such as injunctions and imperatives—as well as Derrida's own writing. Hence, Derrida's writing is arranged in such a way that one is drawn into sites in which the subversive effects of the event put one into question and raise the issue of one's relation to events as a perpetual ethical concern. Turbulence stands as a fitting image here, for it captures the ways in which both the event and Derrida's writing both draw one after them and disturb one.

Chapter Three, the final chapter of Part One, argues that the thinking of ethics and the event found in Badiou's work is best captured by the image of the immortal hero. For Badiou, the event is considered to be a 'paradox of Being,' or a 'flash' in which the distribution of appearances in the world is drastically and dramatically upset and the ontological laws of Being are violated. At the level of ethics, Badiou describes different modes of possible response to such an event. One such mode, which he describes as 'fidelity', involves a committed attempt to bring into the world as many of the possible consequences of the event as one can. The image of the immortal

hero is appropriate because, for Badiou, 'immortality' is a name for a form of life in which fidelity is present and 'hero' is the name for one who lives such a life.

As a result of the chapters of Part One, the three ways of thinking the event and ethics present in the work of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou lie more open to view. However, the interpretations given in Part One concern each author individually. To provide a sense of the interrelations between these three ways of thinking requires going beyond individual studies. To do so is the task of Part Two.

Chapter Four situates Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou in relation to their main historical predecessors described above: the Stoics and Heidegger. For the Stoics, events are determined and regulated by *logos*, Zeus, or some other entity or force, of which events become an expression. Given the ways in which they follow Nietzsche in rethinking the 'mainstream' lineage of Western philosophy that begins with Plato, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each have reason to be skeptical of the way in which the Stoics construe events as determined by other entities and forces. For each of the three, Heidegger's notion of *ereignis* acts as a resource to make good on that skepticism. They each draw out aspects of *ereignis* that Heidegger sometimes left underemphasized to further his own break with the Stoic metaphysical thinking of the event. The differences that can be observed in the ways Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each think the event, then, can be understood as resulting from divergences in each thinker's sense of what aspects of *ereignis* most need to be emphasized to prevent the event's metaphysical capture. As a result, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each agree, contra the Stoics, that ethical life is radically puncturable by the event and can never be fully protected or insulated from it since there is no guarantor of the event's consistency with one's ends, goals, and so on.

Chapter Five, the final chapter, provides similar historical comparisons regarding the

concepts of ethics employed by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou and asks about the direction in which those concepts might be taken. Contrary to the Stoics and to Kant, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou take ethics to be neither the study of the good life, nor an analysis and defense of morality. Instead, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou can each be understood as practicing ethics as a 'post-evental cartography' or a description of what alternative options for living are opened by the puncturing of ethical life by an event, a style of ethics only suggested by Heidegger's originary ethics. Though Quentin Meillassoux's 'immanent ethics' attempts to draw upon the departures from traditional ethics made by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, certain features of his thought undermine its claim to truly inherit their work. A better possibility would be to develop what will be termed an "an-ethics"; that is, a general study of the ways in which the constituents of ethical life become impossible or unrealizable.

The General Conclusion then summarizes the upshot of the chapters and speculates that an-ethical thinking might be extended to produce an an-ethical ontology, which conceives how Being must be for all the constituents of ethical life to be radically unrealizable.

On the whole, then, it could be said that the overall outcome of the chapters below is to show that studying Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou in their interrelations does in fact teach important lessons. Those lessons can be condensed into the three concepts just mentioned: the detachment of the event from Being, post-evental cartography, and an-ethics. The first two concepts describe shared features of the thinking of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou that distinguish them from their predecessors and contemporaries. The third concept suggests a direction their thinking might be taken. That the secondary literature available on each thinker does not put forward any of these concepts suggests both that the chapters below will contribute something to the study of these thinkers that has been left out of commentary to date and that a

collective study of the three figures together is of value.

NOTES

1. See, for instance, 1) G.E. Moore <u>Principia Ethica.</u> Barnes and Noble, 2005. Originally published 1905, 2) A.J. Ayer. <u>Language, Truth, and Logic</u>. Dover, 1952. Originally published 1936, 3) Jurgen Habermas. <u>Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.</u> Trans. Lenhardt and Nicholsen. MIT, 2001, and 4) Michel Foucault. <u>Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth</u>. Paul Rabinow (ed). The New Press, 1997.

2. I allude here to two famous Platonic doctrines that can be found in the <u>Meno</u> and elsewhere. See for instance Plato. <u>Meno and Other Dialogues.</u> Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford, 2009.

3. See the passage from Lucretius in A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley. <u>The Hellenistic Philosophers, Vol. 1.</u> Cambridge, 1987. Pg. 49.

4. The work of Abelard and Aquinas are representative here. See 1) Peter Abelard. <u>Ethical Writings.</u> Trans. Paul Vincent Spade. Hackett, 1995, 2) Thomas Aquinas. <u>On Law, Morality, and Politics.</u> Trans. Richard J. Regan. William P. Baumgarth (ed). Hackett, 2003.

5. See David Hume. <u>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding. Cambridge</u>, 2007. Pgs. 96-116.

6. See Immanuel Kant. <u>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.</u> Trans. Mary Gregor. Cambridge, 2012, and John Stuart Mill. <u>Utilitarianism.</u> Hackett, 2002.

7. See G.W.F. Hegel. <u>Phenomenology of Spirit.</u> Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford, 1977.

8. See Aristotle. <u>Nicomachean Ethics.</u> Trans. Terence Irwin. Hackett, 1999.

9. Ibid, pg. 12.

10. Ibid, pg. 14.

11. Epictetus. <u>The Discourses.</u> Trans. Robin Hard. Everyman, 1995. Pg. 67.

12. See Friedrich Nietzsche. <u>On the Genealogy of Morality</u>. Trans. Carol Diethe. Cambridge, 1997. Pg. 26. and throughout Soren Kierkegaard. <u>Concluding Unscientific Postscript.</u> Trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton, 1969.

13. See Friedrich Nietzsche. <u>The Gay Science.</u> Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Vintage, 1974. Pgs. 167, 171, and 181.

14. Sartre would seem to be a case of a philosopher deeply influenced by Heidegger but who does not concern himself with the event. I leave out discussions of this third group of thinkers as not directly relevant to the topic at hand.

15. Michel Foucault. "On the Genealogy of Ethics: Overview of Work in Progress." <u>Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.</u> Paul Rabinow (ed). The New Press, 1997. Pg. 263.

16. Michel Foucault. "An Interview by Stephen Riggins." <u>Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.</u> Paul Rabinow (ed). The New Press, 1997. Pg. 131.

17. Michel Foucault. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In <u>Language, Counter-Memory, Practice</u>. Donald F. Bouchard (ed).Cornell University Press, 1977. Pg. 155.

18. Michel Foucault. <u>The Archaeology of Knowledge</u>. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. Pantheon Books, 1972. Pg. 171.

19. Emmanuel Levinas. <u>Time and the Other.</u> Trans. Richard A. Cohen. Duquesne University Press, 1987. Pg. 74.

20. Ibid, pg. 77.

21. Ibid, pgs. 78-9.

22. Emmanuel Levinas. "Intention, Event, and the Other." in <u>Is it Righteous to Be?: Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas.</u> Jill Robbins (ed). Stanford University Press, 2001. Pg. 140.

23. See ibid, pg. 147.

24. Jean-Luc Marion. <u>Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness.</u> Trans. Jeffrey Kosky. Stanford University Press, 2002. Pgs. 159-60.

25. Immanuel Kant. <u>Critique of Pure Reason.</u> Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. Palgrave, 2003. Table of categories is on pg. 113.

26. Marion. <u>Being Given.</u> Pg. 162.

27. Ibid., pg. 167. Marion makes similar points about categories of contingency and necessity at 168-9.

28. See Jean-Luc Marion. <u>In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena.</u> Trans. Robyn Horner. Fordham University Press, 2004. Pg. xxi. There, Marion characterizes saturated phenomena as a phenomenon in which there is "the excess of intuition over signification and over the concept…"

29. Jean-Luc Marion. <u>In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena.</u> Pg. 34.

30. Jean-Luc Marion. "Phenomenon and Event." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*. Vol. 26, No. 1. 2005. Pg. 147.

31. Francoise Dastur. "Phenomenology of the Event: Waiting and Surprise." Trans. Francoise Dastur. *Hypatia*. Vol. 15, no. 4. 2000. Pg. 182.
32. All Ibid., pg. 179.
33. Ibid, pg. 181.
34. Ibid, pg. 183.
35. Ibid, pg. 182.
36. Ibid, pg. 183.
37. Ibid, pg. 187.
38. Claude Romano. Event and World. Trans. Shane Mackinlay. Fordham University Press, 2009. Pg. 24.
39. Ibid, pg. 29.
40. Ibid, pg. 31.
41. Ibid, pg. 38.
42. Ibid, pg. 39.
43. Ibid, pg. 42.
44. Ibid, pg. 46.
45. Romano. Event and World. Pg. 211. He writes that events "do not happen as such *in* time, but instead they *open* time, or *temporalize* it."
46. Ibid, pg. 50.
47. Marion. Being Given. Pg. 323.
48. Ibid, pg. 324.
49. See Jean-Luc Marion. The Erotic Phenomenon. Trans. Stephen E. Lewis. University of Chicago Press, 2008.
50. Romano. Event and World. Pg. 94.
51. Ibid, pg. 95.
52. See Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Investigations. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe. Blackwell, 2001. Para. 124.
53. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (eds). God, the Gift, and Postmodernism. Indiana University Press, 1999. Pg. 55.
54. See, for instance, her 1) "Finitude and Repetition in Husserl and Derrida." *Southern Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 32 supplement. 1994. Pgs. 113-130. 2) "Heidegger and Derrida: On Play and Difference." *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 3, no. 1 & 2. 1995. Pgs. 1-23. 3) "Derrida and the Question of Presence." *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 36. 2006. Pgs. 45-62.
55. Romano. Event and World. Pg. xiii. There, he expresses thanks for "The generous and attentive reading of Francoise Dastur and Jean-Luc Marion, along with their penetrating comments at my defense…"
56. Caputo and Scanlon, pg. 56.
57. Ibid., pg. 62.
58. Ibid, pg. 59.
59. Ibid, pg. 60.
60. Ibid, pg. 61.
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63. Ibid, pgs. 75-6.
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66. Ian Buchanan. Deleuzism: A Metacommentary. Edinburgh University Press, 2000. Pg. 73.
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68. Sean Bowden. The Primacy of Events. Edinburgh University Press, 2011. Pg. 42.
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73. Ibid, 165.
74. Ibid, 166-7.
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77. Gilles Deleuze. <u>Nietzsche and Philosophy.</u> Columbia University Press, 1994. Originally published 1962.

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81. Ibid, pg. 86.

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84. Ibid.

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86. Ibid.

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91. Erin Cunniff Gilson. "Responsive Becoming: Ethics between Deleuze and Feminism." In <u>Deleuze and Ethics.</u> Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (eds). Edinburgh University Press, 2011. Pg. 77.

92. Ibid.

93. Colombat, 241.

94. Patton, 320.

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96. Hawkins, 48.

97. Ibid.

98. Gilson, 77.

99. Buchanan, 78-9.

100. See note 75 above.

101. Bogue, 9.

102. Bryant, 33.

103. Ibid, 33-4.

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105. Ibid, 34-5.

106. Ibid, 36.

107. Ibid, 37-9.

108. Patton, 324.

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110. Hawkins, 48.

111. Bryant, 36.

112. Jurgen Habermas. "How to Answer the Ethical Question." In <u>Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida.</u> Trans. Bettina Bergo and Michael B. Smith. Bettina Bergo, Joseph Cohen, and Raphael Zagury-Orly (eds). Fordham University Press, 2007. Pg. 143.

113. Ibid, 154.

114. Rodolphe Gasché. <u>Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida.</u> Harvard, 1994. Pg. 229.

115. Ibid.

116. François Raffoul. "Derrida and the Ethics of the Im-possible." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 38. 2008. Pg. 275.

117. Ibid.

118. Both of the last two quotes are from Christian Lotz. "The Events of Morality and Forgiveness: From Kant to Derrida." *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 36. 2006. Pg. 256.

119. Lotz, 264. Some parenthetical citations from the original have been removed.

120. Ibid, 267.

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125. Shaoling Ma. "Living and Dying by the Event." *Theory & Event*, vol. 12, no. 1. 2009.Vol 12, Issue 1, 2009. Taken from http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v012/12.1.ma.html. Accessed 6 September 2012. No pagination.

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127. Michael Naas. "History's Remains: Of Memory, Mourning, and the Event." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 33. 2003. Pgs. 76-7.

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129. Fred Poché. Penser avec Jacques Derrida: Comprendre la déconstruction. Chronique Sociale, 2007. Pg. 96.

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131. Lotz, 268.

132. Poché, 50.

133. Raffoul, 286. Some parenthetical citations from the original have been removed.

134. See note 122 above.

135. Ernesto Laclau. "An Ethics of Militant Engagement." In Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004. Pg. 122.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid, all from 122 and 123.

138. Ibid, 129.

139. Simon Critchley. "On the Ethics of Alain Badiou." In Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions. Gabriel Riera (ed). SUNY, 2005. Pg. 227.

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141. Ed Pluth. Badiou: A Philosophy of the New. Polity, 2010. Pgs. 140-41.

142. See note 132 above.

143. Critchley, 224.

144. Ibid.

145. Christopher Norris. "Alain Badiou: Truth, Ethics, and the Formal Imperative." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, vol. 65 (sup). 2009. Pg. 1128.

146. See Badiou. Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil. Trans. Peter Hallward. Verso, 2001.Pg. lvii.

147. Benjamin Noys. "Badiou's Fidelities: Reading the Ethics." *Communication and Cognition,* vol. 36, no. 1-2. 2003. Pg. 42.

148. Pluth, 143.

149. Ibid. The thought is repeated at 150-151.

150. Noys, 31 and 32.

151. Peter Dews. "States of Grace: The Excess of the Demand in Badiou's Ethics of Truths." In Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004. Pg. 115.

152. Noys, 33.

153. Dews, 108.

154. Laclau, 121.

155. Norris, 1108.

156. Ibid, 1109.

157. See 149 above.

158. Laclau, 121-2.

159. Pluth, 140.

160. Fabian Tarby. Materialismes d'aujourd'hui: de Deleuze et Badiou. L'Harmattan, 2005. Pg. 12. My translation.

CHAPTER II

DELEUZE'S ETHICS OF THE EVENT: ETHOLOGY, HAECCEITY, AND MIME

Introduction

In a forcefully worded passage from *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes

Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say:

not to be unworthy of what happens to us. To grasp whatever happens as unjust and

unwarranted (it is always someone else's fault) is, on the contrary, what renders our sores

repugnant—veritable *ressentiment*, resentment of the event. There is no other ill will.

What is really immoral is the use of moral notions like just or unjust, merit or fault. What

does it mean then to will the event? Is it to accept war, wounds, and death when they

occur? It is highly probably that resignation is only one more figure of *ressentiment*,

since *ressentiment*, has many figures. If willing the event is, primarily, to release its

eternal truth, like the fire on which it is fed, this will would reach the point at which war

is waged against war, the wound would be the living trace and the scar of all wounds, and

death turned   on itself would be willed against all deaths.[1]

On the whole, this passage makes strikingly clear the fact that Deleuze's conception of ethics will

principally concern itself with the way in which we comport ourselves toward events, or toward

'what happens to us.' The details of the passage, though, suggest a few questions that lack

obvious answers. First, Deleuze seems to be making a distinction between the ethics that

concerns what happens to us and the 'moral notions' he lists. In other words, there is a distinction

at work here between ethics and morality. What exactly is the distinction and why does he make

it? Second, Deleuze speaks of the event and of what happens to us, but does not describe further what one is to understand by those phrases. What exactly is an event for Deleuze? What is happening when something happens to us? And third, Deleuze seems to propose that 'not being unworthy,' 'willing' and 'releasing' constitute the proper mode of comportment toward the event. But what is the character of these comportments? How is one to envision them concretely?

This chapter attempts to answer all three sets of questions in turn. The first section examines Deleuze's notions of ethology and haecceity, describing the distinction between ethics and morality in a way which renders Deleuze's use of seemingly moral language unproblematic. The second section articulates his concept of the event in a way that renders it consistent with Deleuze's anti-Platonism. The third section examines the key concept of counter-actualization employed by Deleuze to describe modes of comportment toward events. A fourth section argues that the figure of the mime provides a model for that mode of ethical relation to the event. The essay concludes by turning back to the passage above, re-reading it in light of the results of the earlier sections.

Ethics and Morality

Deleuze describes the only ethics that 'makes sense at all' in a variety of ways. The central claim of this section is that, when taken together, those descriptions constitute a single vision of ethics according to which ethics is the process of uncovering which immanent category a given mode of being fits into based on the way in which it comports itself toward or incarnates a haecceity. In contrast, morality consists of judging subjects according to transcendent categories based on the ways in which they respect or fail to respect those categories. This

reading of what Deleuze means by 'ethics' and 'morality' can answer what seems to be the simple and powerful objection that Deleuze sometimes engages in moralistic thinking.

The distinction between ethics (sometimes referred to as 'ethology' in Deleuze's work) and morality employed by Deleuze stems from his encounters with Spinoza and Nietzsche.[2] Indeed, one of the more succinct descriptions of the distinction between ethics and morality comes in Deleuze's *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. There, he writes "Ethics, which is to say, a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values."[3] The contrast between ethics and morality, then, corresponds to a contrast between immanence and transcendence, and to a contrast between a typology of modes of existence and the reference of existence to something other than itself. What constitutes morality is what Nietzsche characterizes[4] as a concern with the distinction between transcendent Good and transcendent Evil, while ethics concerns the immanent distinction between good and bad modes of existence.[5] This means that distinct sets of conceptual categories are involved in ethics, on the one hand, and morality, on the other.

What exactly the difference is between a typology of modes of existence and the reference of existence to something other than itself can be gleaned from the text of a course Deleuze gave on Spinoza. Deleuze writes that

> In an ethics, it is completely different [than morality], you do not judge. In a certain manner, you say: whatever you do, you will only ever have what you deserve. Somebody says or does something, you do not relate it to values. You ask yourself how is that possible? How is this possible in an internal way? In other words, you relate the thing or the statement to the mode of existence that it implies, that it envelops in itself. How must it be in order to say that? Which manner of Being does this imply? You seek the

61

enveloped modes of existence, and not the transcendent values. It is the operation of immanence.[6]

Now, saying that 'you will only ever have what you deserve' raises some issues which will have to wait until the end of this section. In the meantime, the point to note is that this passage both reemphasizes and restates the same contrasts as the previous one, while displaying a bit more clearly the difference between a typology of modes and the reference of existence to something else. A typology of modes examines a mode of existence with an eye to what it is in relation to itself. As Deleuze puts it in an interview on Foucault, "There are things one can only do or say through mean-spiritedness, a life based on hatred, or bitterness toward life."[7] Morality, on the other hand, refers existence to something other than itself by *judging* it in accordance with the transcendent value categories it employs.

It might seem that Deleuze deploys the phrase 'mode of existence' in a rather vague fashion in these passages but, in fact, the phrase does have a precise meaning. The source of the term is, once again, Spinoza.[8] In the first part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza's fifth definition states "By mode I understand the affections [some translations have 'modifications'] of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is also conceived."[9] Since substance is, in a sense, all there is for Spinoza, a mode can be seen as an 'affection' or 'modification' of what is, a shape taken by substance or a way in which substance exists. A 'mode of existence' in Deleuze's terminology, then, would be a shape taken by existence or way in which existence exists.

So far, it appears that the contrast between ethics and morality can be traced to the different ways in which they deal with the modes of existence about which they inquire, that is, to the sorts of category they employ in that inquiry, and whether they use those categories to simply describe or to judge modes of existence. But this is not the entire story, for part of the

way in which ethics and morality differ in how they deal with modes of existence has not yet been mentioned.

Think, first, of Kantian ethical theory, which would clearly fall into the 'morality' side of Deleuze's distinction. Kant's ethics concerns the ways in which a subject gives itself the universal laws of morality. Thus, a key feature of this ethical theory is its focus on a specific type of existential mode: the subject. Kant is not alone in this subject-centeredness, for even in a utilitarian theory focusing more on specific actions, it is only the actions *of a subject* that can be judged.

As might be expected, Deleuze's sense of ethics concerns itself with types of mode that are other than 'subject' types. Indeed, Deleuze's thought more generally tends to focus at such a level. He writes about his work with Guattari:

> Some wonder what makes up the individuality of an event: *a* life, *a* season, a wind, a battle, five o'clock in the evening...One could call these individuations that do not constitute a person or an I haeccities or ecceities. And the question arises as to whether we are not haeccities like that instead of an I....We believe that the notion of the subject has lost much of its interest *in favor of pre-individual singularities and non-personal individuations*.[10]

Deleuze adopts a technical term from Duns Scotus—alternately spelled haeccity, ecceity, or haecceity—who used it to mean the specific 'thisness' of a particular thing. Given that Deleuze's thinking generally turns away from subject individuations or modes to hacceities, one would expect that ethics, on his view, manifests the same turn away from morality's focus on the subject.

This is just what one finds. Consider this passage from "Immanence: A Life":

[A life] is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure

immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that incarnated it in

the midst of things that made it good or bad. The life of such individuality fades away in

favor of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be

mistaken for no other...*A* life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject

goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying

with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects.[11]

This passage complicates the picture of ethics slightly. What Deleuze seems to say here is that a

mode of existence, including that specific mode of existence we call a 'subject', can be

understood as a site or locale in which a haecceity incarnates, actualizes, or realizes itself.

Deleuze also seems to say that it is only when a mode of existence incarnates an impersonal,

non-individual haecceity that the immanent categories of ethics can be properly applied at all.

Morality, one assumes, is unconcerned with the ways in which a mode of existence is related to

haecceities. This, then, is a further root of the distinction between ethics and morality.

At this point, two concerns are worth raising about Deleuze's thinking. The first was

mentioned earlier. In earlier passages, Deleuze wrote both that it is wrong to use moral notions

like merit and fault—that one should stay on the 'ethics' side of the ethics/morality distinction—

but he also said that one only ever has what one deserves based on one's mode of existence.

'Dessert', though, seems like a traditionally moral notion in that it indicates fault. Isn't Deleuze

self-contradictorily invoking the very moral notions he rejects?

It need not be so. The distinction between ethics and morality can be applied to the senses

of normative terms, so that a given term can have an ethical sense and a moral sense depending

on its use. Deleuze himself seems to make this same distinction. He takes Spinoza to distinguish

64

two different ways of understanding God's injunction to Adam to not eat the fruit in the Garden of Eden. The injunction can be read morally as the command or prohibition 'thou shalt not eat the fruit.' Or, the injunction can be read ethically, in which case "God does not prohibit anything, but he informs Adam that *the fruit, by virtue of its composition, will decompose Adam's body*."[12] Here, what seems to be a moral prohibition is really only a description of a mode of existence. The same could easily be said of Deleuze's notion of dessert. A moral use of the notion of dessert would indeed suggest that performing an Evil action should bring in its wake justifiably Evil consequences for the doer. But an ethical use of the notion of dessert is different. 'Dessert' in an ethical, rather than a moral sense, just indicates what follows from the constitutive features of a mode of existence.

The second concern is that the distinction between ethics and morality is undermined by the idea of haecceities. For it may seem that a haecceity is something transcendent to a mode of existence in terms of which the mode is judged or assessed. Fully answering this objection would require describing how at least one particular type of haecceity—the event—is not a transcendent entity. This task will be taken up in the next section.

In the meantime, Deleuze's distinction between ethics and morality should be clearer. When, in the passage cited on page 59, Deleuze contrasts the use of moral notions with the only ethics which 'makes sense,' the contrast is between an inquiry into the features of a mode of being resulting from the incarnation of a haecceity and the judgment of a subjective type of mode in terms of transcendent categories. But what are we to say about that particular haecceity called an 'event'?

Deleuze's Concept of the Event

In the passage cited on page 59, Deleuze wrote that the event must be willed and released. What kind of thing is it that we are to will and release? What are the features of the haecceity called 'the event'?

It will be helpful to anticipate some of the concepts which later textual analyses will present to more precisely frame the questions of this section. Consider very roughly the total situation within which an event could, commonsensically, be said to happen. There are a few key elements of that situation. First, there is the temporality of the situation, its distribution into (assuming a linear temporality is at work) a past, a present, and a future. Second, there is the general state of affairs—the physical arrangement of bodies in the situation. Third, there are specific occurrences; that is, there are the changes, shifts, or alterations in or of that situation. These are what are normally called 'events' in everyday speech. The question of the Deleuzian event's main features, then, can be more precisely put in this way: what is the event and what are its relationships to the three elements just described? This section argues that Deleuze sees the event as that haecceity 1) which does not conform to linear temporality, 2) which is both distinct from, but inseparable from, states of affairs, and 3) which is 'that which happens' when the state of affairs changes or shifts, but which is not exhausted by any one of those changes.

A central example of Deleuze's will offer a simple way into this rather complex thesis and will illustrate the first point. On the very first page of *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes, of two pieces by Lewis Carroll to which he will return to throughout the work:

In *Alice* and *Through the Looking-Glass* it is a question of a category of very special things: events, pure events. When I say 'Alice becomes larger,' I mean that she becomes larger than she was. By the same token, however, she becomes smaller than she is now.

66

Certainly, she is not bigger and smaller at the same time. She is larger now; she was

smaller before. But it is at the same moment that one becomes larger than one was and

smaller than one becomes. This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is

to elude the present.[13]

The final sentence here is enough to show that Deleuze sees the event as not conforming to a

certain aspect of linear temporality, but what exactly that means is not so clear. Imagine, then,

that at 4:00, Alice grows—at 3:59, she was a certain small size, at 4:00 she changed until at 4:01,

she was certain different, larger size. In imagining these times, one imagines a process of growth,

but where is the *event* of Alice's growing, the event of her becoming larger? The commonsense

answer would be that the event of Alice's becoming larger can be located right at 4:00; that is,

after all, when she changed. But at 4:00, a lot more was going on. When 4:01-Alice was bigger,

something about 3:59-Alice changed. 3:59-Alice is now smaller—that Alice became smaller by

comparison to the 4:01 Alice that did not exist a moment ago. So when 4:00 Alice becomes

larger, 3:59 Alice becomes smaller. It seems, then, that something in the past has changed due to

what has come to happen. But this is not some sort of backward causality in which something

time-travels into the past, effecting a change there. Rather, Deleuze seems to be saying here,—

and the logic of the example leads to the same conclusion—that Alice's becoming larger seems

to happen with a 'simultaneity' both in the past, present, and future. It happens at 3:59, 4:00, and

4:01, but does not happen completely at either one of those times. Alice's becoming larger

happens to all three versions of Alice at once. The commonsense view, which would locate the

event of Alice's becoming larger at one particular point in time actually turns out to be wrong

since, as the passage says, the event 'eludes' the present.[14] The commonsense attempt to 'pin

down' the event in the present overlooks its other dimensions. So, it is clear that the event

escapes or eludes linear temporality, and what this means is that the clean division of entities into those that are in the past, those that are in the present, and those that are in the future does not apply to events, but instead seems to break down. This is enough to show the first point above.

And already, it starts to appear that Deleuze distinguishes between the 'pure' event of becoming larger and the moment where the state of affairs changes, which is what would usually be referred to as an event. The distinction actually goes farther. Deleuze warns that "*the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs.*"[15] Deleuze italicizes the warning here, though he repeats it in less emphatic form in a number of places. The point seems to be that not only is the event, properly speaking, different from the moment of change usually called 'an event', but also that the event is actually ontologically distinct from the state of affairs—the arrangement of bodies in a situation—wherein it seems to take place.[16]

At times, Deleuze seems to draw the distinction between an event and the state of affairs wherein it takes place in a quite radical and, indeed, classical or traditional way. He says of it, for instance, that

> The distinction however is not between two sorts of events; rather, it is between the event, which is ideal by nature, and its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs. The distinction is between *event* and *accident*. Events are ideational singularities which communicate in one and the same Event. They have therefore an eternal truth, and their time is never the present which realizes them and makes them exist.[17]

Here, events and their happening in states of affairs are described in extremely opposed ways. The former are ideal, eternal, and separate from usual modes of existence, while the latter are spatio-temporal.

Indeed, describing events as ideal, eternal, and separable from spatio-temporal existence would seem to place them in a position transcendent to the situations wherein they occur. This would be to think of events in the same way that a standard reading of Plato has him think the Forms of concepts such as Justice, Beauty, and the like. Thus, Deleuze would seem to display a certain transcendent, Platonic tendency in his thinking. Were this true, it would be a major problem for, as was suggested above, Deleuze's conception of ethics aims to affirm immanence and avoid any moral invocation of the transcendent.

However, the worry that there are traces of transcendence in Deleuze's view of the event does not hold, for Deleuze also emphasizes the inseparability of the event from concrete states of affairs and their changes. In the later work *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write about the relation between states of affairs and the event rather differently, stating that the event is

> the part that eludes its own actualization in everything that happens. The event is not the state of affairs. It is actualized in a state of affairs, in a body, in a lived, but it has a shadowy and secret part that is continually subtracted from or added to its actualization: in contrast with the state of affairs, it neither begins nor ends but has gained or kept the infinite movement to which it gives consistency. It is the virtual that is distinct from the actual, but a virtual that is no longer chaotic, that has become consistent or real on the plane of immanence that wrests it from the chaos—it is a virtual that is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract. The event might seem to be transcendent because it surveys the state of affairs, but it is pure immanence that gives it the capacity to survey itself by itself and on the plane. What is transcendent, transdescendent, is the state of affairs in which the event is actualized. But, even in this state of affairs, the event is pure

immanence of what is not actualized or of what remains indifferent to actualization, since

its reality does not depend upon it. The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure

reserve.[18]

Deleuze's earlier point that the event should not be confused with the state of affairs in which it

is actualized can easily be recognized in this passage. But here, this distinction is given an

immanent inflection. Deleuze does use the language of immateriality and incorporeality, saying

that the reality of the event does not depend on the state of affairs, but other parts of the passage

suggest the limited way in which this is to be understood. Deleuze describes the event as 'virtual,'

that is, as real, but not actual, and ideal, but not abstract.

What does this mean? Consider as an example the 'virtual' reality created by computing

technologies. The informational environments in which these 'virtual' realities consist are clearly

not actual—the trees, mountains, or other objects that appear before me in this virtual reality are

not actually there materially (I could not cut down the tree, or climb the mountain). But it is also

clear that this virtual environment is real in some sense, for I can interact with it, comport myself

toward it and within it, learn things from it that hold in actuality, and so on. Likewise, the virtual

environment does not itself consist of arrangements of matter, and as such is ideal. At the same

time, though, this virtual environment is perfectly concrete—it is *this specific* scene of trees and

mountains, rather than any tree and mountain scene in general. In this way, the virtual scene that

I experience is both distinct from the states of affairs that produce it (the hardware of the

computer I'm using), but also inseparable from it. Likewise, the scene is not transcendent to the

state of affairs that produces it, for it is not in any way above or beyond it. The verticality that

characterizes transcendence is absent in this situation.

That a virtuality has the peculiar features just described suggests that when Deleuze calls the event a virtuality, he is indicating the ways in which the event is distinct yet inseparable from the states of affairs with which it is associated, and that it does not have a relationship of transcendence to those states of affairs. Indeed, he writes with Guattari that

> the event is not only made up from inseparable variations, it is itself inseparable from the states of affairs, bodies, and lived reality in which it is actualized or brought about. But we can also say the converse: the state of affairs is no more separable from the event that nonetheless goes beyond its actualization in every respect.[19]

So, even more strongly than before, it seems that states of affairs and events incarnated within them display a mutual inseparability, despite their distinctness.

Two conclusions follow. First, point 2) above seems supported by the textual evidence. And further, the worry about a Platonic tendency in Deleuze's way of thinking the event should be lessened. A Platonic Form—Truth, Justice, Virtue, and the like—need not have the features of a virtuality. A Form, rather, is a) actual (for it exists more fully than even the material objects one would intuitively call actual), b) abstract (for it is not *this* Truth or Justice, but Truth or Justice in general and 'as such'), and c) transcendent (for it exists outside of states of affairs and makes them possible).

Point 3) above follows relatively directly from what has been said so far. Already, Deleuze wrote of an event as a 'becoming larger' or as a 'to become larger.' So, it seems that for a given change in a state of affairs, the event is the 'to X' that is becoming incarnated in that state of affairs, rather than the change itself. And, given points 1) and 2), this makes sense. If the event is distinct from the states of affairs in which it is incarnated, and if it eludes presentistic temporality, then it cannot be identical to the change itself: the change itself is a moment in

71

which the state of affairs is altered, and so is not distinct from that state of affairs and does not elude presentistic temporality. The event, rather, is that which is happening when something changes.

Given this, it also seems that the event is not exhausted or fully incarnated by any of the changes in states of affairs. Consider once again the example of Alice's becoming larger. At the level of states of affairs, Alice does indeed change sizes from a smaller to a larger size. But the same could be said of many other items. My waistline (sadly), my bank account (happily), or the hole I'm digging could also change from a smaller to a larger size. There is nothing about Alice's incarnating a ' to become larger' that somehow makes impossible a 'to become larger' being incarnated by other beings in other states of affairs. Alice's growth, then, does not fully or exhaustively incarnate 'to become larger' so that it has been incarnated perfectly, once and for all, or never again. Put differently, the event has a certain inexhaustibility on Deleuze's view.[20]

When Deleuze writes, in the passage from page 59, about willing, resenting, or releasing the event, what he means by 'event' is a haecceity with the three characteristic features revealed by the texts and examples just analyzed. But, the passage from page 59 has still not yet been fully interpreted, for it is not yet clear what ethics or ethology has to say about our comportment toward the event.

Counter-Actualization

What does it mean to will and release the event or to be 'not unworthy of what happens to us?' Answering these questions requires an understanding of Deleuze's concept of 'counter-actualization'. The argument of this section of the paper is that counter-actualization—and, therefore, willing and releasing the event and not being unworthy—consists in entering to a

mode of being which comports itself toward the event in such a way that it is 'un-confused' with the changes in states of affairs with which it is associated.

Consider, first, a passage in which Deleuze describes the 'free man' as one who:

grasps the event, and does not allow it to be actualized as such without enacting, the actor, its counter-actualization. Only the free man, therefore, can comprehend all violence in a single act of violence, and every mortal event *in a single Event* which no longer makes room for the accident, and which denounces and removes the power of *ressentiment* within the individual as well as the power of oppression within society. Only by spreading *ressentiment* the tyrant forms allies, namely slaves and servants. The revolutionary alone is free from the *ressentiment*, by means of which one always participates in, and profits by, an oppressive order. *One and the same Event?* Mixture which extracts and purifies, or measures everything at an instant without mixture, instead of mixing everything together.[21]

What Deleuze is suggesting here is that the free man—the person whose mode of being meets the immanent criteria of ethology—is one whose mode of being does not resent the event, but rather one who 'counter-actualizes' it, 'extracting' or 'purifying' it. Since this way of being no longer makes room for the 'accident'—the change in states of affairs—it would seem that counter-actualization is defined by its attitude toward the event as a haecceity.

Since an event is actualized (though not exhausted!) by the associated change in states of affairs, the term 'counter-actualization' immediately suggests a process which reverses or 'counters' the process of actualization. Though this description is true enough, it is also rather general. What specifically is counter-actualization?

The most concrete sense of counter-actualization can be found when Deleuze writes

The eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh. But each time we must double this painful actualization by a counter-actualization which limits, moves, and transfigures it. …to be the mime of *what effectively occurs*, to double the actualization with counter-actualization, the identification with a distance, like the true actor and dancer, is to give to the truth of the event the only chance of not being confused with its inevitable actualization....To the extent that the pure event is each time imprisoned forever in its actualization, counter-actualization liberates it, always for other times. We can not give up the hope that the effects of drugs and alcohol (their 'revelations') will be able to be relived and recovered for their own sake at the surface of the world, independently of the use of those substances…[22]

Happily, one can find here both a more specific description of what counter-actualization is, and is not, as well as some examples of it. Indeed, the examples can help expose the meaning of the concept more generally. When a person ingests a drug, say a hallucinogen like LSD or mescaline, she is altering states of affairs. In particular, she is altering the part of a state of affairs formed by the functioning of her brain. A likely consequence of altering states of affairs in that specific way is that events which would not normally actualize themselves in her situation come to actualize themselves. The experience of those actualizations is what Deleuze here refers to as 'revelations'. But, as was suggested earlier, because the event that actualizes or incarnates itself in the drugged state of affairs is not totally exhausted by that single occurrence, it remains possible that it actualize or incarnate itself again in other states of affairs. However, if the drug user simply forgets, dismisses, hates, or otherwise ignores or despises the drug experience's revelation, the likelihood that the same type of event will incarnate itself in some other state of

74

affairs in which she is not using drugs may be radically reduced. This would *not* be a counter-actualizing mode of comportment toward the event.

But, if the drug user recognizes, feels, or senses the event which incarnated itself in her state of affairs during the drug experience and does not forget or dismiss it, her openness will make it more likely that the same event might incarnate itself in her state of affairs again, without her even needing to ingest the drug. This would be counter-actualizing; the event is now 'liberated' to happen again.

What the example and its accompanying description suggest, then, is that counter-actualization involves comporting oneself, in one's actions and way of life, in such a way that the inexhaustibility of the event is highlighted, shown, or acknowledged in a particularly intense and explicit fashion.[23] So when, in the passage on page 59, Deleuze talks about willing and releasing the event, he is indicating that it is a counter-actualizing mode of being which meets the immanent criteria of ethics. It is by taking up that mode of being that we become not unworthy of what happens to us.

The Art of Mime

One may still have the sense that the counter-actualizing mode of being has not yet been described concretely enough. But in the passage just cited, Deleuze also mentions being the mime, actor, or dancer of what occurs. These images, especially that of the mime, will provide the concrete sense of counter-actualization, or of willing and releasing the event. The argument of this section, in other words, is that given what Deleuze's conception of ethics and his view of the event imply about the best ethical comportment toward the event, the mime is the best image or motif for capturing that comportment.

That Deleuze does in fact present mime as an image for his ethics is easy to show. Explaining why exactly he does so is the greater challenge. In addition to the passage cited earlier, in *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze writes with Guattari that

> The event is actualized or effectuated whenever it is inserted, willy-nilly, into states of affairs; but it is *counter-effectuated* whenever it is abstracted from states of affairs so as to isolate its concept. There is a dignity of the event that has always been inseparable from philosophy as *amor fati*: being equal to the event, or becoming the offspring of one's own events—'my wound existed before me; I was born to embody it'. I was born to embody it as event because I was able to disembody it as state of affairs or lived situation. There is no other ethic than the *amor fati* of philosophy. Philosophy is always meanwhile. Mallarmé, who counter-effectuated the event, called it Mime because it side-steps the state of affairs and 'confines itself to perpetual allusion without breaking the ice.' Such a mime neither reproduces the state of affairs nor imitates the lived; it does not give an image but constructs the concept. It does not look for the function of what happens but extracts the event from it, or that part that does not let itself be actualized, the reality of the concept.[24]

Here, 'counter-effectuate' translates the same French phrase as 'counter-actualize,' and the tie between counter-actualization and mime is just as observable here as it was before. Though it may be unclear why, Deleuze does seem to think that the mime's mode of being is a counter-actualizing one. The reasoning behind the thought is in fact quite solid, if somewhat counter-intuitive.

A commonsense view of mime as art form would be that mime is the silent bodily representation of everyday states, emotions, situations, and activities. Mime, on this view, is both

a representational art and an art that fundamentally concerns states of affairs. On the face of it, the most famous paradigm cases of mime performance seem to fit this view. Marcel Marceau is unarguably the most famous mime in recent history, and his "Walking Against the Wind" and other instances of what Marceau calls 'style pantomimes' would appear to be clear cases of representational performance. Marceau's on-stage movements picture, mirror, or have a one-to-one correspondence with the off-stage movements of a person who is 'really' trying to walk against the wind. Further, the very word 'mime' is rooted in the word 'mimesis,' which is usually taken to mean 'to imitate', so that the etymology of the term 'mime' itself suggests the representational nature of the art form.

However, Deleuze's point that the mime "neither reproduces the state of affairs nor imitates the lived; it does not give an image but constructs the concept" is actually supported by a closer examination of the art form.

Consider again the example of Marceau's "Walking in the Wind." To actually have to move through a strong wind is to incarnate an event: a 'to be caught in the wind' is being actualized in the state of affairs that includes one's body. When Marceau performs his piece, the audience is able to witness an incarnation of the 'to be caught in the wind' in the unusual state of affairs constituted by the performance space. The performance thus shows to the audience that the 'original' incarnation of that event was not the only possible incarnation. Because the audience is shown that 'to be caught in the wind' can be actualized in circumstances other than those in which a storm is raging, the effect of the mime's action is to highlight the way in which the event is not exhausted by any of its incarnations in states of affairs and thereby to prevent the confusion between the event and the accident—to 'extract' the event. That highlighting or

77

preventing is exactly what counter-actualization is. It follows that the mime is an image of one who counter-actualizes the event.

Now, it is indeed true that the mime has to perform certain actions—taking steps, struggling to remain upright, etc.—which correspond to the movements of a person actually walking in a wind. The claim is only that this is the means to the end of counter-actualizing an event, and not itself the end of the artistic practice.

The mime, then, is a type of artist who relates to the haecceity called 'the event' in the way that meets the immanent criteria of ethology. As such, the mime is a concrete illustration or image of how counter-actualization could look in practice.[25] This figure, one could say, *incarnates* Deleuze's ethics of the event.

Conclusion

The overall argument of this paper has been fourfold. First, it was claimed that ethics or ethology, as opposed to morality, is an analysis of modes of existence in their comportment to haecceities that is oriented away from the transcendent. Second, it was claimed that the event is a particular type of haecceity characterized by a few distinct features. Third, it was claimed that the type of comportment toward the event that best meets ethological criteria is a 'counter-actualizing' mode, the main features of which were outlined. And finally, it was argued that the mime is the concrete embodiment of that mode.

What, then, should one really understand when returning to and re-reading the first passage on page 59? The sense of that passage can be restated in this way. If we were to employ ethological analysis instead of moral judgment to cope with what happens to us, then we would not call certain events evil and resent them or call others good and think that we had earned or

deserve them. Instead, we would ask ourselves how our mode of being comports itself toward

the haecceity that had incarnated itself in our situation. We would search for courses of action

which do not attempt to escape the possibility of a new incarnation of the event, but instead ones

which actively acknowledge it. We would be doing in our lives the same sort of activity which

the mime does in a theatrical context.

NOTES

1. Gilles Deleuze. The Logic of Sense. Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. Columbia University Press, 1990. Pg. 149. Cited as 'LS' in following notes.

2. See Gilles Deleuze. Spinoza: Practical Philosophy. Trans. Robert Hurley. City Lights Books, 1988. And Nietzsche and Philosophy. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. Columbia University Press, 2006. I will cite the first of these as 'SPP' in later notes.

3. SPP, pg. 23.

4. See Friedrich Nietzsche. Beyond Good and Evil.

5. Deleuze is fond of quoting Nietzsche's line that "beyond Good and Evil does not mean beyond good and bad," quoting it on pg. 72 of *What is Philosophy?*.

6. www.webdeleuze.com. Course of 12-21-1980 entitled "Ontology--Ethics." Trans. Simon Duffy.

7. Gilles Deleuze. "Life as a Work of Art." in Negotiations: 1972-1990. Trans. Martin Joughin. Columbia University Press, 1995. Pg. 100.

8. It deserves to be said that Spinoza himself adopted the idea from Medieval Aristotelians.

9. Spinoza. Ethics. Trans. Edwin Curley. Penguin, 1996. Pg. 1. For a translation with 'modification', see Spinoza. Ethics. Trans. R.H.M. Elwes. Barnes and Noble, 2005. Pg. 39.

10. Gilles Deleuze. "Response to a Question on the Subject." in Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995. Trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina. David Lapoujade (ed). Semiotext(e), 2007. Pg. 355. And in "On A Thousand Pleateaus." in Negotiations. Pg. 26, we read " What we're interested in, you see, are modes of individuation beyond those of things, persons, or subjects: the individuation, say, of a time of day, or a region, a climate, a river or wind, of an event. And maybe it's a mistake to believe in the existence of things, persons, or subjects. The title *A Thousand Plateaus* refers to these individuations that don't individuate persons or things."

11. Gilles Deleuze. "Immanence: A Life" in Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life. Trans. Anne Boyman. Zone Books, 2001. Pg. 29.

12. SPP, 31.

13. LS, pg. 1. Translation altered slightly.

14. "to elude" is "d'esquiver", to dodge, sidestep, or sneak away. Again, a word that connotes slipping out of something. The event slips out of or leaks out of the present.

15. LS, 22.

16. These considerations add weight to the consensus in the secondary literature on Deleuze that, as Bryant puts it, "the event is a *bifurcated* structure…" which involves relations between states of affairs and idealities or virtualities. For examples of that consensus, see 1) André Pierre Colombat. "November 4, 1995: Deleuze's Death as an Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996. Pg. 240; 2) Paul Patton. "Concept and Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996; 3) Stephen Hawkins. "Love and Event in Deleuze." *De Philosophia*, vol. 18, no. 2. 2005; 4) Levi R. Bryant. "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics Without Αρχή." in Deleuze and Ethics. Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (eds). Edinburgh University Press, 2011. The quote above from Bryant comes from pg. 33 of that article.

17. LS, 53. Similarly, at LS 62-4, we read: "Briefly, *there are two times, one of which is composed only of interlocking presents; the other is constantly decomposed into elongated pasts and futures*. ...This Aion, being straight line and empty form, is the time of events-effects. Just as the present measures the temporal realization of the event--that is, its incarnation in the depth of acting bodies and its incorporation in a state of affairs--the event in turn, in its impassibility and impenetrability, has no present. It rather retreats and advances in two directions at once, being the perpetual object of a double question: What is going to happen? What has just happened? The agonizing aspect of the pure event is that it is always and at the same time something which has just happened and something about to happen; never something which is happening....the living present, happens and brings about the event. But the event nonetheless retains an eternal truth upon the line of Aion, which divides it eternally into a proximate past and an imminent future. The Aion endlessly subdivides the event and pushes away past as well as future, without ever rendering them less urgent. The event is that no one ever dies, but has always just died or is always going to die, in the empty present of the Aion, that is, in eternity....Each event is the smallest time, smaller than the minimum of continuous thinkable time, because it is divided into proximate past and imminent future. But it is also the longest time, longer than the maximum of continuous thinkable time, because it is endlessly subdivided by the Aion which renders it equal to its own unlimited line. Let us understand that each event in the Aion is smaller than the smallest subdivision of Chronos; but it is also greater than the greatest divisor of Chronos, namely, the entire cycle. Through its unlimited subdivision in both directions at once, each event runs along the entire Aion and becomes coextensive

to its straight line in both directions. Do we then sense the approach of an eternal return no longer having anything to do with the cycle, or indeed of the entrance to a labyrinth, all the more terrible since it is the labyrinth of the unique line, straight and without thickness? The Aion is the straight line traced by the aleatory point. The singular points of each event are distributed over this line, always in relation to the aleatory point which subdivides them ad infinitum, and it causes them to communicate with each other, as it extends and stretches them out over the entire line. Each event is adequate to the entire Aion; each event communicates with all others, and they all form one and the same Event, an event of the Aion where they have an eternal truth. This is the secret of the event: it exists on the line of the Aion, and yet it does not fill it. How could an incorporeal fill up the incorporeal or the impenetrable fill up the impenetrable? Only bodies penetrate each other, only Chronos is filled up with states of affairs and the movements of the objects that it measures. But being an empty and unfolded form of time, the Aion subdivides ad infinitum that which haunts it without ever inhabiting it--the Event for all events."

18. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. <u>What is Philosophy?</u> Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. Columbia University Press, 1994. Pg. 156. I will cite this as 'WIP' in later notes.

19. WIP, 159.

20. None of the Deleuze scholars mentioned in the Introduction put much emphasis on this feature of events. And though none of the features they do focus upon—a relation to sense (Buchanan), the event's chance nature (Sellars), its role in moments of disequilibrium or disorientation (Bogue), and its problematic and agential nature (Bryant)—are inconsistent with it, the pictures of counteractualization that derive from their accounts of the event do go astray by failing to tie counteractualization to inexhaustibility. This point is discussed in note 23 below. From the authors mentioned, see: 1) Ian Buchanan. <u>Deleuzism: A Metacommentary.</u> Edinburgh University Press, 2000; 2) John Sellars. "An Ethics of the Event: Deleuze's Stoicism." *Angelaki,* vol. 11, no. 3. 2006; 3) Ronald Bogue. <u>Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics.</u> Ashgate, 2007; 4) Levi R. Bryant. "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics Without Αρχή." in<u> Deleuze and Ethics.</u> Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (eds). Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

21. LS, 152-153.

22. LS, 161.

23. Generally, then, Patton, Buchanan, Hawkins, and Bryant fail to fully capture what counteractualization is for Deleuze, since none of these commentators emphasize the way in which counteractualization involves a relation to the event specifically *in its inexhaustibility*.

More specifically, Patton is not wrong that counteractualization can involve becoming aware of processes in which I am engaged, but there is more to counteractualization than that. I can become aware of the processes in which I am engaged and then go on to try to escape or repress them, and this would not be a counteractualizing mode of existence.

A similar criticism can be made of Hawkins. Though Hawkins is correct to say that counteractualization involves recognizing that an event has occurred or is occurring, this does not go far enough: one can recognize an event without counteractualizing it. Indeed, this is exactly what happens in cases where one denies or rejects the event that has occurred.

Bryant's point that counteractualization crucially involves attributing agency to an event seems incorrect as well. To the extent that agency is a figure of subjectivity (i.e., something is an agent to the extent to which it acts in the way we think of subjects as acting), then events have no agency: they do not act, they happen. Bryant may only intend to say that events have causal powers and produce effects, but the distinction between states of affairs and events undermines this point, for it is only states of affairs in which causal relationships operate.

Similarly, Buchanan's claim that counteractualization requires actively attributing a specific sense to an event need not hold. Certainly, one might need to know what type of event one is dealing with—a 'to love', a 'to fall', and so on—but this does not involve attributing any specific meaning to the event.

It should be said, though, that even though Bogue's reading of counteractualization as involving a reconfiguration of concepts and practices does not emphasize the inexhaustibility of the event, it does properly capture the way in which counteractualization is a lived mode of comportment.

For these interpretations of counteractualization, see 1) Ian Buchanan. <u>Deleuzism: A Metacommentary.</u> Edinburgh University Press, 2000; 2) Stephen Hawkins. "Love and Event in Deleuze." *De Philosophia*, vol. 18, no. 2. 2005; 3) Ronald Bogue. <u>Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics.</u> Ashgate, 2007; 4) Levi R. Bryant. "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics Without Αρχή." in<u> Deleuze and Ethics.</u> Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (eds). Edinburgh University Press, 2011; 5) Paul Patton. "Concept and Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996.

24. WIP, 157-60. Deleuze here quotes Joe Bousquet and alludes to Mallarmé's "Mimesis." See his <u>Divagations</u>. Trans. Barbara Johnson. Belknap, 2007.

25. I suggested on page 30 of the Introduction that Patton, Bornaetxea, Hawkins, and Bryant each link Deleuze's notion of the event closely to other concepts and images in his work. Since none of them link the event to the mime, they each leave out one of the most crucial links. However, this does not by itself mean that they are wrong to link the event to the other concepts and images that they do (philosophy itself, knowledge, action, and problem, respectively). See 1) Paul Patton. "Concept and Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996; 2) Fito Rodriguez Bornaetxea. "L'éthique de l'événement: être deleuzien dans la vie philosophique. L'Ombre de Hegel et de Descartes dans la memoire de Gilles Deleuze." in *Hegel-Jahrbuch 1998: Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*; 3) Stephen Hawkins. "Love and Event in Deleuze." *De Philosophia*, vol. 18, no. 2. 2005; 4) Levi R. Bryant. "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics Without Αρχή." in <u>Deleuze and Ethics.</u> Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (eds). Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

CHAPTER III

DERRIDA'S ETHICS OF THE EVENT: DECONSTRUCTION AND TURBULENCE

Introduction

The modern English "turbulence" and its identically spelled modern French cognate both

stem from the Greek verb "τυρβάζω," which means "to trouble" or "to stir up" or "to be

agitated." The Greek eventually entered into the late Latin as "turba," which can mean both "a

crowd, mob, or multitude," as well as an "uproar, disturbance, turmoil, or commotion," after

which it was taken up into older forms of both French and English, eventually gaining its modern

meaning of the unstable motion of a fluid medium. The most common instance of turbulence is

probably the wake turbulence produced when a passing vehicle disturbs the air around it, causing

a "suction" effect which can draw other vehicles toward it. This instance provides an image of

the sense in which the term will be used in what follows. Turbulence is a situation in which one

item is caught up or drawn after a second one creates distortions or disturbances as it moves

passed the first.

Derrida himself has used this and related concepts and imagery at certain points in his

work. In discussing the way he imagines readers of his writing, Derrida said "Perhaps, but in an

always ambiguous manner, you hope to *pull others into it,* or rather to discover or invent others

who do not yet exist, but who nevertheless know something about it already, know more about it

than you do."[1] Though the phrase "or rather" suggests a qualification or better option, this

sentence employs, even if provisionally, an image of the drawing movement associated with

turbulence. And in talking about the deconstruction of the subject, Derrida said that "In order to

recast, if not rigorously re-found a discourse on the 'subject,' on that which will hold the place (or replace the place) of the subject (of law, of morality, of politics—so many categories caught up in the same turbulence), one has to go through the experience of a deconstruction."[2] The suggestion here, made through the use of the same word, seems to be that questioning the concept "subject" also throws into question other associated concepts—those like law or morality which are founded on or linked to an understanding of subjectivity. Such brief references indicate that the notion of turbulence is at least not completely foreign to Derrida's work and, in fact, turbulence might be more central than these quotes suggest.

Derrida's ethics of the event is encountered in the way in which his texts constitute sites which draw one into movements of ethical questioning about one's relation to events. This chapter uncovers those movements by re-performing them and employs the figure of turbulence to limn their contour.

For Derrida, the event is radically inappropriable by the structures with which we would usually comprehend, understand, explain, experience, or control something. To show or display the ways in which Derrida's writing itself shows or displays the event's withdrawal from appropriation, it is not enough to merely deductively argue with or about his claims, even though such explicit argumentation is necessary. Rather, one must undergo and thereby repeat the self-effacing and self-questioning movements of being drawn after the event which Derrida's texts themselves embody. One must allow oneself to be "pulled" into or caught up in them. It is as if one has to demonstrate that a strong wind blows in a certain place and must do so by letting oneself be blown over.

To this end, the chapter begins with the seemingly straightforward question 'what is deconstruction?' By critically pressuring and attending to themes in passages where Derrida

appears to answer this question (Section I), its connection to the event becomes evident. Attempting the same for Derrida's statements about the event (Section II) leads to a turbulence in which the subversion of our thinking about the event indicates its inappropriability. Making the same attempt once again on what appears to be a concise and simple statement on Derrida's part of an ethical principle concerning events (Section III) initiates the same movement. The chapter ends by looking back at the territory traversed to describe what the turbulences undergone throughout the course of the chapter suggest about the characteristics of Derrida's ethics of the event.

Deconstruction

'What is deconstruction?' This is a simple question; an easy question. One should, no doubt, already have a feeling that it is *too* simple and easy. But if that feeling is correct, it should stand after an examination of the texts themselves and show itself to grow naturally from them. How, then, would one try to answer this question?

Derrida's work extends and intensifies the questioning of the history of Western metaphysics performed in the Nietzsche's and Heidegger's thinking. As he puts it in one of his earliest works,

> *within* the metaphysics of presence, within philosophy as knowledge of the presence of the object, as the being-before-oneself of knowledge in consciousness, we believe, quite simply and literally, in absolute knowledge as the *closure* if not the end of history. And we believe *that such a closure has taken place*. The history of being as presence, as self-presence in absolute knowledge, as consciousness of self in the infinity of *parousia*—this history is closed...[3]

85

The phrase "closure if not end" indicates that the closure of a history does not mean that it is simply over, done with, and no longer powerfully in operation. As Nietzsche and Heidegger suggested,[4] and as Derrida agrees, it is not true that thinking can easily move on without any influence or support from the metaphysics of presence, that the move "'outside philosophy'" has been made "long ago with cavalier ease".[5] Indeed, Derrida goes perhaps farther than Nietzsche or Heidegger, saying that "Of course, it is not a question of 'rejecting' these notions; they are necessary and, at least at present, nothing is conceivable for us without them."[6] That thinking will be haunted by the metaphysics of presence, as this comment suggests, creates the strategic and philosophical problem of how to respond to the closure of a metaphysics of presence which cannot be simply escaped.

'Deconstruction,' if understood as a type of reading and writing, is Derrida's answer. He writes that

> The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work.[7]

The passage suggests that deconstruction is decidedly different than trying to naively leap outside of the metaphysics of presence. Since the structures of that metaphysics cannot be gotten "outside" of, the path of thinking, reading, and writing can only be to remain "inside" those

structures in a way which does not simply accept them or leave them as they are, but which subverts them.

This characterization of deconstruction is not the only one Derrida has given. Other texts contain other descriptions—"definitions" is not quite right—of deconstruction, and the investigation of two such texts will initiate the turbulent movement with which this chapter will be concerned.

In the first passage, Derrida writes:

If every concept shelters or lets itself be haunted by another concept, by an other than itself that is no longer even its other, then no concept remains in place any longer. This is about the concept of concept, and this is why I suggested earlier that hospitality, the experience, the apprehension, the exercise of impossible hospitality, of hospitality as the possibility of impossibility (to receive another guest whom I am incapable of welcoming, to become capable of that which I am incapable of)—this is the exemplary experience of deconstruction itself, when it is or does what it has to do or be, that is, the experience of the impossible. Hospitality—this is a name or an example of deconstruction. Of the deconstruction of the concept, of the concept of concept, as well as of its construction, its home, its 'at home.' Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than 'its other,' to an other who is beyond any 'its other.'[8]

This first passage elaborates how deconstructive reading and writing subversively inhabits the structures of metaphysics. Any given metaphysical concept contains "within" it, so to speak, some other concept by which it is both made possible and made impossible. The one concept could not be what it is without the other, but that other concept also prevents the first from being

what it is by throwing into question its self-contained identity. Deconstruction will let appear that other concept, showing how this other concept—which is "outside" the given metaphysical concept—is also "inside" it. The image of the home in this passage is a helpful heuristic. Imagining a concept as a house, one would seem to have a solid structure with clear boundaries between an inside and an outside. Walls, thresholds, and so forth, delineate the border between the two spaces. But deconstruction lives or dwells in the house in such a way that it comes to appear that there is already something of the outside inside the house —it is as if one opened a closet door and found the sky. The house has already welcomed the guest.

In the second passage, Derrida writes:

Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs itself. It can be deconstructed. (Ça se déconstruit)[9]

Interestingly, these sentences construe deconstruction not, or not only, as the name of a way of reading and writing or a way of inhabiting metaphysical structures, but as something that *happens*. Yet this happening is not made to happen by any of the things to which one would usually point out as a source or cause (consciousness, subject, certain historical arrangements, and the like).

On the face of it, it is not clear how Derrida means these two descriptions of deconstruction to fit together, or even whether they are consistent with each other. The next task is to ask how the two descriptions might indeed be consistent with each other, as well as to attend to some of the themes in them.

The first theme is that of ethics, already present in the first passage. Heidegger had written in the "Letter on Humanism" that

If the name 'ethics,' in keeping with the basic meaning of the word *ethos*, should   now

say that 'ethics' ponders the abode of man, then that thinking which thinks the truth of

Being as the primordial element of man, as one who eksists, is in itself the original

ethics.[10]

Though he seems to turn away from this possibility later on in the "Letter,"[11] Heidegger still

highlights the association between ethics and abode or dwelling. And the passage from Derrida

invokes the latter notions directly, saying at once that deconstruction involves inhabiting or

dwelling in the structures of the metaphysics of presence; that deconstruction involves

welcoming the other into the home; and that this subverts the at-home itself. Given an

association between ethics and dwelling, the implications would be that deconstruction is a mode

of dwelling, so is itself an *ethos*; that deconstruction involves an ethical relationship with the

other (one of welcoming and hospitality); and deconstruction subverts *ethos* itself. These points

suggest that deconstruction is somehow both an ethical practice—an "enterprise" whose

"movements" themselves constitute or contribute to an *ethos* with a certain relationship toward

the other—and a "subversion" of ethics. But the problem is that if deconstruction is itself an

ethos or way of pondering the abode, then it is itself ethics. It would be both an ethics and a

subversion of ethics.

Further, there is the second passage cited above which describes deconstruction as an

impersonal event that takes place, not as a way of inhabiting metaphysical structures. How can

deconstruction be all of these at once? Do these different descriptions apply to different aspects

or layers of deconstruction, or to different temporal stages of its movements? In other words, is

there some simple distinction that resolves the seeming contradiction? Or must the way in which

deconstruction is at once ethics, the subversion of ethics, and an event be explained in some

other way? To respond to these questions, the next pages of this section look more deeply into the ways Derrida thinks ethics, turning more directly to the notion of event in section II. But notice what is already happening: asking after deconstruction initiates a pull toward the two other concepts.

In any case, it is important to articulate more fully the specific sense in which deconstruction is a subversion of ethics before the questions at issue can be answered. To this end, recall Kant's claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that "All the interests of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions: 1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope?"[12] The second of these questions is the ethical question which, in Kant's work, is answered by the subject's reflectively legislating to itself its obligations or responsibilities.[13]

At one point, Derrida describes what he calls three "minimal determinations" concerning ethics and politics in this way:

> (1) ethics and politics command an action—to use this old word—an *act* and an answer to the question, 'What should I do?' 'Ethics' and 'politics' have this in common. (2) They demand that the answer to this question be as thoughtful and responsible as possible, thus preceded by a questioning that constitutes an essential part to any ethical and political act. *A questioning without limit*...(3) The responsible decision must also and above all—and this is what I wanted to insist on—be made *with the utmost urgency*. And by urgency I mean the necessity of not waiting, or rather, the *impossibility of waiting* for the end of the reflection…[14]

To grasp the logic of this passage, imagine a person faced with some ethical crisis or moral dilemma trying to decide on a course of action. This person is asking "what should I do?," and

needs both to act and to carry through to the end the moral reflections and deliberations which would tell her how to act. That is, she needs both to act and to refrain from acting. Rather than describing a "Buridan's ass" situation of equal and opposite countervailing forces, the point seems to be that the structure of any situation in which a decision needs to be made implies contradictory necessities.

> Concerning urgency, Derrida adds that

> this structure is simultaneously the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of all responsibility. No responsibility is taken if at a given moment one could not decide *without knowing*, without knowledge, theoretical reflection, the *determinate* inquiry having encountered its limit or its suspension, its interruption....One must, in some way, arrive at a point at which one does not know what to decide for the decision to be made. Thus a certain undecidability...is the condition or the opening of a space for an ethical or political decision, and not the opposite...Conversely, the paradoxical condition of possibility of the decision, the urgency of the interruption is, in its very principle, an impossible condition, a condition of impossibility: there can be no ethical or political responsibility without time for reflection....Thus there can be no responsibility without a structure of deliberation being regulated by a double rule, theoretical and practical.[15]

In other words, the contradiction of the necessity both to wait and to not wait constitutes a limit situation which is at once the condition of possibility for a responsible decision (I cannot be responsible unless I encounter this situation) and its condition of impossibility (if I encounter this situation, it actually prevents me from going through the process of arriving at a responsible decision).

Now, these passages contain certain resonances with Kant's ethics. Derrida's first "minimal determination" of ethics is a reflection of Kant's second question from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. What's more, the central notion around which Derrida's thinking in the above passages revolves is that of responsibility or obligation, and in these passages the sense of those terms in play is same in which they are at play in Kantian "deontological" ethics. In short, it seems as though Derrida's starting point or concern is a Kantian way of thinking ethics.

And yet, Derrida does not appear to be simply endorsing or agreeing with Kant's ethical thought in its entirety, nor does he appear to be utterly rejecting it. Rather, in these passages Derrida is showing the constituting and de-constituting "outside" that lives on the "inside" of Kantian ethics. He is inhabiting Kantian ethics in a subversive fashion, neither endorsing nor rejecting it, but rather deconstructing it. Hence, the sense in which deconstruction is a subversion of ethics is that Kantian ethics is one of those structures of the metaphysics of presence which can be inhabited in the "certain way" that Derrida described.[16]

Still, there remains the inhabiting itself, the *ethos*. And Derrida explicitly rejected the idea that deconstruction involves nothing but the subversion of ethics, saying "deconstruction is far from being the amoral or unethical nihilism it is often presented as,"[17] and "deconstruction (we should once again remind those who do not want to read) is neither negative nor nihilistic...."[18] What, then, of deconstruction as an ethical affirmation?

Telling in this regard is Derrida's reply when asked if there is anything normative in his work. In the first part of a response, he answers in quite strong terms:

> Of course there is, there is nothing but that. But if you are asking me implicitly whether what I am saying there is normative in the ordinary sense of the term, I would have more trouble answering you. Why don't I particularly like this word 'normative' in this context?

92

> What I have just suggested about responsibility signals instead in the direction of a law, of an imperative injunction to which one must finally respond *without norm*, without a presently presentable normativity or normality, without anything that would finally be the object of knowledge, belonging to an order of being or value. I am not even sure that the concept of *duty*...can measure up to it.[19]

Here, Derrida agrees that there is "nothing but" normativity in his work, but not "in the ordinary sense of the term." In the ordinary sense of the term, normativity would be the presentation of principles, rules or models in terms of which actions and decisions can be justified. Moral exemplars, commandments, or imperatives would be normative in this sense. As earlier texts have indicated, Derrida understands action and decision in such a way that the very appeal to a norm would undermine the genuineness of a decision, for the decision would then be just the application of an established structure. So, the normativity Derrida invokes cannot be *this* kind of normativity. In other words, Derrida's work does not provide rules, models, or guidelines which one can algorithmically apply to decisions, logically deducing from deconstruction how to live a good life or how to act morally.

> But what other sense of normativity is there? In the rest of his response, he states
>
> No doubt one will be tempted to reply: From all these apparently negative or abstract propositions, it is difficult to deduce a politics, a morality, or a right. I think the opposite. If they economize on such doubts, questions, reservations, clauses of non-knowledge, aporias, and so forth, then politics, morality, and right (which I do not confuse here with justice) take assurance from and reassure themselves in illusion and good conscience— and are never far from being or from doing *something other* than morality, politics, and right.[19]

When Derrida here says that he thinks "the opposite" of the idea that it is difficult to deduce politics, morality, or right from his questioning and rethinking of responsibility. This could be taken as suggesting exactly what Derrida seemed to reject a moment earlier—that his work provides premises or models from which to deduce a system of moral rules. That this would read Derrida as simply going back on what he had just said or contradicting himself outright suggests interpreting his comment differently.

Later in the same interview, Derrida says:

As I said a moment ago, there is in fact no philosophy and no philosophy of philosophy that could be called deconstruction and that would deduce from itself a 'moral component.' But that does not mean that deconstructive experience is not a responsibility, even an ethico-political responsibility, or does not exercise or deploy any responsibility in itself. By questioning philosophy about its treatment of ethics, politics, the concept of responsibility, deconstruction orders itself I will not say on a still *higher* concept of responsibility...but on an exigency, which I believe is more *inflexible*, of response and responsibility. Without this exigency, in my view no ethico-political question has any chance of being opened up or awakened today. I will not go so far as to say that it is a matter there of a hyper-ethical or hyper-political 'radicalization,' or even ask (this would take us too far afield today) whether the words 'ethical' and 'political' are still the most appropriate ones to name this other exigency, gentle or inflexible, this exigency of the other that is precisely inflexible…[20]

This passage suggests a quite different sense of "normativity," one in which something is normative if it involves an experience of responsibility or of response to the call of an other. Such an experience or response deserves the name of "normativity" not because it limits action

94

or decision, but because it continually opens up ethical questions about actions and decisions. In this way, a body of work can be normative without implying a system of moral guidelines.[21]

This point has some important interpretive consequences. First, it provides an understanding of how Derrida's writing can be read as normative, but without it needing to imply a set of moral rules. In so doing, reading Derrida as saying something which he immediately takes back becomes unnecessary.

Second, it provides a sense of the way in which there is an ethical affirmation in deconstruction, for deconstruction can now appear as a process of reading and writing which is an extended response to the call of the other. The motivation or impulse which drives deconstructive work is a concern for the way in which usual ethical concepts and ways of thinking can do harm with a good conscience.

Taken together with the previous examination of the way in which deconstruction subverts Kantian deontology, it is now possible to see how deconstruction can involve both the subversion and affirmation of ethics. The kind of reading and writing called "deconstruction" is a process of affirmatively responding to the other. That response involves inhabiting the structures of metaphysics in such a way that the "outside" or other of those structures are let be (welcomed with hospitality) "inside" them, thus revealing both the constitutive conditions of the structure's identity and the conditions which undo its identity. One of the structures that the deconstructive process inhabits in this fashion is the way of ethical thinking associated with Kant. "Inside" this structure is located an aporetic notion of responsibility, in which a responsible decision is one made without norm and without knowledge.[22] This aporetic notion both makes possible more standard conceptions of responsibility but also calls them into question. Deconstruction's manner of dwelling within structures is an ethical response, but it is an ethical response which subverts

95

the structure within which it dwells. Deconstruction as a process or strategy involves an ethically responsive subversive dwelling inside certain ethical structures, and is thus both an *ethos* or manner of dwelling and a subversion of ethics.

This recalls the idea of deconstruction being something which happens without the involvement of a subject. For if, in Derrida's writing, one finds a subversion of ethical structures or concepts which is yet rooted in those structures or concepts themselves, then it is not from something simply "external" or opposed to those structures or concepts that their subversion arises. Rather, in the very manner described by Derrida in his statement that "It deconstructs itself," these ethical structures and concepts deconstruct themselves. Out of ethical structures like responsibility arise the occurrence of their own subversion. Deconstruction as a process of reading and writing does not make this happen or force it to happen, but provides the site wherein it can be experienced as happening.

At this point, it becomes necessary to discuss Derrida's descriptions of the event, for a certain tie between deconstruction and the event has already begun to appear. Once again, though, not all of Derrida's descriptions of the event are easy to square with each other, and many of them raise difficult problems on their own. Such a discussion is the task of the next section.

Derrida on Events

'What is the event?' As before, this seems to be a natural and simple question to which a detailed look at Derrida's texts would give an answer of the form 'the event is…' And there are points at which Derrida does seem to make statements of that form. But, thinking them

through—the task of this section—will bring to light the turbulent movements of the event and of Derrida's writing. This question is no simple one.

Still, it is right to begin with one of the passages in which Derrida seems to give a detailed description of the event. Derrida writes of the event that

> It is another name for that which, in what arrives, one can neither reduce nor deny (or only, if you prefer, what one cannot deny). It is another name for experience itself, which is always experience of the other. The event does not let itself be subsumed under any other concept, not even that of being. The 'il y a' or the 'let there be something rather than nothing' arises perhaps from the experience of the event, rather than from a thinking of being. The coming of the event is what cannot and should not be prevented; it is another name for the future itself. This does not mean that it is good—good in itself—for everything or anything to arrive; it is not that one should give up trying to prevent certain things from coming to pass (without which there would be no decision, no responsibility, ethics, or politics). But one should only ever oppose events that one thinks will block the future or that bring death with them: events that would put an end to the possibility of the event, to the affirmative opening to the coming of the other.[23]

The first half of this paragraph suggests two key points. First, that the event cannot be subsumed under any concept and, secondly, that the event is the irreducible or undeniable "in" what arrives.[24] Though more will need to be said about it later, the first point can, for the moment, be taken as a warning not to define the event as a species of some genus, an approach that might otherwise prove attractive. The second point is interesting, for it says, not that the event is what happens, what comes to happen, what is surprising, or the arrival of something, but that the event is something "in" what arrives. Derrida describes it as what can neither be reduced or denied, but

97

emphasizes the latter in the parenthetical comment. Now prima facie, what cannot be denied in what comes or happens is just the sheer happening or coming, the "that it is." No matter how hard one tries to avoid it or not to admit it, there has happened a vacation, a gunshot, a birth, the eating of a meal, or what have you. But this "that it is" would seem to do exactly what Derrida has warned against; namely, subsume the event under the concept of being by, in this case, saying that the event is the name of the sheer being of what happens. Such a result is troubling, for the second part of this passage indicates the ethical stakes involved.

Derrida says in the same interview

an event that remains an event is an arrival, an arrivance: it surprises and belatedly resists analysis. With the birth of a child—the first figure of the absolute arrivant—one can analyze the causalities, the genealogical, genetic, and symbolic premises, or the wedding preparations. But even if such an analysis could ever be completed, one could never reduce the element of chance, the place of the taking-place; there will be someone who speaks, someone irreplaceable, an absolute initiative, another origin of the world.[25]

Here the surprising aspect of an event and its resistance to attempts to grasp it through analysis are again emphasized. To these important features of an event Derrida adds through his example of a birth a sense of the singularity of an event. What arrives in an event is something or someone utterly unique and unable to be replaced with another. He adds:

The task of a philosopher—and therefore of anyone, of a citizen, for example—is to take the analysis as far as possible to try to make the event intelligible up to the moment when one comes to the arrivant. What is absolutely new is not this, rather than that; it is the fact that it arrives only once...Even if one could predict the fall of the Berlin Wall, it happened one day, there were still deaths (before and during the collapse), and this is what makes it

an indelible event. What resists analysis is birth and death: always the origin and the end

of a world…[26]

The previous quotes suggested that surprise, resistance to analysis, and the singularity of what

comes are characteristic of an event. In other words, they suggested either 1) that what makes for

an event is the way certain occurrences affect me (by surprising me or by being resistant to

certain of my activities), or 2) that it is the singularity of that which arrives in or through the

event (the specific person or animal or God which shows itself to me in the event). But in this

quote, the phrase "that it arrives only once"[27] suggests that it is 3) the singularity of the

happening—not of what happens or who comes when it happens— which is characteristic of an

event. The thought would be that when something specific happens, that specific happening can

never take place again. Even if lightning strikes in the same place twice, it is not the same

occurrence of striking both times. In other words, it would not be what arrives, but the

uniqueness of the arrival itself which "makes for an event," so to speak. Which of these three

options, or which combination of them, is Derrida putting forward?

There is some evidence in favor of 1), for Derrida repeatedly emphasizes the relation of

an event to expectation and knowledge. He says, concerning rain, that "It may rain this evening,

or it may not, but this will not be an absolute event because I know what rain is", adding that "If

I am sure there will be an event, it will not be an event…"[28] This could easily be read as saying

that an event is simply that which is not anticipated, prepared for, or expected by a subject—rain

is not an event because it is expectable. Such a reading would support the idea that the subject's

surprise is what "makes for" an event. But 1) would give the subject the power to define or

constitute an event, for what would make for an event would be a certain relationship to the

subject. And Derrida writes of the event of a deconstruction, as quoted before, that it "does not

await the deliberation, consciousness or organization of a subject..."[29] The issue of the

relationships between the subject and the event will arise again later, but for the moment it seems

warranted to think that 1) does not capture that relationship, and that the event should not be

defined by the subject who encounters it.

The problem, then, is how to decide between or combine 2) and 3) above. Derrida's

notion of the *arrivant* accomplishes the combination. Derrida writes:

> I was recently taken by this word, *arrivant*, as if its uncanniness had just arrived to me in
>
> a language in which it has nonetheless sounded very familiar to me for a long time. The
>
> new *arrivant*, this word can, indeed, mean the neutrality of *that which* arrives, but also
>
> the singularity of *who* arrives, he or she who comes, coming to be where s/he was not
>
> expected...[30]

Since the French "arrivant" is the present participle form of the verb "arriver," which can mean

both "to arrive" and "to happen," when Derrida writes of 'that which' arrives he can be taken as

referring to the coming or happening of an event itself. When he writes of 'who' arrives, he can

be taken as referring to the person, being, God, animal, or other who comes in the event. By

intentionally keeping in play both senses of "arrivant," Derrida leaves open as possibilities both

that it is the singularity of the thing, person, etc. who arrives in an event that makes for an event

and that it is the uniqueness or singularity of the happening itself that makes for an event.

Likewise, talking about what is irreducible or undeniable "in" what arrives suggests a similar

openness of meaning, for with "in" it is unclear whether the word refers to some quality of what

is happening or to what/whom appears in that happening. The play in these terms, notice,

corresponds to the difference between 2) and 3) above.

But even to say this much is still to locate markers of an event's identity, to put a finger on how the event is constituted as event. It would identify what makes the event what it is, thereby construing the event as a species of being; it would once again incorporate the event into the knowledge of a subject. Unfortunately, this is exactly what Derrida has warned against. How should one proceed in light of this problem?

Not by simply solving it. An interview Derrida gave on the topic of the September 11th attacks[31] provides a place in which the problem, instead, proliferates and intensifies. Since such an outcome is itself telling, the interview deserves attention.

At the very beginning of the interview, Derrida was asked what he thinks about September 11th having the impression of being a major event. The exchange that follows warrants being quoted at length:

> All the philosophical questions remain open, unless they are opening up again in a
>
> perhaps new and original way: What is an impression? What is a belief? But especially:
>
> what is an event worthy of this name? And a 'major' event, that is, one that is actually
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> more of an 'event,' more actually an 'event,' than ever? An event that would bear witness,
>
> in an exemplary or hyperbolic fashion, to the very essence of an event or even to an event
>
> beyond essence? For could an event that still conforms to an essence, to a law or a truth,
>
> indeed to a concept of the event, ever be a major event? A major event should be so
>
> unforeseeable and irruptive that it disturbs even the horizon of the concept or essence on
>
> the basis of which we believe we recognize the event *as such*. That is why all the
>
> 'philosophical' questions remain open, perhaps even beyond philosophy itself, as soon as
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> it is a matter of thinking the event…The undergoing of the event, that which in the
>
> undergoing or in the ordeal *at once opens itself up to and resists experience*, is, it seems

to me, a certain *unappropriability* of what comes or happens. The event is what comes

and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend

comprehension…although the experience of an event, the mode according to which it

affects us, calls for a movement of appropriation (comprehension, recognition,

identification, description, determination, interpretation on the basis of a horizon of

anticipation, knowledge, naming, and so on), although this movement of appropriation is

irreducible and ineluctable, there is no event worthy of its name except insofar as this

appropriation *falters* at some border or frontier… Whence the unappropriability, the

unforeseeability, absolute surprise, incomprehension, the risk of misunderstanding,

unanticipatable novelty, pure singularity, the absence of horizon. Were we to accept this

minimal definition of the event, minimal but double and paradoxical, could we affirm

that 'September 11' constituted an event without precedent? An unforeseeable event? A

singular event through and through?

Nothing is less certain.[32]

This exchange has a number of threads running through it which are well worth discussing in

other contexts. In this chapter, a few of those threads in particular call for comment.

Notice that there are some important repetitions in Derrida's language here. Once again

Derrida seems to distinguish between the event and what he here calls "the mode according to

which it affects us." And once again Derrida emphasizes the ideas of surprise, etc. that were

mentioned above, though this time he multiplies related descriptions, also adding to them the

idea that any tendency to re-appropriate the event will always eventually falter.[33] Further, the

idea that the event has a special relationship to concepts is reminiscent of his thought that "no

concept remains in place" when it comes to deconstruction.[34] But the interesting phrase "worthy

of the name"[35] and the idea that the event has a special relationship to concepts have not appeared in any of the previous texts examined in this chapter.

"Worthy of the name" occurs in this interview a number of times, as well as in other texts, and so appears to be a phrase with which Derrida is comfortable.[36] Later on in the interview, Derrida suggests its meaning, saying "Whatever happens, happens, whoever comes, comes, and that, in the end, is the only event worthy of this name."[37] Now this sentence is almost a tautology, seeming to say only "that which happens is that which happens." The openness of this statement could be read as a claim that *any* occurrence or happening is worthy of the name "event."

Is every happening worthy of the name event? An affirmative answer may seem to fit with a comment made by Derrida earlier in the interview. After the assumption that September 11th was a "major event," he eventually says

> Let us accept nonethelesis such a hypothesis and proceed slowly and patiently inspeaking of this as an 'event.' After all, every time something happens, even in the most banal, everyday experience, there is *something* of an event and of singular unforeseeability about it: each instant marks an event, everything that is 'other' as   well, and each birth, and each death, even the most gentle and most 'natural.'[38]

One could read this as accepting that all occurrences are worthy of the name "event." The "after all" may commit Derrida to the thought that every occurrence is an event in the final analysis, so to speak. Of course, there is some nuance in the passage. In the context of the interview, Derrida is trying to entertain the hypothesis that the September 11th attacks were a "major event,"[39] and the idea that all occurrences are events could be read as struggling to find a justification for doing so. But whatever the strength of commitment to the idea Derrida has, it is also important to

notice that he speaks of each occurrence as being *something* of an event, not simply as being an event. The implication is that not every occurrence is worthy of the name to the same degree. What does it mean to be worthy of the name "event"?

The phrase "worthy of the name" recalls the idea of being worthy of some award or honor.[40] Certain words function in the same way, "honorific" terms which suggest the positive value of that to which they are applied. "Art," "human," or "friend" are common examples of such terms. Perhaps "event" is another? Perhaps to attach the name "event" to something is at the same time to evaluate it, to call it good. It is easy to get the sense reading Derrida that "event" is honorific, but this does not make it necessary to read "worthy of the name" as implying some sort of positive value judgment. After all, only certain items are worthy of being named "cold," "small," or "blue," but these terms are not always honorific. Rather, they only apply when certain characteristics justify that application. A piece of ice earns the name "cold" not by being good, but by having the often neutral feature of a low temperature. It is possible that Derrida is only saying that every occurrence has certain features which, if there to a high degree, would warrant applying the neutral name "event." The question to which this leads would be as to what exactly those characteristics are which something must have to be called an "event." One expects it is not simply a low temperature.

But once again, notice the form of this concern. Just as the worry arose before that asking what makes for an event attempts to locate markers of an event's identity and constitution in a way which incorporates the event into being, knowledge, or subjectivity, so here, problems proliferate when the event is treated in a certain way. It has been assumed that there are necessary and sufficient conditions, having to do with the neutral features of certain occurrences, which justify the application of the term "event," that the concept of the event functions like the

concepts "cold" or "small." And once again, this would be to incorporate the event into being, knowledge, or subjectivity in the same way that arose before. In the long quote from the September 11th interview, Derrida already indicated that the event has an unusual relationship to concepts. Understanding what he meant now appears crucial.

The identification of a thing through the use of a concept is one way in which the subject can appropriate that thing. I encounter an object, and when I make some judgment about it of the form "S is P," when I recognize or identify the thing using the concept "P," I have now made it my own (something proper to me). The thing can now be compared and contrasted with others of the same kind, its essence can be described, and its meaning or significance made evident and incorporated into the web of significations within which I operate. The thing is now mine; I have gotten hold of it with concepts and now, in a sense, I control it.

Part of Derrida's point in the long exchange from the interview is that this process breaks down with an event. Imagine that, in line with Derrida's initial descriptions of the event in terms of surprise, that something surprising or unexpected happens to me. As described, I will start making judgments of the form "S is P"— I will start giving explanations, analyzing causalities, uncovering meanings, and so forth, generating a narrative which at least attempts to frame the surprising occurrence. If this process is successful, then the event will not really be surprising anymore, for it will have been appropriated into a causal narrative in which it is a natural, perhaps inevitable, consequence of what came before. Its surprising quality having been diminished, the event will not be experienced as or affect me in the way an event does any longer. So, as Derrida says, for it to remain an event, this process of incorporation must falter. If it was really an event I encountered, then it will always remain surprising despite my attempts at appropriation; it will always slip from my hands.

105

Moreover, the same logic applies not just to the affective quality of the encounter with an event (surprise, violation of expectation) but even to the basic acts of recognizing and identifying the occurrence. Imagine that my only judgment is "this is an event." Even this minimal predication is still an identification, still a form of appropriation. If this identification and appropriation stabilizes rather than falters, then what I've called an event cannot really be one—the faltering of appropriation was a key part of Derrida's way of thinking the event. If, in contrast, the identification or appropriation does falter, then it remains uncompleted and cannot actually name "this" an "event." In other words, the event undoes even the identification of it as an event, it withdraws even from its own identity.

This line of thinking needs to be taken still further, for an instance of judging that "this is an event" is still only a single case of encounter and judgment. And Derrida, in the interview on September 11th, spoke both of a minimal and paradoxical "definition" of the event and of the concept of the event. Derrida writes elsewhere that

> We are speaking here with names (event, decision, responsibility, ethics, politics—
> Europe) of 'things' that can only exceed (and *must* exceed) the order of theoretical
> determination, of knowledge, certainty, judgment, and of statements in the form of 'this is
> that,' in other words, more generally and essentially, the order of the *present* or of
> *presentation*. Each time they are reduced to what they must exceed, error, recklessness,
> the unthought, and irresponsibility are given the so very presentable face of good
> conscience.[41]

So even possessing a concept or essential definition of 'event' would reduce the event to some form of presentation and allow the subject to attempt appropriating the event. If such a process should falter, then it is not just specific cases of judging "this is an event" from which the event

106

withdraws, but even the employment of the concept or definition of "event." By the same logic that applied to specific judgments, an event which is susceptible to conceptualization or definition would not be an event. A "genuine" event would be something that would not correspond even to the concept or definition of "event."

Deconstruction, as described in part I of this chapter, was a name for the happening of self-subversion undergone by a structure of metaphysics, and for the process of reading and writing which articulates it. The concept, expressed in the form of definitions, should be listed among such structures. The result of the preceding considerations is that the event upsets or ruptures its own concept. The concept of "event," then, is a concept which is also a subversion of the concept—the event is the deconstruction of the concept.

Arriving at this point clarifies the course of this section. Taking off from initial descriptions of events in terms of surprise and the violation of expectation, the juxtaposition of other descriptions of the event were found to create problems and reveal tensions. Their consideration led to a process in which those very descriptions, problems, and tensions undid themselves, ending eventually in the event being the subversion of its own concept. In other words, the path traced through Derrida's writing is one in which Derrida's own attempts to identify, solidify, and appropriate the event undermine themselves. This undermining is not a failure on Derrida's part, but rather a positive movement of which his texts are the site. By retracing and engaging with that movement, one is drawn or pulled into it, finding one's own thinking on the event subverted and changed. In other words, "as soon as it is a matter of thinking the event," to use Derrida's phrase, turbulences occur—Derrida's writing itself and the structures of metaphysics analyzed in them are drawn into certain torsions in the face of the

event, as is the thinking of those who engage with that writing. Derrida's writing on the event, then, is a locus of the event's turbulence.[42]

But the event, as the previous discussion indicated, is not susceptible to common forms of appropriation like identification, recognition, conceptualization, or definition, instead withdrawing from them, rupturing them, and leading them to falter. So for Derrida's work to be caught and to catch others in the turbulence of the event cannot be for it to arrive at a point at which the essence of the event can be stated or at which a judgment that "this is an event" can be rendered. Rather, the movement of being caught in the turbulence of the event involves opening and keeping open the question of whether "this is an event" can even be said. That is, the turbulent movement does not, or does not only, draw one into an encounter with the event, but draws one into a space in which the issue of whether an encounter with the event has happened, will happen, or can happen finally becomes a question.

Such a reading of Derrida avoids a worry that could easily arise from the idea that the event is unpresentable and exceeds theoretical determination. If the event is unpresentable and exceeds theoretical determination, then Derrida's own discussions of the event might seem either pointless (verbose ways of saying nothing) or ethically problematic (reducing the event to the order of presentation). In either case, the value of his work would be called into question.

But the movement of Derrida's texts avoid the horns of this dilemma. Derrida neither says nothing about the event, nor argues that nothing can be said about it. Instead, Derrida says plenty "about" the event, though in such a manner that what he says "about" the event initiates movements rather than presents definitions. In this way, Derrida also avoids reducing the event to the order of presentation in an ethically pernicious way, for the event is not presented in what he says "about" it.

<center>The Imperative</center>

It is in light of this interpretation that the most compact statement of Derrida's ethics of the event can be understood. Reading that statement through the lens of the previous sections will strengthen the interpretation cultivated there, while also developing further the theme of ethics.

That statement, cited earlier, was:

> The coming of the event is what cannot and should not be prevented; it is another name for the future itself. This does not mean that it is good—good in itself—for everything or anything to arrive; it is not that one should give up trying to prevent certain things from coming to pass (without which there would be no decision, no responsibility, ethics, or politics). But one should only ever oppose events that one thinks will block the future or that bring death with them: events that would put an end to the possibility of the event, to the affirmative opening to the coming of the other.[43]

The key first sentence appears to be an imperative, saying how one should or should not act toward the event. Specifically, it says that the event should not be prevented.

Imperatives fall into the "this is that" or "S is P" form, even if the content of imperatives is more normative than the more descriptive definitional statements or predications which that form usually calls to mind. But it was precisely the "this is that" form which is thrown into question when it is a matter of thinking the event, since the event resists even its identification as event. So, to mirror Derrida's sentence that "If I'm sure there will be an event, it will not be an event", an event which is identifiable or recognizable as what cannot and should not be

<center>109</center>

prevented would not be an event. This imperative is opened and torsioned in the same way in which the concept of the event and its definition was seen to be in earlier sections of this chapter.

Concerning the specifically normative dimension of the imperative, it is important to remember Derrida's resistance to normativity in its usual sense and his preference for the alternative sense of normativity as an experience of responsibility, of the other's call. A standard imperative is a paradigm case of a statement which is normative in the usual sense, for it establishes or expresses a norm, model, or guide which is to regulate decision and action. For Derrida to provide an imperative in a way consistent with the alternative sense of normativity would be, rather, to bring to language an experience of responsibility or to express a call. This statement, which seems to command one to act in accordance with a certain responsibility, is actually an affirmation of the other from which such a responsibility could come.

Notice also that this understanding also resolves the apparent tension between the more descriptive and more normative aspects of the sentence. Derrida says *both* that the coming of the event "cannot" be prevented, and that it "should not" be. It would be odd to be told that one should not prevent something that one could not prevent even if one tried. Such would be akin to being told that one should not violate the laws of gravity. However, if Derrida's imperative is not actually commanding actions, but rather initiating a movement which draws one into experiencing the affirmation of a responsibility which comes from the other, then this problem dissolves.

Still, to talk about "preventing" events does raise the difficult question of how and to what extent the subject can affect the event. Though Derrida never says that the subject can make the event come or cause it to come, the language of prevention does seem to suggest that the subject can keep the event from coming. An inviting path of inquiry would be to follow the

110

question of which actions or sorts of action prevent the event. Such an inquiry would provide information quite helpful to an ethical life, it would seem.

But even aside from the previous argument against reading Derrida's imperative as actually commanding certain actions, this seemingly natural path of inquiry presupposes a model of subjectivity in which the subject is the bearer of powers whose machinations might "harm" the event in some way—powers which therefore need to be limited or controlled by ethical prescriptions and imperatives. This is the same model of subjectivity which Derrida calls into question in saying that decision and responsibility come, not from the subject and the powers it bears, but from the other "within" the subject. So rather than even raise the question of how the subject may or may not harm the event, the imperative's purpose is actually to indicate that the subject's powers have already been subverted by it. Rather than aiming to keep those powers in check, it marks a prior break in them.

So, both in its "this is that" form, its normative content, and its language, Derrida's imperative seems to actually be an opening up or subversion of the imperative form. Once again, one is caught up in a movement of a structure's self-subversion.

In this way, this single sentence represents a kind of miniature or microcosm. In it, the same turbulent motions of opening and subverting which have repeated themselves throughout Derrida's thought as it has been considered in this chapter appear again.

Conclusion

Because the event exceeds even its own concept, the ethical injunctions and imperatives concerning it initiate their own subversion. Through deconstruction as a process of reading and

writing, ethical structures (like the question "what should I do?" or the imperative form in which answers to that question are put) are drawn into a turbulence in the face of the event.

Derrida's texts bear an ethics of the event insofar as they are the site of such turbulence. The resistance to identifiability characteristic of an event means that the space into which those texts are drawn and draw others is not a space in which the event is defined, located, and then related to ethically, but one in which the event remains a possibility and a question. Those texts open the questions "has there been an event?" and "is this encounter an event?," questions the function of which is not to be definitively answered, but which orient care and concern toward the event.

At the same time that it pulls ethics itself into its turbulence, the event becomes a perpetual ethical question. It is as if one always needs to keep an eye on whether an event may have been encountered, and to open oneself to the consequences—in how one lives, acts, desires, feels—of the fact that this question will always remain open. And to be drawn into those consequences.

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida. "A 'Madness' Must Watch Over Thinking." in <u>Points...Interviews, 1974-1994.</u> Elisabeth Weber (ed). Trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. Stanford University Press, 1995. Pg. 350. The phrase "you hope to pull others into it" translates "espère-t-on en entraîner d'autres," and the verb "entraîner" can mean "to pull, bring, carry, drag, sweep, entice," or "to train." Future notes will reference this text as M. Italics added. All italics in passages used later in the chapter are Derrida's.
2. Jacques Derrida. "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject." in <u>Points...Interviews, 1974-1994.</u> Elisabeth Weber (ed). Trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. Stanford University Press, 1995 pg. 272. The French "turbulence" is used in the original. Future notes will reference this text as EW.
3. Jacques Derrida. <u>Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs</u>. Trans. David B. Allison. Northwestern University Press, 1973. Pg. 102.
4. In his aphorism "New Struggles," Nietzsche writes that "After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown.—And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." See <u>The Gay Science.</u> Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Vintage Books, 1974. Pg. 167. And Heidegger comments that "To think Being without beings means: to think Being without regard to metaphysics. Yet a regard for metaphysics still prevails even in the intention to overcome metaphysics. Therefore, our task is to cease all overcoming, and leave metaphysics to itself." See <u>On Time and Being.</u> Trans. Joan Stambaugh. The University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pg. 24.
5. Jacques Derrida. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." in <u>Writing and Difference.</u> Trans. Alan Bass. University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pg. 284. Here "conceive" translates the French "penser," which more directly means "to think." The phrase "The step" translates "la sortie," which suggests "The exit."
6. Jacques Derrida. <u>Of Grammatology.</u> Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. Pg. 13. The word translated here as "conceivable" is the French "pensable," which also suggests "thinkable." Future notes will refer to this text as OG.
7. Ibid., pg. 24. All of the words translated as "habitation," "inhabit," etc., are from the French verb "habiter," which can mean "to occupy," "to live (in)," or "to dwell."
8. Jacques Derrida. "Hostipitality." in <u>Acts of Religion.</u> Trans. Gil Anidjar (ed). Routledge, 2002. Pg. 364. According to the editor's notes on 356-7, this essay is an unedited set of 'notes' for four sessions of Derrida's seminar, and appears to only have been published in English translation.
9. Jacques Derrida. "Letter to a Japanese Friend." In <u>Derrida and Diffé#rance.</u> Trans. David Wood and Andrew Benjamin. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (eds). Northwestern University Press, 1988. Pg. 5.
10. Martin Heidegger. "Letter on Humanism." in <u>Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings.</u> David Farrell Krell (ed). Harper, 1977. Pgs. 234-5.
11. As explained in the introduction to the dissertation.
12. Immanuel Kant. <u>Critique of Pure Reason.</u> Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. Palgrave, 2003. Pg. 635 (A 805/B 833). The German for the second question is "Was soll ich thun?" The German "soll" suggests the English "should," "ought," or "shall. The closest French approximation to "soll" seems to be "devrait," which means "must" or "ought."
13. For which see Kant's <u>Critique of Practical Reason.</u> Trans. Lewis White Beck. Library of Liberal Arts, 1993. and his <u>Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals.</u> Trans. James W. Ellington. Hackett, 1993.
14. Jacques Derrida. "Ethics and Politics Today." in <u>Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001.</u> Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (ed). Stanford University Press, 2002. Pg. 296. This text is a transcription of a presentation, and this translation appears to be the only form in which it has been published.
15. Ibid., pgs. 298-9.
16. Lotz seems to miss this key point in tracing Derrida's ethics to Kant's. Though Lotz is correct to say that Kant is part of Derrida's lineage, it is equally important to see how Derrida is involved in deconstructing the very lineage of which he is a part. See Christian Lotz. "The Events of Morality and Forgiveness: From Kant to Derrida." *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 36. 2006. Pg. 256.
17. Jacques Derrida. Untitled interview from <u>Conversations with French Philosophers.</u> Trans. Gary E. Aylesworth. Florian Rotzer (ed). Humanities Press, 1995. Pg. 49. A French version of this book was not published until 2004.
18. EW, pg. 272.

19. M, pgs. 361-2. The English "ordinary" translates French "courant," which could also mean "current" or "standard."

20. M, pg. 364.

21. This suggests that Habermas' concern that Derrida leaves the "normative connotations" of his work unclear is misplaced, as the concern presumes a sense of 'normative' that Derrida rejects. See Jurgen Habermas. "How to Answer the Ethical Question." In Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida. Trans. Bettina Bergo and Michael B. Smith. Bettina Bergo, Joseph Cohen, and Raphael Zagury-Orly (eds). Fordham University Press, 2007. Pg. 143.

22. Hence, one should agree with Raffoul and Gasché that responsibility is a key notion in Derrida's ethics. See 1) François Raffoul. "Derrida and the Ethics of the Im-possible." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 38. 2008 and 2) Rodolphe Gasché. Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida. Harvard, 1994.

23. Jacques Derrida. "The Deconstruction of Actuality." in Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001. Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (ed). Stanford University Press, 2002. Pg. 94. Future notes will refer to this text as DA.

24. "dans" in the French original.

25. Ibid., pg. 104.

26. Ibid., ellipses in original.

27. The French "que cela arrive une seule fois" could also be read as "that it arrives/happens a single time."

28. Ibid., pg. 96. The English "expect" and its cognates translate the French "attendre" and its cognates, which could also be rendered as "wait" or "await.

29. See note 9 above.

30. Jacques Derrida. Aporias. Trans. Thomas Dutoit. Stanford University Press, 2003. Pg. 33. The English "uncanniness" translates the French "étrangeté," which could also be translated as "strangeness." Future notes will reference this text as A.

31. Jacques Derrida. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides." In Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida. Giovanna Borradori (ed). The University of Chicago Press, 2003. Future notes will refer to this text as RSS.

32. Ibid., pgs. 90-91.

33. The French is "échoue," which can also mean "to run aground (as one would say of a boat hitting the shore)," "to beach (as said of a stranded whale)," or "to sink."

34. For which see pg. 5 above.

35. "digne de ce nom," the word "digne" sharing the same root as the English "dignity" or "dignified."

36. See, for example, Jacques Derrida. Without Alibi. Trans. Peggy Kamuf (ed). Stanford University Press, 2002. Pgs. xxxiii-xxxiv. This English translation by Kamuf appears to be the only place Derrida's preface to this collection of essays has been published in any language.

37. RSS, pg. 129.

38. Ibid., pg. 91.

39. Though Naas is probably right to treat 9/11 as an event, Derrida's qualifications and hesitations are worth noting. See Naas' discussion in "History's Remains: Of Memory, Mourning, and the Event." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 33. 2003.

40. The French suggests the same. See note 35 above.

41. A, pg. 20. The French is "'Ceci est cela'" for "this is that." Here, Derrida is actually quoting at length a passage from his own The Other Heading. Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas. Indiana University Press, 1992. Pgs. 80-81.

42. Hence, I would identify as the key feature of the event for Derrida its turbulence-inducing inappropriability. This is not to disagree with Lotz (who identifies it as unpredictability and unconditionality), Poché and Raffoul (for whom it is impossibility), or Gasché (for whom it is singularity), as I described on pages 39-40 of the Introduction. Rather, it is to suggest that this list of features is incomplete. To his credit, Raffoul does mention inappropriability on pg. 275 of his article, but does not give it as much emphasis as it calls for. See 1) Christian Lotz. "The Events of Morality and Forgiveness: From Kant to Derrida." *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 36. 2006; 2) Fred Poché. Penser avec Jacques Derrida: Comprendre la déconstruction. Chronique Sociale, 2007; 3) François Raffoul. "Derrida and the Ethics of the Im-possible." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 38. 2008; 4) Rodolphe Gasché. Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida. Harvard, 1994.

43. DA, pg. 94. See note 19 above for full reference.

CHAPTER IV

HEROISM, IMMORTALITY, AND THE EVENT IN BADIOU'S ETHICS

Introduction

This chapter argues that the rich content of Badiou's formalistic ethics of 'fidelity' to the event can be articulated using Badiou's own notions of heroism and of immortality. The first section of the chapter briefly describes Badiou's philosophical system as a whole. The second section describes how the event is thought in that system. The third section presents a basic picture of the formalistic aspects of Badiou's ethical thought and considers the normative status of its claims. In the fourth section, that picture is elaborated more concretely through the interrelated concepts of heroism and immortality.

Mathematics and its formal language, as will be seen, is of prime importance in Badiou's work, though the reader will notice such formal symbols are largely absent from this chapter. There is, perhaps, something of a betrayal in such a procedure. Of one of his mathematics-laden texts, Badiou tells his reader "one must make one's way through all the meditations."[1] Of another, he writes that "the courage required to traverse the arid formalisms will receive, like every true crossing of the desert, its own immanent recompense."[2] Though such immanent recompense will have to be foregone by the reader of this chapter, Badiou's "weighty demonstrative apparatus"[3] is more pertinent to the task of constructing and proving his concepts than it is to understanding them.

Badiou and Platonism

Whereas Derrida saw himself as subversively inhabiting conceptual structures and Deleuze saw himself overturning Platonism, Badiou avers "My work is systematic philosophy in the great tradition of systematic philosophy that stretches from Plato to today."[4] He writes that "my aim is to found a Platonism of the multiple..."[5] and speaks of "us Platonists."[6] For Badiou, the philosophical work of a Derrida or a Foucault, along with contemporary analytic philosophy—the "current global state of philosophy"[7]—are unfortunate reflections of wider cultural trends which are worth resisting.[8] The shape of that resistance is to return to and rethink the great themes of the philosophical tradition that stretches from Plato to Descartes, and in something of the same style as that tradition. As Badiou says, mentioning a notion that will become important later in this chapter, "It is very fashionable right now to be modest, not to think big. Grandeur is considered a metaphysical evil. Me, I am for grandeur, I am for heroism."[9]

But as the phrase 'Platonism of the multiple' hints, Badiou does indeed *re*-think those themes, adopting certain insights from the same thinkers from which he distances himself. That is, Badiou seeks "to transcribe the classical problematic (being, truth, subject) into a conceptual assemblage that is not only modern, but perhaps even 'more-than-modern' (given that the adjective 'postmodern' has been evacuated of all content)."[10] The way in which concepts of being, truth, and subject can be re-knotted in a contemporary context is by giving pride of place to multiplicity, certainly a shared theme of Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and thinkers of their ilk.

The balance between Platonism and multiplicity is struck by Badiou in his identification of mathematics and ontology. For Badiou, "mathematics, throughout the entirety of its historical becoming, pronounces what is expressible about being qua being."[11] In other words, it is not the priest, the poet, or the philosopher who tells us about the basic character of being, but the

mathematician. And that branch of mathematics for which multiplicity is most central is set theory—the 'set' being a type of mathematical structure to which other mathematical structures can be reduced. Thus, it is in the theorems and rigorously deductive proofs of set theory, the mathematics of pure multiples, that Badiou looks for clues to how to think being itself. The explication of what set theory suggests about being qua being occupies Badiou's first and most well-known systematic text, *Being and Event*.

But mathematics, in saying what can be said of being qua being, does not say what can be said of being qua appearing, or what Badiou calls, after Heidegger, being-there. For Badiou, it is logic which tells us about appearance or being-there in a world. The completion of this second part of his Platonism of the multiple occupies Badiou's second systematic text, *Logics of Worlds*.

Significant parts of both *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds* are devoted to defining the event, first, in its ontological dimension and, second, in its logical dimension. Indeed, since mathematics thinks being and logic thinks appearing, "Accordingly, we could also say that, beyond the identification of real ontology, which must be ceaselessly taken up again, philosophy is also, first and foremost, the general theory of the event..."[12] In the next section, Badiou's 'general theory of the event' is articulated in both its ontological and logical dimensions.

Ontology and Logic of the Event

Due to the centrality of the event to Badiou's thinking, it is not surprising that he describes the event in many different ways, providing material for what could be a very long list of predicates. The task of this section is to work through the most central of those, moving from ontological descriptions through logical ones. In the course of the section, it will be seen that there are fascinating ambiguities in Badiou's description which need to be thought through. The

end of the section turns to the ways Badiou understands the event in its effects, which finally

brings the discussion to the cusp of ethics, the topic of section three.

The most detailed and common description of the event that Badiou provides concerns

the event in its relation to being. Being qua being, as explained above, is thought by mathematics

and by set theory in particular. One would thus expect Badiou to give a formal, set theoretic

description of the event using the intellectual machinery of its axioms and theorems. And, in a

sense, this is what Badiou does. His "matheme of the event" reads:

> Say that S is the situation, and $X \in S$ (X belongs to S, X is presented by S) the evental site.
>
> The event will be written ex (to be read 'event of the site X'). My definition is then written
>
> as follows:
>
> $$ex = \{ x \in X, ex \}$$
>
> That is, the event is a one-multiple made up of, on the one hand, all the multiples which
>
> belong to the site, and on the other hand, the event itself.[13]

In other words, "If there existed an ontological formalization of the event it would therefore be

necessary, within the framework of set theory, to allow the existence, which is to say the count-

as-one, of a set such that it belonged to itself: $\alpha \in \alpha$."[14] Badiou's own example of the French

Revolution will help explain the purport of these formulae.[15] In the time of the French

Revolution, French society (the 'evental site') was in one or another particular state—the

collection of items which constituted the society at that time (the situation) were arranged in a

particular way. When the Revolution began, a state of affairs arose in which, not only was a

Revolution happening, but the idea of the Revolution was itself part of that state of affairs. Part of the event of the French Revolution was the idea of the French Revolution.

A potential problem lurks here, for in Badiou's formalization, a set is allowed to belong to itself. But it is exactly such an allowance which lead to Russell's famous paradox, and such a paradoxical consequence would seem to constitute a *reductio* of Badiou's notion of the event. Indeed, if set theory—that is, mathematics as ontology—cannot consistently represent something, then that something would not seem to be a part of being at all.

Interestingly, Badiou recognizes this potential problem, but does not see it as a problem at all. As he writes, "Ontology does not allow the existence, or the counting as one as sets in its axiomatic, of multiples which belong to themselves. There is no acceptable ontological matrix of the event."[16] Even more strongly, "ontology has nothing to say about the event."[17] These quotes suggest that Badiou is aware of the issue, but also that he thinks it tells us more about the limits of ontology than it does about the event—in both quotes, he says that *ontology* does not provide a matrix of or says nothing of the event, but not the event is called into question by ontology's silence.

How can this be? For Badiou, the event is "'that-which-is-not-being-qua-being'", and "'what-is-not-being-qua-being'".[18] The event is not simply being qua being. It is clear, after all, that mathematics/ontology can *formulate* the notion of a set which belongs to itself, even if it formulates this notion so as only to quickly rule it out. But if such a notion is to have any embodiment in the world, it cannot be as being qua being.

One might then assume that the event is simply nothing—it would be what is left over after one subtracts being qua being from itself. This might not seem to be an unreasonable position: 'Nothing', as Heidegger suggested, is in fact an aspect of Dasein's experience.[19] Indeed,

certain comments of Badiou's might mistakenly lead his readers to think that he intends

something along these lines. In one place, Badiou writes:

> an event in itself is always a perfect weakness. It is such because the being of an event is
>
> to disappear; the being of an event is disappearing. The event is nothing—just a sort of
>
> illumination—but the consequences of an event within a situation are always very
>
> different and it is true that there are major consequences, long sequences of truth, or brief
>
> sequences.[20]

Here, the phrase 'the event is nothing' could be taken to support the idea that the event is simply a

nothing. But, this statement is only made in the context of a discussion of what exactly the event

is, and is actually meant to suggest something about the being of the event, not to say that it is

non-being. That Badiou writes elsewhere "I will broach the question of 'what-is-not-being-qua-

being'—with respect to which it would not be prudent to immediately conclude that it is a

question of non-being,"[21] should strengthen the sense that 'the event is nothing' must be read as

extremely confined by its specific context.

In Badiou's eyes, rather than constituting a problem, the event's unclear status as neither

nothing nor as being-qua-being and its paradoxical mathematical formalization actually provide

clues as to what the event's genuine status is. He writes

> It happens that $A \in A$. ...Why do we say 'it happens' [*il arrive*]? Because this is not
>
> something that could *be*. In what concerns its exposition to the thinkable, the pure
>
> multiple obeys the axioms of set-theory. Now, the axiom of foundation forbids self-
>
> belonging. It is thus a law of being that no multiple may enter into its own composition.
>
> The notation $A \in A$ is that of an ontological (mathematical) impossibility. A site is

therefore the sudden lifting of an axiomatic prohibition, through which the possibility of the impossible comes to be.[22]

Though using a somewhat different terminology of an evental 'site' here, the general idea is the same as before, with the event being represented by a set which belongs to itself. If the axioms of set theory rule out self-belonging, and if the event is formalized by that self-belonging, then the event is not being, but a 'happening/arrival' in which the laws of being are violated. Rather than say that the laws of being show that events never happen, Badiou instead interprets the happening of events as a break in those laws.

It is fitting, then, that Badiou once describes the event as "a paradox of being."[23] Consider an analogy with Zeno's famous paradoxes. If we affirm both that Zeno's arguments soundly prove the impossibility of motion and that things still move, then we should also hold that movement constitutes the appearance of an impossibility or paradox in the world.[24] Similarly, if we hold that mathematics/ontology suggests the impossibility of events and that events do occur, then we should hold that an event is the happening of the impossible and paradoxical.

It is light of this description that Badiou's calling the event a 'trans-being' can be rightly understood. He writes

there is the vast question of that which subtracts itself from ontological determination...a point at which the ontological (i.e. mathematical) field is detotalized or caught in an impasse. I have called this point *the event*. Accordingly, we could also say that, beyond the identification of real ontology, which must be ceaselessly taken up again, philosophy is also, first and foremost, the general theory of the event...We could also say that, in so far as mathematical thinking takes charge of being as such, the theory of the event aims at the determination of a trans-being.[25]

'Trans-being', as the name suggests, is something which crosses being. But that which crosses being can be neither being nor simply non-being. If what crosses being were being itself, there would be no crossing; if what crosses being were nothing, then there would also be no crossing.

Characterizing the event in this way accomplishes something important for Badiou. In defining the event both in relation to being and in contrast to being, a very fine tightrope must be negotiated. On the one hand, the event needs to be defined in relation to being. Going too far in this direction would let the event be absorbed by being, so that the event could not constitute any break in its laws. Instead, it would be utterly determined by those laws and would not be an event at all. On the other hand, if the event is completely unrelated to being, then it gets absorbed into nothingness. But if the event is a trans-being and a paradox of being, it maintains a relationship with being, but not a limiting or constraining relationship. As Badiou writes, the event "is both *situated*—it is the event of this or that situation—and *supplementary*; thus absolutely detached from, or unrelated to, all the rules of the situation."[26] Though the phrase 'unrelated to' might suggest that Badiou falls off the tightrope in the direction of the event's absorption into nothing, the French which it translates (*délié*) could also be rendered as 'released from' or 'untied from'— the '-*lié*' of '*délié*' indicating 'to tie, bind, or link'. To be released or untied from something still constitutes a relation to it, rather than the utter non-relation of a nothingness.

These points only concern the event in its ontological dimension. A discussion of Badiou's view of the event in its relation to appearing, or being-there, will provide more of a sense of the event's relation to ethics.

One of the most frequently used visual images of the event for Badiou is that of a 'flash' of light.[27] At the level of appearance, what exactly is the 'flash' of the event?

For Badiou,[28] the apparent dimension of a situation—a 'world', a local sector of being-there—is ordered by a logic of presentation, which he calls a 'transcendental.' Though Badiou does provide a detailed formal articulation of the notion, for the purposes of this chapter it suffices to say that the transcendental of a specific world describes the organization of what appears in that world. In Badiou's system, everything that appears in a world can be assigned a certain quantitative 'intensity' of appearance. In the world of a painting, to use one of Badiou's own examples, a nude figure in the foreground might appear more intensely in the painting than a column hidden by shadows in the background. Further, these assigned intensities of appearance can undergo certain ordered changes without the transcendental of the situation being at all disturbed—perhaps the intensity of the column increases when we realize how it organizes the composition of the painting. Such changes are consistent with the transcendental of the world in question, and so are not yet events.

But a 'flash' is an occurrence in which something with *zero* intensity of appearance comes, for a brief moment, to have a maximal intensity of appearance. Badiou writes that "the tipping-over of a nil intensity of existence into a maximal intensity, characterizes real change. Among the numerous consequences of a jolt affecting an object of the world, such a sublation is in effect the signature of what we will call an event."[29] In other words, the event does to a world what a sudden blinding light does to one's visual field—a dark, unnoticed object breaks in on it with newfound brightness. So, just as the event was, ontologically speaking, a break in the laws of being, the event is, logically speaking, a break in the laws of appearing. As Badiou puts it succinctly, the event, the source of 'real' change, is "An exception both to the axioms of the multiple and to the transcendental constitution of objects and relations. An exception to the laws of ontology as well as to the regulation of logical consequences."[30]

For Badiou, then, the event is the happening of an occurrence which ontology rules to be impossible—it is the coming to be of a paradox of being, and one which radically alters the distribution of appearances in the locality wherein it happens.[31] It is in the 'afterward' of such an occurrence and in the space of its consequences where, for Badiou, ethics comes to be at issue. That will be the topic of the next section.

<center>Fidelity</center>

To show that heroism and immortality are central to Badiou's ethics, the first requirement is to understand Badiou's concept of fidelity to the event. The second requirement is an elaboration of how heroism and immortality relate to fidelity. The first of these tasks will be the focus of this section, with the second reserved for section four. This section is itself divided into two parts. Badiou has never discussed the nature and purpose of ethical thinking separately from his own sense of the results of ethical thinking, and it is the results on which he tends to focus. This leaves it somewhat unclear what his concept of ethical thinking is, and thus how to interpret the status of its results. The first part of this section considers the results of ethical thinking for Badiou. The second part delineates what is the nature of ethical thinking itself for Badiou, so that what was described earlier can be seen in the proper light.

In an interview, Badiou states

I give the Good the name 'Truths' (in the plural). A Truth is a concrete process that starts by an upheaval (an encounter, a general revolt, a surprising new invention), and develops as a fidelity to the novelty thus experimented. A Truth is a subjective development of that which is at once both new and universal...To become a subject (and not remain a simple human animal), is to participate in the coming into being of a universal novelty. That

<center>124</center>

requires effort, endurance, sometimes self-denial. I often say it's necessary to be the 'activist' of a Truth. There is Evil each time egoism leads to the renunciation of a Truth. Then, one is de-subjectivized. Egoistic self-interest carries one away, risking the interruption of the whole progress of a truth (and thus of the Good).[32]

That Badiou emphasizes novelty should come as no surprise, given what was said in the last section about the nature of the event, that supreme novelty. What is novel in this passage itself is that the concepts of truth and subjectivity are explicitly and closely tied to the notion of the event, with both truth and subjectivity arising only after and in light of the occurrence of the event. This idea calls for some explication, which will require the introduction of some of the technical terms Badiou employs.

What is a subject and what is a truth in Badiou's thinking? So far, all that has been discussed is multiple-being and its paradoxical evental interruption. But when a paradoxical occurrence befalls being, there is a whole set of possible consequences which can be seen to follow from that occurrence. To use one of Badiou's own repeated examples,[33] the chance encounter between two people that develops into love will have—if the encounter is pursued—a whole series of ramifications for the couple and their lives. But because the event is a momentary rupture in being which being quickly reabsorbs, it is not guaranteed that those consequences will actually be realized. What Badiou alternately calls 'truths' or 'truth-procedures' are processes of tracing out and realizing the consequences of the event in the world. A 'subject', rather than being a substance or a consciousness, is the being or agent who participates in that process and actively realizes, or fails to realize, those consequences in the world. To return to the example, the chance encounter between persons (event) can lead to the development of living out a love relationship together (truth-procedure), by which the two persons form together an active group engaged in

that project (subject). Hence, concisely describing the link between event, truth, and subjectivity, Badiou says "If it were necessary to identify a cause of the subject, one would have to return, not so much to truth, which is rather its stuff, nor to the infinity whose finitude it is, but rather to the event."[34]

There are different orientations or relationships to the event and its consequences which a subject can embody. Badiou writes "the static system of consequences of an event is a (generic) truth. The immanent agent of the production of the consequences (of a truth), or the possible agents of their denial, or that which renders their occultation possible (that which aims to erase a truth)—all of these will be called subjects."[35] The first kind of subject, in Badiou's terminology, is a 'faithful' subject, or one who practices fidelity to the event which brought that subject forth. The second, which Badiou calls a 'reactionary' subject, attempts to prevent the consequences of the event from coming to fruition. The third, 'occulting' or 'obscure' subject simply denies that anything has really taken place, denies that a paradox of being has actually happened.

In explaining these three forms of subjectivity, Badiou uses the case of a slave revolt led by Spartacus.[36] The faithful subject, in this case, would be the slave who joins in the revolt Spartacus initiated. This subject follows through the consequences of the event despite the resistance of the circumstances in which those consequences must be realized. The reactionary subject would be the slave who chooses not to join the revolt, embracing all the more thoroughly and completely the state of affairs in which slavery is institutionalized. Finally, the occulting or obscure subject would simply shrug off the very existence of the revolt, convincing himself that nothing of importance is happening, that the revolt will be easily crushed, and hence goes about his daily life unchanged.

It deserves to be said that the distinction between these three types of subjectivity only explicitly appears in Badiou's 2006 book *Logic of Sense*. In his 1988 *Being and Event*, only the faithful subject was described as even being a subject at all. In the book *Ethics*, written in 1993 in between the two systematic texts, Badiou writes

> The subject cannot be conceived exclusively as the subject faithful to the event. This point in particular has significant ethical implications. For I was previously unable to explain the appearance of reactionary innovations. ...the event opens a subjective space in which not only the progressive and truthful subjective figure of fidelity but also other figures every bit as innovative, albeit negative—such as the reactive figure, or the figure I call the 'obscure subject'—take their place.[37]

He further adds, "So you can see that the theoretical basis of the present book has evolved somewhat. But to my mind it remains solid enough on the essential points..."[38] One could worry that a chronological development in Badiou's ethical thinking has been glossed over in the more systematic portrait of his work given so far.

But, on the contrary, the view that only the faithful subject is a subject and the view that there are three types of subject are in fact consistent with each other, if heard rightly. Certainly, Badiou's more recent work describes a distinction between different subjects, but it is also clear that the faithful subject is the only genuine subject. To put it bluntly, only the subject who is faithful to an event is a full subject. The other two forms of subjectivity arise only in the failure of faithful subjectivity. Hence, it actually makes sense that Badiou's earlier work would describe the faithful subject as the only subject--the reactionary and obscure subjects do not really 'count' when it comes to subjectivity. That the theoretical basis of his work has 'evolved somewhat' does

not mean that his view has fundamentally changed, but only that his view has been elaborated more fully.[39]

Dealing with this objection has the advantage of highlighting how important the notion of fidelity is for Badiou. As he writes about his 'ethic of truths', "There is always only one question in the ethic of truths: how will I, as some-one, *continue* to exceed my own being? How will I link the things I know, in a consistent fashion, via the effects of being seized by the not-known?"[40] Such questions concern the sole ethical task as Badiou sees it.

And Badiou provides an ethical maxim which concerns the achievement of those ends. As he puts it, "This maxim proclaims, in its general version, 'Keep going!' Continue to be this 'some-one', a human animal among others, which nevertheless finds itself *seized* and *displaced* by the evental process of a truth. Continue to be the active part of that subject of a truth that you have happened to become."[41] Indeed, Badiou's claim is put even more strongly when he writes

> A crisis of fidelity is always what puts to the test, following the collapse of an image, the sole maxim of consistency (and thus of ethics): 'Keep going!' Keep going even when you have lost the thread, when you no longer feel 'caught up' in the process, when the event itself has become obscure, when its name is lost, or when it seems that it may have named a mistake, if not a simulacrum.[42]

Taken collectively, these last passages provide some information as to both what fidelity is and what it looks like and requires in practice. Fidelity involves exceeding one's own being; it concerns effects; it engages one in subjectivity; and it requires one to be indefatigable.

Incorporating what was said earlier about consequences, then, fidelity is to bring into the world the consequences of the event, thereby becoming a genuine, full subject. Ontologically, this is what linking what I know to the not-known consists in. Fidelity itself, then, consists in

128

deploying oneself to realize the changes in the world which the event and its occurrence suggest.[43] Badiou writes

> To be faithful to an event is to move within the situation that this event has supplemented, by *thinking* (although all thought is a practice, a putting to the test) the situation 'according to' the event. And this, of course—since the event was excluded by all the regular laws of the situation—compels the subject to *invent* a new way of being and acting in the situation.[44]

Or, to return to a remark of Badiou's pertinent to the earlier example, "It is clear that under the effect of a loving encounter, if I want to be *really* faithful to it, I must completely rework my ordinary way of 'living' my situation."[45] So, if being or a situation is, as mathematics suggests, understandable as a multiple or a set, then fidelity to the event involves rearranging that multiple in light of the event.

And, for Badiou, it seems that the main ethical challenge is to maintain fidelity, to continue that process of rearrangement, come what may. This means resisting those forces which would try to keep being or the situation in an unaltered state, even if that force is one's own doubt or fatigue. Put succinctly, "To give up is always evil."[46]

Now, Badiou has just employed the category of 'evil', and he earlier used the category of the 'good' to describe the overall purpose of his own work. He has also spoken of the ethics attached to a specific situation, but denied that there is an 'ethics in general'[47] while still providing what would seem to be a general ethical principle—the maxim 'keep going!' It is appropriate to wonder at this point what the exact status of ethical thinking is for Badiou. Is his own ethical thinking supposed to have a clear normative or prescriptive output? Is Badiou telling his reader to engage in specific courses of action or is he doing something else? Further, what

129

does the answer to this question mean about the status of the claims of Badiou has been making? The texts bear out a non-normative reading of Badiou's ethics.

Consider, most basically, the notion of the event. It could easily seem that there is a positive ethical valence to this concept in Badiou's thinking and that, as a result, he is in some sense claiming that the event is good or worthy of pursuit. But this interpretation misconstrues the temporal positioning of the categories of good and evil. Badiou writes "What provokes the emergence of the Good—and, by simple consequence, Evil—exclusively concerns the rare existence of truth-processes."[48] If good and evil must be provoked by a truth-process, and truth-processes are only possible on the heels of an event, then good and evil are not categories that are even applicable to events. Instead, they can only become relevant in relationship to an event which has already occurred.

What's more, the 'definition' of the event given by Badiou is purely structural in nature. The kernel of his concept of the event is his matheme of the event (see page 5 above). This matheme says only that the event is represented by the mathematical and therefore ontological impossibility of a set belonging to itself. On its own, this matheme provides no information as to whether the event is 'good' or 'bad.' Whether one would call a given event good or bad is, according to this matheme, irrelevant to its eventhood: it counts as an event as long as the structure outlined in the definition is present.

On the other hand, Badiou's uses of 'evil' could also seem to be normatively loaded. He writes, for instance, that "Every absolutization of the power of a truth organizes an Evil. Not only does this Evil destroy the situation…, but it also interrupts the truth-process in whose name it proceeds…"[49] But even in this instance, the reason why a course of action is marked as 'evil' is not because it violates a substantial ethical guideline, but because it is logically and materially

self-undermining. Even 'evil', then, is not necessarily a word which Badiou uses to recommend specific courses of action. Instead, it is used to name a specific type of logical situation.

So, language that would seem to favor a strong normative reading of Badiou's ethical thought, on closer scrutiny, does not. What this suggests is that Badiou is not recommending any specific courses of action in his work. This suggestion is supported by another passage. Badiou writes "The 'technique' of consistency is singular in each case, depending on the 'animal' traits of the some-one. …having been convoked and seized by a truth-process, this particular 'some-one' will contribute his anguish and agitation, this other his stature and cool composure, this other his voracious taste for domination, and these others their melancholy, or timidity."[50] A technique of consistency is the body of skills, qualities, traits, and actions by which one manages to practice fidelity to an event. What Badiou seems to be saying is that concrete considerations of what to do or of what courses of action to take are not decided by his thinking itself, but are left to us.

The sense in which Badiou's thought provides an ethics is not a normative one. When he writes "What I will call, in general, the 'ethic of a truth' is the principle that enables the continuation of a truth-process…",[51] his own statement is part of a study of the structure of the different singular ethics attached to different truth-processes. The sense of 'ethics' invoked by the title of Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, then, is that of a structural description rather than of a set of practical recommendations.

The consequence of this reading is that the status of Badiou's statements about fidelity are not ways of directing our actions, but are instead descriptions of one of the possibilities open to us after the event. That the single maxim of fidelity is 'keep going!', means that the phrase 'keep going!' captures the general structure of the different (plural) ethics that are tied to specific

events. In this way, Badiou's work is a theory of the Good only insofar as it is a study of the conditions of possibility for and structural features of the good.[52]

If this reading is correct, it seems to leave Badiou's ethics torn into two extremes. On one side, there is Badiou's outlining of the possibilities open to us after the event and his description of their formal features. On the other side, there is the domain of 'technique' where specific persons decide on specific actions in light of their personal characteristics, circumstances, and so forth. What lies in between these two extremes? Is there some 'bridge' which might help one relate Badiou's structural descriptions to one's concrete situation? The next section argues that Badiou's rethinking of heroism and immortality performs this function.

Mathematical Heroism and Materialist Immortality

At the outset of this section, it will be worthwhile to begin with the seemingly self-subverting gesture of presenting positive evidence *against* the conclusion that will be argued. By dealing with this evidence first, it will eventually be seen that it is not as clear cut as it might seem

Badiou, as cited early in this chapter, did indeed say "Me, I am for grandeur, I am for heroism." But it must be granted that this statement was more concerned with the scope and ambition of systematic philosophical thinking than with concrete ethical life. And in a more clearly ethical context—discussing the idea of intervening in a situation for sake of the event—Badiou writes "the intervenor can be both entirely accountable for the regulated consequences of the event, and entirely incapable of boasting that they played a decisive role in the event itself. Intervention generates a discipline: it does not deliver any originality. There is no hero of the event."[53] This last sentence could be read as an utterly direct statement on Badiou's part that the

132

notion of 'hero' has no role to play in his ethical thinking, and thus that the central claim of this section is a non-starter. The description given before of the relationship between the event, fidelity, truth, and so on, is all that would be needed to articulate Badiou's ethical thinking.

But, on the contrary, the ideas of both heroism and immortality were already present, though in more subtle form, in that earlier description. Aside from the example of the heroic figure Spartacus, mentioned only in passing, Badiou talked about what he called the 'activist' of a truth. And in two places, he talked about 'a human animal among others' and 'a simple human animal'. A look at other texts of Badiou's will show that Spartacus and the 'activist' hint at heroism, and that the contrast to the human animal is the immortal.

It will be recalled that Spartacus appeared as a proper name designating an instance of a faithful subject, as opposed to a reactive or obscure subject. In describing the ethic of truths which advocates the fidelity of a figure like Spartacus and implores us to be the activists of a truth, Badiou writes

> the ethics of truths is always more or less militant, combative. For the concrete
>
> manifestation of its heterogeneity to opinion and established knowledges is the struggle
>
> against all sorts of efforts at interruption, at corruption, at the return to the immediate
>
> interests of the human animal, at the humiliation and repression of the Immortal who
>
> arises as subject.[54]

This passage is of value in suggesting an approximate synonym for 'activist' in the form of 'militant', while also employing the contrast between the human animal and the 'Immortal.'

What could Badiou really mean by employing these tropes? He had, it seemed, been attempting to construct a decidedly modern—even 'more than modern'—philosophical system. Despite the fact that he has written on Paul,[55] religion and spirituality are of no substantial

positive value for Badiou, who writes with impressive bluntness "Let us posit *our* axioms. There is no God."[56]

But the most readily available ideas of immortality and of heroism seem decidedly religious and traditional in nature. On these conceptions, immortality is an inherent property of individual human souls. A person is made up of a mortal, physical body and an immortal, immaterial spiritual substance. To live in a way consistent with such a constitution requires denial of the body and its needs. And when it comes to heroism, the usual view would be that the hero is someone who performs a courageous self-sacrifice. The hero is one willing to give up his mortal life to, for instance, save a child from drowning, cleanse humanity of its sins, prevent the President from being struck by an assassin's bullet, and the like.

A likely objection, then, would be that Badiou is self-contradictorily deploying concepts from the very religious framework he explicitly rejects. But if Badiou's notions of immortality and heroism were to mean something quite different from those which are a part of that framework, the objection would not hold. The latter option, so it will be argued, is exactly what the texts bear out.

In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou introduces the notion of a 'point' of a world. He writes "By 'point', we understand here simply what confronts the global situation with singular choices, with decisions that involve the 'yes' and the 'no'."[57] In other words, a point is a circumstance within a world in which there is no neutral middle ground between continuing to alter the situation in light of the event and allowing the situation to remain how it is. It is a circumstance of absolute and forced choice between following the maxim 'Keep going!' and the evil of giving up.

Now, Badiou allows the theoretical possibility that there exist worlds in which there are no points at all, what he calls 'atonic' worlds.[58] Practically speaking, these worlds would be

without struggle or challenge, in which nothing is at stake. When describing such worlds, Badiou writes

> the declaration of the atony of a world may be simply ideological. Under the cover of a
> programme of familial happiness devoid of history, of unreserved   consumption and
> easy-listening euthanasia, it may mask—or even fight against—those tensions that reveal,
> within appearing, innumerable points worthy of being held to. To the violent promise of
> atony made by an armed democratic materialism, we can therefore oppose the search, in
> the nooks and crannies of the world, for some isolate on the basis of which it is possible
> to maintain that a 'yes' authorizes us to become the anonymous heroes of at least one
> point. To incorporate oneself into the True, it is always necessary to interrupt the banality
> of exchanges.[59]

The overall thrust of the first half of this passage is that when someone in power claims that, at present, nothing of importance is at stake and able to be fought for, their claim might well be a lie designed to keep us from joining in what important choices really do exist to still be made. But in spelling out the contrast in the second half of the passage, Badiou writes that encountering a point and making the choice to 'keep going'—saying 'yes' at that point—can make us 'the anonymous heroes' of the point. The word 'anonymous' is clearly key here, but its precise meaning is unclear. The hero would seem to be the opposite of an anonymous figure, for it is the names of heroes that are remembered over others.

In another passage, Badiou writes

I am sometimes told that I see in philosophy only a means to reestablish, against the

contemporary apologia of the futile and the everyday, the rights of heroism. Why not?

Having said that, ancient heroism claimed to justify life through sacrifice. My wish is to

make heroism exist through the affirmative joy which is universally generated by

following consequences through. We could say that the epic heroism of the one who

gives his life is supplanted by the mathematical heroism of the one who creates life, point

by point.[60]

Here, Badiou distinguishes between ancient, sacrificial, epic heroism and affirmative,

mathematical heroism. On the one hand, this contrast explains Badiou's speaking of anonymous

heroism, for the names of the heroes we remember—the non-anonymous heroes—tend to be of

the sacrificial sort. On the other hand, it might not be clear how any form of heroism could be

described as 'mathematical'.

Some of what Badiou says about the proof techniques used by mathematicians will

clarify the phrase. Badiou writes,

inside the mathematical text...*deduction*—which is to say the obligation of demonstration,

the principle of coherency, the rule of interconnection—is the means via which, at each

and every moment, ontological fidelity to the extrinsic eventness of ontology is realized.

The double imperative is that a new theorem attest its coherency with the situation (thus

with existing propositions)—this is the imperative of demonstration; and that the

consequences drawn from it be themselves regulated by an explicit law—this is the

imperative of deductive fidelity as such.[61]

That is, despite the fact that the theorems of mathematics are what rule out the event from

inclusion in being qua being, the rigorous deductions of a mathematical proof are still a model of

fidelity. The mathematician chooses axioms or assumptions, and follows through their

consequences in the strictest and most attentive way. Such a practice is put forward as an

analogue of fidelity to an event—one is to follow through the consequences of the event in the

world in the same dedicated, rigorous ways that the mathematician follows through the consequences of her axioms.[62]

A 'mathematical' heroism, then, is not a heroism modeled on the great courageous figures of the past—Achilles and company—but a heroism modeled on the actions of the mathematician. Of course, this does not mean that the giving of one's life in the name of fidelity to the event will never occur for the mathematical hero. Indeed, if the conclusion of the mathematician's proof was 'you must kill yourself', then qua mathematician, she would be bound to do so. If she did not, that action would be a denial and betrayal of the proof she had constructed and of the axioms which support it. Likewise, the logical consequence of fidelity to an event might well, in certain circumstances, entail the need to die. But in this instance, the death is not constitutive of the heroism, as it would be for epic heroism, but only a side-effect of it.

This distinction sheds the correct light on Badiou's avowal that "There is no hero of the event." What this sentence in fact means is that there is no epic hero of the event who can take personal credit for bringing forth the event through his self-sacrifice. But what there is, for Badiou, is the mathematical hero who devotes himself to following through the event's consequences. It is this form of heroism Badiou could well be referring to when he said "I am for heroism," for it is no contradiction to be for heroism and deny that heroism is possible if one means 'heroism' in different senses in each case. To practice fidelity is to embody that other, mathematical heroism; and, insofar as one is faithful, one is just such a hero, however little credit one can expect for such an accomplishment.

A similar distinction between different notions of immortality can also be discerned in Badiou's work. And, as with heroism, Badiou affirms immortality, but not in the usual sense of

the term. The next task is to determine in exactly what sense Badiou employs the concept of immortality.

There certainly are places in which Badiou seems to deploy the traditional sense of immortality. Quoting Pindar, Badiou writes "'Even so in one point we resemble, whether as great spirit or nature, Immortals.' Meaning that, being but a form and qua form—in the sense of the Platonic idea—the subject is immortal."[63] This particular instance calls up the image of the Socrates of the *Phaedo*, who argues that the soul will separate from the body upon death and pass into an afterlife.[64]

And in the context in which Badiou first introduces the concept of immortality in his writings, he is discussing the ways some people, thrust into the worst circumstances of torture and imprisonment, manage to resist their own dehumanizing reduction to mere victims. For Badiou, such resistance is not the purely instinctual resistance of, say, a tortured horse. He writes that with human beings

> we are dealing with an animal whose resistance, unlike that of a horse, lies not in his fragile body but in his stubborn determination to remain what he is—that is to say, precisely something other than a victim, other than a being-for-death, and thus: *something other than a mortal being*.[65]

What a human animal 'is' is an immortal, the passage seems to say. Likewise, Badiou adds "An immortal: this is what the worst situations that can be inflicted upon Man show him to be, in so far as he distinguishes himself within the varied and rapacious flux of life."[66] Here, what separates the human animal ('Man') from other animals, like the horse, is exactly its immortality.

In short, the language Badiou uses in these passages suggests a very traditional value scheme—a rejection of mere animality in favor of the uniquely human feature of immortality.

Notice also the way in which these passage tie into Badiou's distinction between the ontological sphere of being described by mathematics and the evental 'trans-being' which constitutes its exception. By saying that the subject 'is' immortal, that the human being 'is' something other than mortal, and that situations show man to 'be' immortal, Badiou seems to describe immortality as a feature existing at the level of being. Immortality would have to do with being rather than its evental interruption. Indeed, these two points are not unrelated. If Badiou were not talking about the being of man, the seemingly traditional language he employs could not have a traditional meaning.

But, there are some indications that Badiou does indeed intend something quite different. First, notice that Badiou said that the *subject* is immortal—this seems to be what 'Man' means. But, as earlier portions of this chapter suggested, for Badiou the subject is something that a person could become a part of, rather than something each person is all along by mere dint of being conscious. Along the same lines, Badiou writes of the subject

> If there is no ethics 'in general', that is because there is no abstract Subject, who would adopt it as his shield. There is only a particular kind of animal, convoked by certain circumstances to *become* a subject—or rather, to enter into the composing of a subject. This is to say that at a given moment, everything he is—his body, his abilities—is called upon to enable the passing of a truth along its path. This is when the human animal is convoked to be the Immortal that he was not yet.[67]

This passage both reaffirms the idea that the status of subject is, in a manner of speaking, an *achievement* and adds that the immortal is something a human being 'was not yet'. If there is a point at which a human animal is not yet an immortal, it would go to show that one is not immortal in one's being and from the start. Further, Badiou writes again

139

The fact that in the end we all die, that only dust remains, in no way alters Man's identity

as immortal at the instant in which he affirms himself as someone who runs counter to the

temptation of wanting-to-be-an-animal to which circumstances may expose him. And we

know that every human being is *capable* of being this immortal—unpredictably, be it in

circumstances great or small, for truths important or secondary.[68]

The language here clarifies even further by contrast what Badiou does not mean. He admits that

all human beings die. This on its own may perhaps be a point even a believer in an immortal soul

could admit, but the further clause that 'only dust [*poussière*] remains' is not, for a soul would be

much more than dust. More importantly, Badiou's description of immortality as being something

a human is capable of—rather than already is—and something that is part of his identity at a

certain instant in time—rather than at all times—begins to fill in the positive content of his non-

traditional alternative vision of immortality.

This is a slim beginning, however. That immortality is a possibility achieved at a

particular moment does intimate that immortality may have more to do with the event, with the

exception to being, than with being itself, but how exactly can the connection be explained?

The Aristotelian sources of Badiou's conception of immortality are helpful in explaining

the connection. In the conclusion to *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou says

We are now in a position to propose a response to what has always been the 'daunting'

question—as one of Julien Gracq's characters has it—the question that, however great its

detour, philosophy must ultimately answer: what is it to live? 'To live' obviously not in

the sense of democratic materialism (persevering in the free virtualities of the body), but

rather in the sense of Aristotle's enigmatic formula: to live 'as an Immortal'.[69]

The enigmatic formula Badiou refers to can be found in Chapter 7 of Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle argues that the life containing the most self-sufficient happiness is a life of philosophical study, since such study has no goal outside of itself. In this context, paragraph 8 (1177b26-1178a2) reads:

> Such a life would be superior to the human level. For someone will live it not insofar as he is a human being, but insofar as he has some divine element in him. And the activity of this divine element is as much superior to the activity in accord with the rest of virtue as this element is superior to the compound. Hence if understanding is something divine in comparison with a human being, so also will the life in accord with understanding be divine in comparison with human life. We ought not to follow the makers of proverbs and 'Think human, since you are human', or 'Think mortal, since you are mortal'. Rather, as far as we can, we ought to be pro-immortal, and go to all lengths to live a life in accord with our supreme element; for however much this element may lack in bulk, by much more it surpasses everything in power and value.[70]

Another translator renders the last part of this paragraph as "but we ought, so far as in us lies, to put on immortality, and do all that we can to live in conformity with the highest that is in us; for even if it is small in bulk, in power and preciousness it far excels all the rest."[71]

The correlations between Aristotle and Badiou in this respect are telling. In these passages, Aristotle seems to suggest not that human beings are literally immortal, but that they can live in a way which honors their connection to the immortal. This fits well with the materialist theory of the soul usually attributed to Aristotle, according to which the soul is the functioning of the—mortal—body. Badiou's description of his philosophical system as 'materialist' dialectic seems to accord with Aristotle in this respect as well, and his rough

paraphrase 'as an Immortal,' emphasizes Aristotle's own seeming indication that immortality has

to do with the way in which mortal life is lived. And this is not the only time Badiou paraphrases

Aristotle in this way.[72]

The 'as' in Badiou's paraphrase of Aristotle is also informative. Badiou crucially adds in a

footnote elsewhere, "'As' means 'as if one were'."[73] To live as an immortal, then, is to live *as if*

one were an immortal. The 'as if' can be elaborated as 'as if it were indeed the case that one were

immortal.' Of course, this means that one is not actually immortal—one can only live or act 'as if'

one were a certain way if one is not actually that way. The 'as if' indicates a kind of necessary

fictionality; a mortal cannot act 'as if' she were mortal, no more than an actual squirrel can

pretend to be a squirrel.

Taken together, the apparent Aristotelian origin of Badiou's notion suggests it concerns

the way in which mortal, material life is lived. It must be *this* that we are 'capable' of. Taken in

concert with his earlier comments, immortality will have something to do with how mortal life is

lived in its relation to the event, rather than to being. Still, what sort of life is it that that is 'as if'

immortal? What would a person be like who lived such a life?

In his *Ethics*, Badiou writes

We might put it like this: 'Never forget what you have encountered.' ...Not-forgetting

consists of thinking and practising the arrangement of my multiple-being according to the

Immortal which it holds, and which the piercing through of an encounter has composed

as subject.[74]

Though brief, a number of themes cross in this passage. First, notice that the passage itself calls

upon a distinction between multiple-being and the immortal, since it says that one arranges one's

multiple being according to the immortal, and that can only happen if the immortal is something

other than one's multiple being. At the same time, the passage says that the Immortal is 'composed as subject' by the encounter—by, that is, the encounter with an event. The subject, recall, is properly a subject faithful to the event. Hence, the 'not-forgetting' of which Badiou writes can be understood as the fidelity analyzed earlier. But that faithful subject, as was just argued a moment ago, is most fully embodied in Badiou's mathematical hero.

The point to which this leads, then, is that the three concepts of fidelity, heroism, and immortality form a kind of circuit in Badiou's ethics. A life which is fully faithful to the event would be a life lived as if immortal, an heroic life. The 'generic' structure of fidelity or faithful subjectivity, in other words, finds its thick content and concretization in the hero and in immortality.[75]

So, just as Badiou constructed a mathematical heroism in contrast to epic, sacrificial heroism, he also constructs a materialist, event-oriented conception of immortality in contrast to the traditional being-oriented notion that a person's soul lives on forever. In both cases, the same distinction can be drawn: on one side, there is a classical or traditional conception which ties heroism and immortality to the spiritual dimension of a personal being. On the other, there is a 'Badiouian' conception which ties heroism and immortality to the relational dimensions of an impersonal structure of subjectivity. It is the sometimes hard-to-spot, implicit nature of these distinctions in Badiou's work which led to the appearance that he endorsed the traditional conception, where in fact he was denying its validity altogether.

Conclusion

Badiou's attempt to construct a philosophical system which incorporates both classical philosophemes like truth and subjectivity as well as a modern affirmation of multiplicity gives

143

central place to the event. The event is, in that system, described in both its ontological, logical, and ethical dimensions.

Ontologically, the challenge for Badiou is to describe the event in its relationship to being, but without fully incorporating it into being. This he does by understanding the event as that which is not being qua being, as a break in being or a paradox of being. Logically, the event is taken to be a 'flash' in which the distribution of appearances in the world are drastically and dramatically upset.

The ethics which stems from this quasi-ontological and logical picture is, at one level, an ethics of fidelity. Fidelity involves realizing in the world the possible consequences of the event's interruption, thereby incorporating oneself into a genuine subjectivity. This is done by following the single maxim 'keep going!', in not giving up.

But at a different level, the notions of heroism and immortality are key for Badiou's ethics. In his work, traditional religious notions of heroism and immortality are rejected in favor of his own somewhat more idiosyncratic constructions. The hero, for Badiou, is the one who fully practices fidelity, come what may. Immortality is the name of a form of life lived by such a hero. In short, the notions of heroism and immortality flesh out the more abstract, structural level—centered on fidelity—of Badiou's ethics.

NOTES

1. Alain Badiou. <u>Being and Event.</u> Trans. Oliver Feltham. Continuum Press, 2006. Pg. 19. This text will be cited as "BE" below.

2. Alain Badiou. <u>Logics of Worlds.</u> Trans. Alberto Toscano. Continuum Press, 2009. Pg. 95. This text will be cited as "LW" below.

3. BE, xii.

4. Alain Badiou. "Universal Truths and the Question of Religion: An Interview with Alain Badiou." *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture*, vol. 3, issue 1. Fall 2005. Pg. 41.

5. Alain Badiou. <u>Deleuze: The Clamour of Being.</u> University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Pg. 46.

6. LW, 301.

7. BE, 1.

8. See, for example, LW 1-3, where he says "'Postmodern' is one of the possible names for contemporary democratic materialism." (LW, 2) to which his own 'materialist dialectic' is opposed.

9. See note 4 above.

10. Alain Badiou. <u>Theoretical Writings.</u> Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (eds). Continuum, 2005. Pg. xvi. Cited as 'TW' below.

11. BE, 8.

12. TW, 100.

13. BE, 179.

14. BE, 189.

15. Here I follow Badiou, BE 180.

16. BE, 190.

17. BE, 190.

18. BE, 13 and 173, respectively. The French in both cases is "ce qui n'est pas l'etre-en-tant-qu'etre," with differing hyphenations.

19. See, for instance, Martin Heidegger. "What is Metaphysics?" In <u>Basic Writings.</u> David Farrell Krell (ed). HarperCollins, 1977. Pgs. 95-112, esp. 97-106.

20. Alain Badiou. <u>Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy.</u> Trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (eds). Continuum, 2005. Pg. 140.

21. BE, 173.

22. LW, 391. The reader will notice slight differences in the formalisms presented in some of the passages I've cited. These reflect the particular circumstances within which Badiou was making the quoted statements, and do not undermine my points. All of the formalisms capture the same formal structure of paradoxical self-belonging which is at issue.

23. LW, 380.

24. Perhaps this was what Diogenes was suggesting in his attempt to refute Zeno by walking.

25. TW, 100.

26. Alain Badiou. <u>Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil.</u> Trans. Peter Hallward. Verso, 2002. Pg. 68. Cited as "E" below.

27. In the texts dealt with in this chapter, I count 6 uses of this image, aside from the 'illumination' mentioned above: E 72; TW 103; and LW 144, 368, 507, and 508.

28. Here I draw from LW 109-139.

29. LW, 343.

30. LW, 360.

31. The fact that Badiou's formal definitions of the event have both an ontological and a logical dimension, but not a psychological dimension, is missed in the secondary literature. For Dews to think of the event as a moment of inspiration is to interpret the event as a psychological occurrence rather than an occurrence in Being or appearing. A similar point holds for Norris's reading, on which an event is a point at whcih intellectual resources run out or an injustice is exposed. These may well turn out to be cases of events, but it would be because of the ontological or logical features of the cases rather than their psychological or political features. Noys' understanding the event as an exception to a normal state of affairs and Laclau's reading of the event as the presentation of a situation's void are closer to the truth, for 'state of affairs' and 'situation' seem to be ontological or logical terms. See 1) Peter Dews. "States of Grace: The Excess of the Demand in Badiou's Ethics of Truths." In <u>Think Again: Alain Badiou and the</u>

Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004; 2) Christopher Norris. "Alain Badiou: Truth, Ethics, and the Formal Imperative." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, vol. 65 (sup). 2009; 3) Benjamin Noys. "Badiou's Fidelities: Reading the Ethics." *Communication and Cognition,* vol. 36, no. 1-2. 2003; 4) Ernesto Laclau. "An Ethics of Militant Engagement." In Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004.

32. Alain Badiou. "On Evil: An Interview with Alain Badiou." *Cabinet Magazine*, issue 5. Fall 2001. Taken from http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/alainbadiou.php. Accessed 31 August 2011. No page numbers given.

33. See, for instance, "What is Love?" in Alain Badiou. Conditions. Trans. Steven Corcoran. Continuum, 2008. Pgs. 179-198, especially pg. 188.

34. BE, 433. This should strengthen the sense that Dews and Norris are wrong to interpret events in psychological or subject-oriented terms, for there is no subject prior to the event for Badiou.

35. LW, 453.

36. For which see LW, 50-72.

37. E, lvii.

38. E, lviii.

39.Thus, Noys and Pluth need not hold that there are any important differences between earlier and later Badiou. Instead, Pluth's own point that the faithful subject is basic in Badiou lets us see his apparently differing schemes as unified. See 1) Benjamin Noys. "Badiou's Fidelities: Reading the Ethics." *Communication and Cognition,* vol. 36, no. 1-2. 2003 and 2) Ed Pluth. Badiou: A Philosophy of the New. Polity, 2010.

40. E, 50.

41. E, 90-91. 'Keep going!' translates 'Continuez!'

42. E, 79. Here, 'sole' translates 'unique'.

43. This may be what Laclau means when he interprets fidelity as a way of sticking to the visibility opened by the event, though my sense is that the point is better put in terms of logical consequences rather than in phenomenological terms of visibility. See Ernesto Laclau. "An Ethics of Militant Engagement." In Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004.

44. E, 41-2.

45. E, 42. 'Living' is 'habiter'.

46. See note 31 above.

47. E, 40.

48. E, 60.

49. E, 85.

50. E, 48.

51. E, 44.

52. Laclau, Critchley, and Norris, then, are right to point out the formalistic nature of Badiou's ethics though, as I suggest in the next section, this is not the whole story. Laclau's further criticism that Badiou's ethics "do not provide criteria for moral choice", however, does not hold. Laclau certainly is right that Badiou does not provide such criteria, but providing them was never Badiou's task to begin with. Laclau's criticism is thus beside the point. For Laclau's criticism, see Ernesto Laclau. "An Ethics of Militant Engagement." In Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy. Peter Hallward (ed). Continuum, 2004. Pg. 129. For Critchley's and Norris' points about formalism, see Simon Critchley. "On the Ethics of Alain Badiou." In Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions. Gabriel Riera (ed). SUNY, 2005 and Christopher Norris. "Alain Badiou: Truth, Ethics, and the Formal Imperative." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, vol. 65 (sup). 2009.

53. BE, 207. "Il n'y a pas de héro de l'événement."

54. E, 75.

55. See Alain Badiou. Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism. Trans. Ray Brassier. Stanford University Press, 2003. On pg. 1 of that book, he writes "For me, truth be told, Paul is not an apostle or a saint. I care nothing for the Good News he declares, or the cult dedicated to him. But he is a subjective figure of primary importance."

56. E, 25.

57. LW, 51.

58. LW, 420 reads "A world is said to be *atonic* when its transcendental is devoid of points."

59. LW, 422.

60. LW, 514.

61. BE, 242.

62. Hence, Norris is right to draw attention to the analogies Badiou sees between the ethical and the mathematical. However, he overstates the point somewhat in saying that Badiou's admiration for rigor and commitment is the "ethical core to the work…" See Christopher Norris. "Alain Badiou: Truth, Ethics, and the Formal Imperative." *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, vol. 65 (sup). 2009. Pg. 1109.

63. LW, 49.

64. See Plato. *Phaedo*.

65. E, 11-12.

66. E, 12.

67. E, 40.

68. E, 12.

69. LW, 507. The formula reads "vivre 'en Immortel'" in the French.

70. Aristotle. <u>Nicomachean Ethics.</u> Trans. Terence Irwin. Hackett, 1999. Pgs. 164-65.

71. Aristotle. <u>Nicomachean Ethics.</u> Trans. J.A.K. Thompson. Penguin, 2004. Pgs. 272.

72. The phrase is given in quotes, without reference, again at LW 40 and in <u>The Communist Hypothesis</u>. Trans. David Macey and Steve Corcoran. Verso, 2010. Pg. 239, footnote 7.

73. Alain Badiou. <u>The Communist Hypothesis</u>. Trans. David Macey and Steve Corcoran. Verso, 2010. Pg. 239, footnote 7.

74. E, 52.

75. It seems, then, that Laclau, Critchley, and Norris are right in their agreement that Badiou's ethics is highly formal. I only mean to add that it is not *purely* formal, for there are concrete images of what his formal ethical concepts look like when embodied. See note 52 above.

CHAPTER V

THE DETACHMENT OF THE EVENT: BEYOND STOICISM

Introduction

This chapter is both historical and comparative. Part One has offered interpretations only of individual bodies of work, dealing with Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each separately. This is a necessary groundwork for discussing the interrelationships between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou without forcibly imposing onto them an inappropriate pre-conceived framework, but on its own is insufficient to show that there is something to learn by reading this group of thinkers together.

This chapter brings together the three ways of thinking just analyzed by situating them against the backdrop of their main historical predecessors—the Stoics and Heidegger—in a way that reveals their convergences and divergences. Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou can each be understood as radicalizing aspects of Heidegger's thinking of *ereignis* against a Stoic view according to which the event is determined in its occurrence by an external force or entity. Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each detach the event from those forces or entities which would determine its occurrence and thus call into question the conception of ethical life as a harmonious totality which was founded upon that determination. With this backdrop in place, key differences between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou become clearer.

The first section of this chapter describes how the rethinking of Platonism inaugurated by Nietzsche is taken up by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou in slightly different but related ways. The second section looks at the Stoics and suggests that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou could each

argue in the same fashion against the Stoics. The third section analyzes each thinker's comments on Heidegger and suggests that they each make more explicit the points at which his thinking of *ereignis* breaks with the Stoics. With this framework in place, the fourth section looks at written exchanges between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou to delineate some important divergences between them that can be properly understood in light of the earlier sections. The fifth section then relates these divergences back to the engagements with Heidegger analyzed in section three.

<div align="center">The Triad and the Tradition</div>

As thinkers who are historically self-conscious, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each situate their philosophical researches in relation to the history of philosophy as a whole. Though in different ways in each case, the questioning and rethinking of the Platonic tradition inaugurated by Nietzsche forms the most immediate background to the work of each of these three thinkers.

Deleuze sees his work as calling into question what he calls 'the traditional image of thought'— according to which a self-identical subject identifies and represents in a concept the different objects that correspond to it—in a way which upsets its subordination of difference. In what he describes as "the first book in which I tried to 'do philosophy',"[1] Deleuze calls into question the traditional image of thought and its subordination of difference to identity. He writes

> The thinking subject brings to the concept its subjective concomitants: memory, recognition and self-consciousness. Nevertheless, it is the moral vision of the world which is thereby extended and represented in this subjective identity affirmed as a *common sense*. When difference is subordinated by the thinking subject to the identity of

<div align="center">149</div>

the concept (even when this identity is synthetic), difference in thought disappears. In other words, what disappears is that difference that thinking makes in thought, that *genitality* of thinking, that profound fracture of the I which leads it to think only in thinking its own passion, and even its own death, in the pure and empty form of time. To restore difference in thought is to untie this first knot which consists of representing difference through the identity of the concept and the thinking subject.[2]

On the model of the traditional image of thought, to think is for the subject to recognize and represent objects under concepts. In thinking about an object, I recognize and 'identify' it as what it is, as a table, chair, or the like. As a consequence, in thinking, the subject remains what it is, while the represented objects and representing concepts likewise maintain their own identities.

But "Such an orientation," Deleuze writes, "is a hindrance to philosophy."[3] Instead of allowing this image to prejudge everything,[4] Deleuze instead seeks a new strategy. This means, as he says of Artaud, that "the problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which pre-exists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist...To think is to create..."[5] In other words, to think "without image"[6] or in a way that does not presume the traditional image of thought—to do philosophy in a way which does not subordinate difference to identity—requires thinking in a way that literally *makes a difference*.[7]

This is not unrelated to the history of philosophy for, as Deleuze writes, "perhaps the majority of philosophers had subordinated difference to identity…"[8] On the same page, he cites Aristotle, Leibniz, and Hegel as examples of that majority. When describing why the subject of *Difference and Repetition* is "manifestly in the air", he cites "a generalized anti-Hegelianism" characteristic of the times.[9] Also cited earlier in Chapter One was a passage in which Deleuze wrote that "To reverse Platonism is first and foremost to remove essences and to substitute

events in their place, as jets of singularities."[10] It seems, then, that Deleuze's thinking of the event

is one aspect of a complex project which breaks with a certain tradition which runs from Plato

through to Hegel, a tradition with specific characteristics that include the commitment to a

particular image of thought, a valuation of identity over difference, and, of course, a not

unrelated valuing of transcendence over immanence.

Derrida viewed his work, as described in Chapter Two, as an intensification of

Nietzsche's and Heidegger's critique of metaphysics. Instead of 'reversing' Platonism, one aspect

of deconstruction, it was explained, is that it subverts the structures of metaphysics from within

since, at the closure of metaphysics, it cannot simply be escaped or stepped outside of. Given the

figures which Derrida reads—Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Husserl, as well as

Heidegger[11]—it seems that there is a significant overlap with the tradition which Deleuze seeks

to upset.

As Chapter Three described, though Badiou sees himself as a latter-day Platonist, he is no

merely deferential devotee of Plato, for he aims to rethink what Platonism means in light of set

theory's non-Platonic affirmation of pure multiplicity. And in the course of this rewriting of

Platonism in a 'more than modern' context, Badiou reconsiders figures as diverse as Aristotle,

Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger[12]—roughly the same

tradition as Deleuze and Derrida.

Thus, the pattern that emerges is one in which all three thinkers share a basic relationship

to the traditional canon of Western philosophy that stems from Plato, one in which the tradition

is critically reconsidered in its entirety, a project most easily traceable to Nietzsche. Though

Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each have different reasons for engaging in such reconsideration

and display very different strategies for doing so, it remains true that the questioning and

rethinking of the Platonic tradition inaugurated by Nietzsche forms the general context within which their work takes place.

On its own, this point might seem rather trivial, for the idea that contemporary European philosophy owes many of its distinctive features to Nietzsche's questioning of Platonic metaphysics seems obvious. But what is not trivial is the way this has affected how Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each think the event. The next two sections examine these effects.

Stoic Ethical Thought

Though there is no lack of internal disagreement and division between the various members of the Stoic tradition that stretches from Ancient Greece and Rome, certain telling patterns in Stoic ethical thinking surrounding the event are quite consistent.

Plutarch quotes Chrysippus, one of the Greek founders of Stoicism, as saying

For since universal nature reaches everywhere, it must be the case that however anything happens in the whole and in any of its parts it happens in accordance with universal nature and its reasons in unhindered sequence, because neither is there anything which could interfere with its government from outside, nor is there any way for any of the parts to enter any process or state except in accordance with universal nature.[13]

The argument here can be paraphrased as follows. The universe is a whole which is subdivided into many parts. This whole and each of its parts are determined in their behaviors by nature and its reasons. Anything that happens, then—any events—must be expressions of that nature and its reasons. If this were not so, then one would need to posit either something outside the universe or some sort of uncaused effect, both of which Chrysippus takes to be absurd. As this argument

152

would have it, the event is taken to express or be determined by something other than itself, something greater than it—in this case, *logos*, *physis*, or even 'God'.

Now, in this passage, Chrysippus does not point to any particular ethical consequences of his argument, but other Stoic thinkers like Epictetus draw them clearly. In his *Discourses*, Epictetus is reported to have said "true instruction is this: learning to will that things happen as they do. And how do they happen? As the appointer of them has appointed."[14] His many other references to 'Zeus', 'god', and 'providence' provide other names for this appointer and other evidence of his belief in its existence, and therefore of Epictetus' agreement with the argument of Chrysippus. The ethical insights Epictetus builds on the basis of that agreement can be seen when he asks "To what purpose, then, do philosophers have precepts to offer? To this purpose, that whatever happens, we keep and continue to keep our ruling faculty in accord with nature. Do you think this a small thing? No, but the greatest."[15] The suggestion here is that the ethical achievement of the Stoic sage is to maintain his rational self-command in all circumstances, even in the worst of situations and in light of the most violent events. For if all events are the result of or happen in accordance with nature or reason, and if virtue consists in exercising one's rational capacities in a way that is also consistent with that nature or reason, then the proper response to events is one which both accepts their occurrence and remains essentially indifferent to them. That is, "whatever happens, if it be outside the sphere of choice, is nothing to me."[16]

The general pattern shown in these texts is that events are, in their happening, determined by a force or being—*logos, physis*, reason, providence, the gods, or nature—which controls them and ensures their essential accord with our ethical lives and moral identities. It could be said that for the Stoic 'everything happens for a reason', to use an often heard phrase.

The accord between events and ethical life has important consequences for Stoic theories of happiness and virtue. Fifth century anthologist and commentator Stobaeus writes the following about the earlier Stoics:

> They say that being happy is the end, for the sake of which everything is done, but which is not itself done for the sake of anything. This consists in living in accordance with virtue, in living in agreement, or, what is the same, living in accordance with nature. Zeno defined happiness in this way: 'Happiness is a good flow of life.' Cleanthes too has made use of this definition in his writings, as have Chrysippus and all their successors, saying that happiness is no different from the happy life.[17]

Notice that the Stoics employ the same basic argument as Aristotle does to show that happiness is the overall goal of action.[18] Also like Aristotle, the Stoics identify happiness with a certain type of life; namely, a virtuous life. But what is distinct about the Stoics here is that the virtuous and happy life is construed as one lived 'in accordance with nature'—the same universal nature or reason which was seen to be the determinant of events a moment ago. Further, the idea that this life corresponds to a 'good flow of life' suggests that it is a life in which nothing that happens radically breaks, ruptures, or throws off track its course. What this passage suggests, then, is that the Stoic vision of a good life is the vision of a life with a certain overarching structure; it is a life which, so to speak, moves in a straight line rather than a jagged one, for it is a life all the elements of which flow from and are consistent with reason, nature, and so on.

> Two other passages are also helpful here. Stobaeus quotes Chrysippus as saying
>
> The man who progresses to the furthest point performs all proper functions without exception and omits none. Yet his life…is not yet happy, but happiness supervenes on it

when these intermediate actions acquire the additional properties of firmness and tenor and their own particular fixity.[19]

And Plutarch says of the Stoics

They say that the virtues are inter-entailing, not only because he who has one has them all but also because he who does any action in accordance with one does so in accordance with them all. For they say that a man is not perfect unless he possesses all the virtues nor an action either, unless it is performed in accordance with all the virtues.[20]

To perform a function well constitutes a virtue. And these passages suggest that the person who lives the Stoic life performs all such functions. Indeed, to perform one of those functions well is to perform all of them well. The happy life, on this conception, is a set of actions or activities that is both logically *closed* and logically *complete.* The activities which constitute this life are logically closed because any of those activities and its associated virtue entails one or more of the other activities which constitutes that life, but it does not entail any activities which do not constitute that life. And the set of actions and activities is logically complete because there are not actions, activities, or virtues which constitute the good life which are not entailed by some member of the set. To engage in the actions or activities in that set is to perform all and only the proper functions of a human being, and therein to display all and only the virtues of a human being. So, the actions and activities that make up a good life form an internally harmonious whole, a bounded and unified totality.

Drawing these last few points together, then, it can be said that Stoic views of the event and of ethics are not unconnected. If ethical life is to be the closed, linear, and harmonious totality the Stoics think it is, then what happens in and to that life would need to be in essential

155

accord with it; if that were not the case, such a structure would be impossible, or at least threatened.

Hence, on a Stoic view, whenever something happens, one can automatically tell, just because it has happened, that it should have happened and that it was reasonable that it happened. One could say, with Hegel, that the real is the rational and the rational is the real.[21] Though it would be the case that, at the level of our partial, finite, and embedded knowledge that we might not have direct access or understanding of *how* exactly a specific event is reasonable, we could rest assured that this ignorance is a mere artifact of our limitations as knowers, and not representative of any flaw in the world or in our ethical lives. For, at the level of being or of the actual facts of our ethical lives, we could rest assured that the events that befall us are expressions of some greater plan, purpose, or design. Whatever happens is automatically justified and we can remain secure in that sense of justification. Some force or other is in charge of what happens.

In this way, ethical life is a well-ordered totality, a bounded and unified whole. Ethical life is continuous, rather than discontinuous: its temporality is linear and developmental, and a true narrative of it would be free of breaks or sudden departures. Ethical life cannot be punctured or thrown from equilibrium by events.

Now it has already been suggested that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, though they seem to agree on which thinkers constitute the Platonic tradition, do have slightly different conceptions of what the meaning of that tradition is. Still, they can each be suspicious of the Stoics as one instance of the aspects of Platonism about which they worry.

Deleuze has much that is positive to say about the Stoics,[22] but consider what would be true if the event's occurrence was determined by *logos* or the other entities and forces named by

156

the Stoics. Mainly, such determination would ensure that the event is the expression of the order

or design of *logos*. If this were the case, the event would be causally linked to previous states of

affairs by efficient causation or to later states of affairs by teleological causation, because this is

the only way in which the universe as a whole would form a single coherent totality. This linking

would reduce the event to a mere shift in a state of affairs, in principle deducible from an

exhaustive description of those states of affairs. But, such a conception runs afoul of what was

said of Deleuze in Chapter One. There, it became clear that Deleuze distinguishes events from

what he considers mere alterations in states of affairs. As a consequence, he would also need to

object to the determination of the event by *logos* or the other names mentioned by the Stoics.

Moreover, there is a second reason why Deleuze should question the way in which events

would be expressions of and consequences of *logos* on the Stoic conception. The determination

of the event by *logos* would figure the event as a sign of the identity of *logos*: if I encounter one

event, I have encountered the operations of *logos*; if I encounter another event, I have also

encountered the operations of *logos*. Such a conception would clearly associate the event with

identity rather than difference, making the Stoics a part of the tradition which Deleuze aims to

upset in *Difference and Repetition.*

Further, it is clear that the ethical ideal which fits best with the Stoic conception of the

event is that of the sage. A key feature of the Stoic sage is *apatheia*, or his ability to be morally

and emotionally unaffected by what happens to him. The sage's power to remain unchanged is

itself a power of maintaining his own identity in the face of what happens to him. That on its

own is another symptom of the sort of thinking Deleuze aims to upset. It also illustrates that

Deleuze's 'mime' figure is distinct from that of the sage. The mime must become worthy of the

event by unlocking it in new circumstances. Thus, unlike the sage, the mime must become different after her encounter with an event.

Points analogous to these hold for Derrida. Again, imagine that the event was determined by *logos*. As before, this would mean that the event's occurrence would be an expression and consequence of *logos*. What would matter for Derrida is that this fact would underwrite the adequacy to the event of other structures of *logos*. If the event is an expression of *logos*, then my reason and its concepts, also expressions of *logos*, are the only things that can grasp it—indeed, the event and the concept would be of a piece, arising out of a common origin. But of course, Derrida's thought questioned the ways in which the event was graspable by concepts and the subjects who employ them. For him, the event subverts the structures favored by the metaphysics of presence. It seems that for the Stoics, on the contrary, it supports them.

A version of the points made above about the Stoic sage hold not only for Deleuze, but for Derrida as well. For the Stoic sage, a genuine encounter with an event, it was argued, leaves his identity as a subject intact. This means that the sage is not caught up in the turbulence of the event in the ways performed by Derrida's texts; he is not drawn after the event into a space of self-questioning. Derrida, one imagines, could argue against the Stoics that an encounter with an event should put the sage's own conception of sagehood into question. For the Stoics themselves, it clearly does not.

Much the same can be said of Badiou. Even though he aims to refound Platonism on multiplicity rather than reverse or subvert it, there are at least two points where even he would need to criticize the Stoics for being a part of a questionable tradition. Firstly, Badiou seeks to refound Platonism on the multiple rather than on the One (which he sometimes calls the 'One-All'). But, as will be mentioned later, part of what Badiou worries about in Deleuze is his relation

with the Stoics. The passages from *Logics of Worlds* in which Badiou voices those worries suggest that, for him, the Stoics are thinkers of the One and not of multiplicity, making them a symptom of an un-refounded Platonism. Badiou writes that for the Stoics and for Deleuze, "The event is the ontological realization of the eternal truth of the One…the gift of the One amid the concatenation of multiplicities."[23] The way in which the event is made a figure of the One would, one presumes, not survive Badiou's reconstruction of Platonism on the multiple.

Further, as was explained in Chapter Three, Badiou emphasizes the way in which the event and fidelity to it display a "heterogeneity to opinion and established knowledges".[24] But if the event were to happen in accordance with *logos*, then knowledge of it would in principle be deducible from knowledge of the arrangement of situations prior to the event because it would arise from the causal linkages existing between situations. This would mean that the event would not be a paradoxical break in being, but only a lesser form of change.

Finally, as with Deleuze and Derrida, the ideal of Stoic sagehood must be contrasted with the image proposed by Badiou's ethics. Though it may seem that Badiou's immortal heroism is quite close to the sage, that appearance is undermined when it is remembered that what defines the hero is fidelity to a break in being, even at the cost of one's life or identity. The sage's *apatheia* preserves his identity and is unrelated to any break in being. Thus, it cannot be defined as a kind of fidelity.

There is a similar worry in all three cases. If the event is as Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou say, then the Stoic way of thinking the event as the expression of a force or being must be a reduction of the event to a non-event. For Deleuze, it reduces the event to a type of identity or to a shift in a state of affairs. For Derrida, it reduces the event to an occurrence graspable by structures of the metaphysics of presence. For Badiou, it reduces the event to a lesser form of

change that does not involve a paradox of being. Given this, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou could each deploy a similar argument against the Stoics. They could each suggest that the Stoics strip events of their definitive features in an attempt to make events seem reasonable. But that attempt, they could say, ends up flattening or crushing events altogether.

Heidegger and *Ereignis*

Though Heidegger appears not to have written about the Stoics,[25] his later thinking of or from *ereignis* breaks with the Stoic way of thinking the event. Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each bring out certain implicit or de-emphasized features of that break in their own thinking of the event.

Though even in the early *Being and Time* Being had a verbal and evental sense for Heidegger, he did not explicitly think Being as *ereignis* until the later works in which, as he puts it, he attempted "to shape the question of *Being and Time* in a more primordial fashion" by way of "an immanent criticism" of its point of departure.[26] In the *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event), The Event,* and in his lecture on "Time and Being," Heidegger attempts to speak and think of and from *ereignis* in a fashion that is otherwise than metaphysical. Methodologically, this attempt requires Heidegger to think and write meditatively rather than calculatively and representationally.[27] In the *Contributions*, he writes both that "The issue is no longer to be 'about' something, to present something objective, but to be appropriated over to the appropriating event," and that "Here the speaking is not something over and against what is to be said but is this latter itself as the essential occurrence of beyng."[28] In other words, Heidegger is not trying to produce a series of propositions which would present to his reader information or facts about the event; he is not trying to provide a picture of the event. In *The Event*, he similarly writes that

160

"This 'presentation' does not describe and report; it is neither 'system' nor 'aphorisms.' Only apparently is it a 'presentation.' It is an attempt at a replying word, a grounding word; the saying of the endurance; but merely a timber trail off the beaten path."[29] So rather than propositionally state facts about events, Heidegger is trying to let his own thinking become a site wherein the happening or occurring of the event can be shown.

As Heidegger's denial of a systematic or aphoristic nature to his thinking suggests, unlike its calculative or representational counterpart, this manner of thinking does not issue in stable conclusions or theorems. Heidegger writes "To be sure, the event must never be represented immediately and objectively,"[30] and again that "We must learn to experience the event as the appropriating event… . The event can never, in the manner of an idea, be established and presented."[31] Were one to present finished, fact-stating propositions about the event, one would be treating it as if it were an object and would thereby miss what is distinctive about it. Instead, Heidegger's thinking has a different aim. He writes that "Beyng becomes that which is alienating and specifically such that the grounding of its truth heightens the strangeness and maintains all beings *of* this beyng in the strangeness characteristic of beyng."[32] In letting thinking become attuned to the event Heidegger is attempting to let the event bring into question those beings with which it might be mistakenly identified or in terms of which it might be inadequately described. This meditative thinking, then, allows the matter of thought to destabilize and call into question that very thinking itself. Instead of making the event less strange, it allows the event to make other things stranger.

At the same time, Heidegger's thinking of the event has a key theme to which it continually returns. One of the most frequently repeated refrains of the *Contributions* is "Beyng essentially occurs as the event."[33] To read this as saying that Being is an entity or force which

makes events happen or causes them to happen would be to interpret Heidegger metaphysically or onto-theologically. But Heidegger is not simply replacing the *logos* or 'God' of the Stoics with 'Being'. Rather, the point is that Being itself is happening. This is a made clearest in a marginal notation in *The Event* in which Heidegger notes "not: being and then the event 'with' it, but being itself the event and only this."[34] To think Being in a way that does not conflate it with beings means to think Being as happening or as event. *Ereignis* is the name for this happening. In thinking according to *ereignis*, Heidegger thus breaks with the Stoics rather than repeats them.

Though Heidegger described Being as the appropriating event, expropriation is also a key dimension of *ereignis*. In "Time and Being," Heidegger says

> Insofar as the destiny of Being lies in the extending of time, and time, together with
> Being, lies in Appropriation, Appropriating makes manifest its peculiar property, that
> Appropriation withdraws what is most fully its own from boundless unconcealment.
> Thought in terms of Appropriating, this means: in that sense it expropriates itself of itself.
> Expropriation belongs to Appropriation as such.[35]

If by 'appropriation', one understands the bringing of things into what is proper to them, then Heidegger is saying that the occurrence of Being makes it possible for beings to be what and how they are, to have identities and to enter into relationships with each other throughout the course of their existence. But, when happening or occurrence opens up these possibilities and gives forth beings, the happening or occurrence itself gets covered over by those beings. That is, happening or occurring withdraws from the world or context it produces, rather than stabilizing into an identifiable entity within that world or context. As Heidegger puts it, "withdrawal must belong to what is peculiar to the Appropriation."[36] This is no doubt how it is possible for metaphysical thinking to reduce Being to beings—the withdrawal of Being itself makes such a

162

mistake very easy. In attempting to not fall prey to it, Heidegger instead tries to attune his thinking to occurring or happening itself, rather than the things that come forward in the occurring or happening, and to open himself to the destabilizing forces that such an attempt releases.

Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each have a double stance toward Heidegger, both criticizing aspects of his thinking while also converging with it in many ways. Delineating this double stance and explaining the tension between its two sides requires examining some of the comments each of the triad of philosophers has made about Heidegger's work.

Though Deleuze's writings do not confront Heidegger in a very sustained and detailed way, the passages in which he does mention Heidegger provide enough material to come to some conclusions about his view of the German thinker's work. Some of Deleuze's comments are quite positive. He writes, for instance,

> There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice. We say Duns Scotus because he was the one who elevated univocal being to the highest point of subtlety, albeit at the price of abstraction. However, from Parmenides to Heidegger it is the same voice which is taken up, in an echo which itself forms the whole development of the univocal. A single voice raises the clamour of being.[37]

This passage is also quite complimentary to Heidegger, as it includes him in the canon of thinkers of the univocity of being whom Deleuze greatly respects.[38]

But the majority of Deleuze's statements about Heidegger's work are rather more negative. Indeed, some thirty pages after the above quote, Deleuze provides a "*Note on*

Heidegger's Philosophy of Difference" in which, after summarizing Heidegger's theses on the topic, he writes

> If it is true that some commentators have found Thomist echos in Husserl, Heidegger, by contrast, follows Duns Scotus and gives renewed splendour to the Univocity of Being. But does he effectuate the conversion after which univocal Being belongs only to difference and, in this sense, revolves around being? Does he conceive of *being* in such a manner that it will be truly disengaged from any subordination in relation to the identity of representation? It would seem not, given his critique of the Nietzschean eternal return.[39]

Heidegger's affirmation of the univocity of Being, in other words, is incomplete because it does not give way to the affirmation represented by Nietzsche's thought of the eternal return. Indeed, in a footnote to *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze writes "Heidegger gives an interpretation of Nietzschean philosophy closer to his own than to Nietzsche's. ...This interpretation neglects all that Nietzsche fought against. Nietzsche is opposed to every conception of affirmation which would find its foundation in Being, and its determination in the being of man."[40] Notice that in both of these passages, Heidegger's concept of Being constitutes a central focus of Deleuze's criticism—he wonders whether Heidegger's concept is still regulated by a valuing of identity and representation, and seems to think that it constitutes a backsliding from Nietzsche's liberation of affirmation from its foundation on the concept of Being.

In a similar vein, Deleuze compares Heidegger's view of the Greeks to Hegel's. In that context he claims

> What remains common to Heidegger and Hegel is having conceived of the relationship of Greece and philosophy as an origin and thus as the point of departure of a history internal

to the West, such that *philosophy necessarily becomes indistinguishable from its own history*. However close he got to it, Heidegger betrays the movement of deterritorialization because he fixes it once and for all between being and beings, between the Greek territory and the Western earth that the Greeks would have called Being.[41]

The claim of this paragraph is that, by treating the history of philosophy as stemming from an original Greek intuition of Being, Heidegger treats that history as a narrative without sudden breaks, twists and turns, or chance departures from linearity. In so doing, the concept of Being acts as a force which unifies and solidifies a certain canon and a certain sense of philosophy's possibilities. Here again, the concept of Being—and also of the ontological difference—is the point at which Heidegger's work freezes movement.

Thus, what little Deleuze did write concerning Heidegger suggests that, though there is much he appreciates in Heidegger's work, he sees Heidegger employing his concept of Being in such a way that its more Nietzschean, affirmative possibilities are closed off in favor of the fragments of representational, identitarian thinking that remain within that concept.

Though Deleuze does not mention the event or Heidegger's *ereignis* in these passages, they are not unrelated to what Deleuze has said. That Heidegger 'fixes' deterritorialization indicates the force of transcendence is still at work in his thinking in that "Transcendence enters as soon as movement of the infinite is stopped."[42] And, recalling a passage quoted in Chapter One:

a mime neither reproduces the state of affairs nor imitates the lived; it does not give an image but constructs the concept. …Philosophy's sole aim is to become worthy of the event, and it is precisely the conceptual persona who counter-effectuates the event. Mime

is an ambiguous name. It is he or she, the conceptual persona carrying out the infinite movement.[43]

That Heidegger's concept of Being has a 'fixing' function implies that it helps transcendence to enter the picture. And the transcendent function of that concept prevents the very same movement that the mime performs, a movement in which the event is counter-actualized. So, it would seem that for Deleuze, to the extent that Heidegger's thinking of *ereignis* identifies Being and *ereignis*, the movement of *ereignis* itself is frozen and denied rather than affirmed.

But given what was said above about Heidegger's later work, it does not seem that Deleuze is that far from Heidegger. For, firstly, Deleuze's point that, like Nietzsche, Heidegger should be 'opposed to every conception of affirmation which would find its foundation in Being, and its determination in the being of man' seems quite consistent with Heidegger's own later thinking. This suggests that the real target of Deleuze's criticisms is the early, pre-*Contributions* Heidegger. But the reading of the later Heidegger given above indicated that Being should not be taken as a transcendent force or entity, for Being is happening or occurring itself and not what produces it. This also means that Heidegger is quite far from a Hegelian history in which each stage is a necessary and determined outcome of the earlier stages. For if Being is sheer happening which no force or entity determines, there is nothing other than Being which could render its happening—or the ways of thinking that happening—necessary. Indeed, Heidegger's notion of a 'destruktion' of the history of philosophy is about opening up hitherto unexplored possibilities from the history of philosophy,[44] those 'timber trails' off the beaten path which Heidegger mentioned above. In these ways, Deleuze's thought is quite close to Heidegger and Deleuze's worries about Heidegger are made from a standpoint consistent with his own later thinking of *ereignis*.

166

Much more so than Deleuze, Derrida's engagement with Heidegger was repeated, detailed, and sustained. Heidegger formed a constant point of reference for Derrida's work, a point to which he frequently returned from a number of different angles. Though trying to comprehend Derrida's complex view of Heidegger in a few paragraphs would undoubtedly lead to oversimplification, it is possible to understand the dimension of that view which concerns *ereignis* by returning to some passages commented upon in Chapter Two, as well as some others.

Chapter Two already cited part of an interview in which Derrida said "The event does not let itself be subsumed under any other concept, not even that of being. The 'il y a' or the 'let there be something rather than nothing' arises perhaps from the experience of the event, rather than from a thinking of being."[45] With its strong allusions to Heidegger's work, this passage suggests that the event cannot be thought of as defined in its features by its conceptual relations to Being. This might seem an unambiguous rejection of Heidegger's work as a whole, since he is so completely dedicated to thinking Being, but Derrida's position is more nuanced than this one quote would suggest.

In another passage already cited in Chapter Two, Derrida employed the notion of the event in his discussion of September 11th, upon which he was asked whether he means event "in the Heideggerian sense." His answer, recall, was

> No doubt, but, curiously, to the extent that the thought of *Ereignis* in Heidegger would be turned not only toward the *appropriation* of the proper but toward a certain *expropriation* that Heidegger himself names. The undergoing of the event, that which in the undergoing or in the ordeal *at once opens itself up to and resists experience*, is, it seems to me, a certain *unappropriability* of what comes or happens. The event is what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend comprehension: the event is

167

first of all *that which* I do not first of all comprehend.[46]

Here, Derrida recognizes the complexity of Heidegger's concept of *ereignis* but, in giving un- or in-appropriability as a key feature of the event, tries to emphasize more strongly than Heidegger the aspect of *ereignis* which escapes the 'proper'. It seems that on Derrida's view, Heidegger did 'name' this aspect, but did not develop its implications as fully as Derrida himself does.

There is also a fascinating passage not previously mentioned in which Derrida describes Heidegger's *Being and Time* in the following way:

I am thus increasingly inclined to read ultimately this great, inexhaustible book in the following way: as an event that, at least in the final analysis, would no longer simply stem from ontological necessity or demonstration. It would never submit to logic, phenomenology, or ontology, which it nonetheless invokes. ...The event of this interrupted book would be irreducible to these categories, indeed to the categories that Heidegger himself never stopped articulating. In order to welcome into thought and into history such a 'work,' the event has to be thought otherwise. *Being and Time* would belong neither to science, nor to philosophy, nor to poetics. Such is perhaps the case for every work worthy of its name: there, what puts thinking into operation exceeds its own borders or what thinking itself intends to present of these borders. The work exceeds itself, it surpasses the limits of the concept of itself that it claims to have properly while presenting itself. But if the event of this work thus exceeds its own borders, the borders that its discourse seems to give to itself (for example, 'those of an existential analysis of *Dasein* in the transcendental horizon of time'), then it would do so precisely at this locus where it *experiences the aporia*—and perhaps its premature interruption, its very prematurity.[47]

168

This passage would seem to constitute a very concise deconstructive reading of *Being and Time* according to which it is a kind of paradoxical text. *Being and Time* constitutes an event which subverts the very categories that the book itself articulates and employs in its own self-understanding. Since those categories are categories of ontological thinking, the book actually subverts the very ontological thinking which it is trying to perform. Thus, *Being and Time* is actually an instance of an event which forces one to think the event in a way inconsistent with the sort of thinking performed in the text itself.

Taken in concert with the earlier passages, a picture begins to emerge of Derrida's view of Heidegger's work as far as the event is concerned. It would appear that, for Derrida, Heidegger's work is original and powerful enough that it produces possibilities which exceed it, but which also undercut certain of its aspects. Heidegger's work is itself an example of an event which is unbounded by Being, but the concept of the event espoused in that work is not fully radicalized, for its inappropriability by Being is not emphasized as much as it could be. [48]

Of course, the reading of Heidegger given above suggests that Being is not separate from the event at all. And as with Deleuze, the target of Derrida's critique is the Heidegger of *Being and Time* rather than the post-*Contributions* work. In those later works Heidegger, like Derrida, both 1) subjects his earlier work to a kind of deconstruction by subjected it to an "immanent criticism"[49] and 2) emphasizes the event's withdrawal and expropriation.

Badiou's view of Heidegger is, like Deleuze's, laid out in only a few texts. At the beginning of *Being and Event*, Badiou writes that in the book "Along with Heidegger, it will be maintained that philosophy as such can only be re-assigned on the basis of the ontological question."[50] He elsewhere states, along similar lines, that "There is no doubt we are indebted to Heidegger for having yoked philosophy once more to the question of being."[51] That Badiou

agrees with Heidegger's conviction that philosophy must be concerned with Being in some way seems quite clear.

But, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, Badiou thinks that philosophy is not itself the thinking of Being, for this is the task of mathematics. This thought is the point at which one can begin to see Badiou's departure from Heidegger, a departure of which Badiou himself is fully aware when he writes

> The thesis of the identity of mathematics and ontology is disagreeable, I know, to both mathematicians and philosophers. …Contemporary philosophical 'ontology' is entirely dominated by the name of Heidegger. For Heidegger, science, from which mathematics is not distinguished, constitutes the hard kernel of metaphysics…[52]

Badiou, then, is aware that the Heideggerian response to his own identification of mathematics and ontology would be the accusation that Badiou has slipped back into metaphysics.

But interestingly, Badiou turns this accusation back on Heidegger. He writes that, even by Heidegger's own lights, "the defining characteristic of metaphysics" is that it "exposes the being of the entity to the power of a count, a counting-as-one. That through which 'what is' is what it is, is also that through which it is one. …We can therefore define metaphysics as the commandeering of being by the one."[53] Granting this, Badiou thinks that the strategy for overcoming metaphysics is thereby determined: "The initial decision then consists in holding that what is thinkable of being takes the form of radical multiplicity…"[54] That is, if the task is to prevent Being from being subjected to the One, then Being must be thought in a way which contrasts with the One, that is, as multiplicity, which is studied in its purest form in set theory. As Badiou would have it, Heidegger does not make this move, and thus remains within the defining characteristic of metaphysics that he himself identifies.

So far, Badiou's critical interpretation of Heidegger may seem concerned far more with Being than with the evental break in Being, but Badiou also states

> Heidegger still remains enslaved, even in the doctrine of the withdrawal and the un-
> veiling, to what I consider, for my part, to be the essence of metaphysics; that is, the
> figure of being as endowment and gift, as presence and opening, and the figure of
> ontology as the offering of a trajectory of proximity.[55]

Though in this passage Badiou does not make terribly clear the link between the definition of metaphysics as the commandeering of Being by the One and the idea that the essence of metaphysics is the consideration of Being as gift, one gets the impression that the two concepts of metaphysics are, for him, supposed to be the same or at least tightly linked in some way. Though Derrida might suggest that the gift is a figure of dissemination,[56] it appears that Badiou sees it as a figure of unity—it makes Being into a plenitude which cannot be genuinely displaced or interrupted. It might be said, then, that for Badiou, if Being is gift, then Being is One. The link to the concept of *ereignis* should then be that, for Heidegger, it is *ereignis* which is the It that gives Being.[57] Thus, what is implied by Badiou's discussion is that in Heidegger, the event becomes one of the sites at which the metaphysical subjection of Being to the One is allowed to survive.

Badiou's worries about Heidegger may not seem to have much directly to do with Heidegger's proximity to the Stoic thinking of the event, but a second look suggests that it does, and in a way that is perhaps more devious than with Deleuze and Derrida. On Badiou's reading of Heidegger, the event is not just determined by something else—Being, which it is unable to interrupt—but it is also that by which Being is itself mastered by the One. Though his reading maps the relations of determination and subordination in a more complicated way than, say,

171

Deleuze's does, the object of the concerns presented in that reading is still the way in which the event is determined or controlled by another force or entity. Badiou too, then, worries about the ways in which Heidegger's thought converges with a troubling Stoicism.

There is something to Badiou's claim that the essence of metaphysics is subjecting being to the count-as-one, since Heidegger suggests that metaphysics consists in treating Being as a single entity or single totality of entities. Granting this, it would then seem that Badiou himself could be accused of slipping into metaphysics, not because of the position he gives to mathematics, but because he thinks Being as a multiplicity of entities—as a set of beings. However, noting that Badiou's ontology focuses on beings means that when Badiou describes the event as a break in Being, he is describing the event as a break in the distribution or arrangement of beings, a point which presupposes that the event is not itself a being. That presupposition is shared with Heidegger. At the same time, while Heidegger certainly does use the language of 'gift', proximity, and the like, the emphasis of the later Heidegger on expropriation also means that *ereignis* is not only a figure of proximity, since it withdraws in its happening. Badiou's own image of the event as a 'flash' seems to capture the same point.

Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou all seem to display a double attitude toward Heidegger. On the one hand, they each seem to accuse Heidegger of continuing to engage in metaphysical thinking despite his attempts to avoid it, and thus worry about how he still remains in proximity to the Stoics. On the other hand, all three thinkers converge in close and significant ways with Heidegger's *Contributions*, *The Event*, and "Time and Being." How is this tension to be resolved? It may seem as if there are only two options. First, one could agree with the readings of Heidegger given by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, including the accusations of metaphysics that stem from them, and deny the convergences between their thinking and his. Second, one could

accept the convergences and reject the accusations. Unfortunately, neither of these options seems

desirable on its own. The first requires claiming that Heidegger is engaging in metaphysical

thinking and is not consistent with the texts of Heidegger's discussed earlier. The second option

would seem to leave the accusations against Heidegger on the level of mere rhetorical posturing.

But there is a third option which makes sense of the evidence without having to do so

much of a disservice to either Heidegger or to Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. When read as

Heidegger seems to have intended, his thinking of the event is quite far from the Stoics and from

traditional metaphysics more generally. To the extent that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou find

metaphysical thinking happening in Heidegger, it is quite possible that they are unintentionally

misreading him at the level of their 'official' interpretations of his work. But, the very fact that

they fall prey to such misreading shows how vulnerable Heidegger is to it and therefore how

easily his worked could suffer metaphysical misappropriation. That vulnerability is indeed a

problem and to that extent Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are right to search for ways of thinking

that break with what they take Heidegger to be saying. But since Heidegger is actually not as

metaphysical as he may seem, in practice the ways of thinking that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou

develop 'unofficially' converge with his own and end up making more explicit certain of its

aspects or commitments. All three thinkers emphasize the destabilizing effects of the event to

which Heidegger draws attention. Deleuze's thinking of the event as an inexhaustible haecceity

which calls for miming emphasizes the event's non-objective dimension and affirms its

repeatability, making explicit the idea—to which Heidegger's meditative practice seems to

commit him—that an ethical attitude toward the event involves a kind of repeated returning to it.

Derrida's expropriation and turbulence, emphasizing the event's withdrawal from any grasp and

the disturbing effects of that withdrawal, makes more intense Heidegger's thought that *ereignis*

withdraws from the field of beings that it opens. And Badiou's mathematical approach, in placing the event outside the grasp of mathematics, brings out—from within scientific language itself—Heidegger's sense of the event's opacity to calculative thinking. Thus, at bottom, Heidegger need not be guilty of engaging in metaphysical thinking, but nor is it true that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are engaging in mere rhetorical posturing in their criticisms of him.

Divergences and Convergences

Taken in concert with the earlier points about the general project of rethinking the Platonic tradition and the suspicious nature of the Stoic ethics of the event, this observation about Heidegger makes it possible to understand the motivations behind both the convergences and divergences that can be observed between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. This section and the next examine some exchanges between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou in light of the interpretations given in Part One to show the ways in which their views diverge, arguing that their different encounters with the Stoics and Heidegger as described above explain those convergences and divergences.

In previous sections, some convergences between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou have been described. They share the desire to rethink Platonism in various ways. It has been suggested that each of the three thinkers should voice similar worries about the Stoic conception of the event and the ethics based upon it, and that each open up and use the resources of Heidegger's work to deal with those worries.

Some exchanges between the three thinkers show that the intellectual space thus opened is not homogeneous, but is divided into separate territories by specific conceptual distinctions. Looking at comments each thinker has made about the others will reveals these distinctions.

Doing this thoroughly will require rotating through each of the relationships between the thinkers that has been represented in writing. Taking them in chronological order, this means considering each of the following combinations; Deleuze on Badiou, Badiou on Deleuze, Derrida on Deleuze, and Badiou on Derrida.

There is a series of examples distributed throughout the chapters of Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?* through which the authors elaborate and develop the concepts they there invent. The twelfth example put forward in that book is a two-page description and critique of Badiou's entire philosophical project.

In the context in which Deleuze and Guattari give "Example 12", they have been discussing the distinction between a concept (purview of philosophy) and a function (purview of the sciences), and arguing that a concept cannot be reduced to a function—that is, a concept does not just map one state of affairs onto another in the way that a function does, for "*events* are the concept's consistency."[58] As they read him, Badiou's "particularly interesting undertaking" "proposes to distribute at intervals on an ascending line a series of factors passing from functions to concepts", beginning with "any multiplicity whatever" in the form of sets.[59] From the base of sets, that is, Badiou can slowly construct both functions and concepts, thereby making the two homogenous to each other and reducible to the 'any multiplicity whatever' from which they are constructed. At this point, Deleuze and Guattari write

> It seems to us that the theory of multiplicities does not support the hypothesis of any multiplicity whatever (even mathematics has had enough of set-theoreticism). There must be at least two multiplic*ities*, two types, from the outset. This is not because dualism is better than unity but because the multiplicity is precisely what happens between the two. Hence, the two types will certainly not be one above the other but rather one beside the

other, against the other, face to face, or back to back. Functions and concepts, actual

states of affairs and virtual events, are two types of multiplicities that are not distributed

on an errant line but related to two vectors that intersect, one according to which states of

affairs actualize events and the other according to which events absorb (or rather, adsorb)

states of affairs.[60]

Much could be said about both the positions concerning the philosophy of mathematics and

concerning the relationship between concepts and functions mentioned here, but for present

purposes, what deserves focus is the passage's final sentence. There, Deleuze seems to describe

an instance of the happening of an event, such as Alice's growing, as the meeting or 'intersection'

of a state of affairs and an event—in this case, the intersection of that state of affairs made up of

Alice's body and the objects around it with that haecceity called 'to grow'. The core objection to

Badiou which Deleuze seems to be presenting here is that Badiou's conception of the event is not

intersectional. For Deleuze, Badiou's conception does not interpret the happening of an event as

the chiasmus of two series (a state of affairs and an inexhaustible haecceity) but "as a separated

aleatory point that is added to or subtracted from the site."[61] Multiplicity, on Deleuze's account,

requires difference, and Badiou's notion of the event instead reduces the event to the set out of

which it is constructed in a way which does not give a place to such difference.

Deleuze's point here seems to both fit with the interpretation given of Badiou in Chapter

Three and the interpretation of Deleuze given in Chapter One. In Chapter Three, the point was

made that Badiou must navigate between absorbing the event into its site and making the event

completely transcendent to its site. He does this by making the event the paradox of Being,

represented by a set which belongs to itself. Deleuze is right to note that this view does not make

the occurrence of, say, Alice's growing the intersection of a site and a 'to grow', but instead takes

176

it as a fold in the site itself. It seems equally accurate of Deleuze to describe his own view of the

event as involving exactly such an intersection, as the distinction between states of affairs and

hacceities seems crucial to his position—for a state of affairs to embody an event, the state and

the event must be different, but also must come together in some fashion.

What this first portion of the exchange between Deleuze and Badiou reveals, then, is kind

of conceptual fault line which runs between their works—that between an 'intersectional' and a

'non-intersectional' view of the event. Those texts in which Badiou comments upon Deleuze's

work reveal more such lines.

Badiou defends an interpretation of Deleuze's writing which sharply contrasts with the

sense that most readers have of it. In his *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, Badiou writes, citing

Deleuze as he goes:

> contrary to the commonly accepted image (Deleuze as liberating the anarchic multiple of
>
> desires and errant drifts), contrary even to the apparent indications of his work that play
>
> on the opposition multiple/multiplicities ('There are only rare multiplicities'; ibid.), it is
>
> the occurrence of the One—renamed by Deleuze the One-All—that forms the supreme
>
> destination of thought and to which thought is accordingly consecrated. ...'...a single
>
> clamour of Being for all beings' (*Difference and Repetition*, p. 304).[62]

Hence, for Badiou, Deleuze, as the thinker of the plane of immanence and the univocity of

Being, is a thinker of the One—the same One which, at the beginning of *Being and Event*,

Badiou rejected as leading to inescapable logical contradictions and which earlier sections of this

chapter found him worrying about in the Stoics, in Heidegger, and in Deleuze.[63] Badiou's

interpretation of Deleuze as a thinker of the One extends to his understanding of Deleuze's notion

of the event. As he writes in a passage from *Logics of Worlds* partially quoted earlier, for Deleuze the event

> is the play of the One, composition, intensity of plenitude, crystal (or logic) of sense. *Logic of Sense* is Deleuze's most noteworthy effort to clarify his concept of the event. He does so in the company of the Stoics. This sets the tone: the 'event' must comply with the inflexible discipline of the All, from which Stoicism takes its bearings.[64]

According to Badiou, then, Deleuze's concept of the event unfortunately and problematically incorporates it into the One. It is also worth pointing out that Badiou accuses Deleuze of being too close to the Stoics, further confirming the point of section II above.

The interpretation of Deleuze developed in Chapter One suggest, contra Badiou, that Deleuze is as much the thinker of multiplicity as he appears to be. Indeed, Deleuze's own comments on Badiou in *What is Philosophy?* reaffirm that the event's occurrence is in no way bound by the One or merely an expression of the One, since such an occurrence is an intersection between different multiplicities. But despite potential problems in Badiou's reading of Deleuze, the terms which he employs to describe his position relative to Deleuze's remain valuable and revealing.

The first contrast given by Badiou employs proper names. Badiou writes:

> Let us suppose that the history of this period is guided by the coupling of two proper names: Bergson and Brunschvicg. We find, on the one hand, the concrete intuition of time, carried as far as a metaphysics of living totality, and, on the other, the timeless intuition of mathematical idealities, carried as far as a metaphysics of creative Reason.[65]

The contrast Badiou here sketches between the two early 20th century French philosophers is homologous to the contrast between his own work and Deleuze's. He writes "Deleuze's immense

merit was to have assumed and modernized the Bergsonian filiation. ...he confronted the operators of Bergson with the concrete artistic, scientific, or political productions of our time."[66] Badiou elsewhere includes a third name as well, saying

> there are two paradigms that govern the manner in which the multiple is thought, as Deleuze's texts indicate from very early on: the 'vital' (or 'animal') paradigm of open multiplicities (in the Bergsonian filiation) and the mathematicized paradigm of sets, which can also be qualified as 'stellar' in Mallarmé's sense of the word. That being the case, it is not too inexact to maintain that Deleuze is the contemporary thinker of the first paradigm, and that I strive to harbor the second, including its most extreme consequences.[67]

The Bergsonian filiation described by Badiou corresponds to a conception of the event which, in his view, thinks the event in terms of and in subordination to the One, of a 'living totality'. This is a first indication that the contrast Badiou is spelling out in terms of proper names also concerns their notions of the event in more a substantial way.

Badiou's *Logics of Worlds*, a later text, bears this out. There, in a section devoted entirely to a discussion of Deleuze's concept of the event, Badiou writes:

> The notion [of the event] is central in Deleuze, just as it is in my own endeavor. But what a contrast! The interest of this contrast is that it exposes the original ambiguity in the notion. In effect, it is a notion that contains a structural dimension (interruption as such, the appearance of a supernumerary term) and a dimension that concerns the history of life (the concentration of becoming, being as coming-to-self, promise). In the first case, the event is unbound from the One, there is separation, assumption of the void, pure non-

179

sense; in the second, it is the play of the One, composition, intensity of plenitude, crystal (or logic) of sense.[68]

This passage leads into one quoted earlier, but here the important points are that Badiou articulates the contrast between himself and Deleuze in a further way, and that he makes an interesting admission about the notion of the event in doing so. The contrast between ways of thinking multiplicities which Badiou mentioned before are here reflected in a 'vital' conception of the event—the event as a result or moment of a becoming--and a 'structural' conception of the event—the event as sheer interruption or as a break in a vital continuity. As he writes further on, articulating his own position,

> An event is never the concentration of vital continuity or the immanent intensification of a becoming. It is never coextensive with becoming. On the contrary, it is a pure cut in becoming made by an object of the world, through the object's auto-appearance; but it is also the supplementing of appearing through the upsurge of a trace: the old inexistent which has become an intense existence.[69]

So, it appears that the contrast between a way of thinking which inherits Bergson and one which inherits Brunschvicg and Mallarmé correlates to a contrast between a vital and a structural, a continuous and a discontinuous, notion of the event.

The fascinating admission is that these two different specific conceptions of the event result from an ambiguity in the concept of the event itself, rather than from two different interpretations, readings, or perspectives on a single, unambiguous concept. It would appear that, as Badiou sees it, the concept of the event has two 'dimensions', either of which could be emphasized. One wonders, then, why Badiou sees fit to identify the event with only a single of

its dimensions, to collapse a complex and ambiguous concept into only one of its aspects, rather than trying to fully captures its richness.

But Badiou does have his reasons for disambiguating the concept in the way he does. It was already suggested in Chapter Three that a central theoretical challenge for Badiou is to neither absorb the event into its site nor leave it completely unrelated to the site. As his worries about Deleuze's supposed commitments to the One indicate, including the 'dimension that concerns the history of life' in his notion of the event would mean that the event would be incorporable into its site. The event would be an expression of life or of Being, rather than a paradox of Being. The worry, it seems, is that Deleuze's vitalism performs just such an incorporation. In Badiou's eyes, then, trying to construct a 'full' or 'two-dimensional' notion of the event—a conception which captures both of its aspects—runs into theoretical problems. The better option is a reduction, in which a part of the concept is sacrificed for sake of the whole.

It was already suggested that neither Deleuze's own comments on Badiou's work nor the interpretation of Deleuze presented in Chapter One fit with Badiou's reading of Deleuze. As Badiou understands Deleuze, the event would seem to be an epiphenomenon of the One, understood as the totality of life and its becomings. To return to an earlier example, Badiou's reading seems to suggest that a 'to grow' (an event) is, for Deleuze, somehow ontologically dependent on or the product or expression of Alice's growth (a vital process). But in fact, this is not necessarily the case. Rather, Alice's growth is an intersection between Alice and a 'to grow', each of which requires the other to appear, but without either entity falling into a primary or secondary position relative to the other.

Nevertheless, the distinctions Badiou employs to describe his contrast with Deleuze actually do capture something important about both of their bodies of work. It certainly does

181

seem to be true that Deleuze would fight on the Bergsonian side of a battle between Bergson and Brunschvicg/Mallarmé. Further, it is also right that Badiou, to a much greater extent than Deleuze, emphasizes the interruptive aspect of events. Thus, it appears that some of the terms in which Badiou articulates his contrast with Deleuze do not presuppose the truth of his specific interpretation of Deleuze. One could say that there are two parts of Badiou's reading of Deleuze. On the one hand, there is his reading of Deleuze's project independently of its relationship to Badiou's own project. On the other, there is Badiou's understanding of Deleuze's project in its relation to his own. These two parts are separable, and the latter can stand without the former. This means that even if Badiou is wrong about the overarching nature of Deleuze's thought concerning the event, he can still locate the fault lines between his own thinking and Deleuze's in the correct place.

In the time they had together before Deleuze's death, Derrida and Deleuze made only passing references to each other in their published works. The main text in which some comment is made by one on the other is Derrida's eulogy for Deleuze, entitled "I'll Have to Wander All Alone."[70] Though some of that text is given over to more personal recollections of the story of a long friendship, a few passages of Derrida's text are germane to the task of describing how Derrida's and Deleuze's thinking are connected.

In the first important passage, which is worth quoting at length, Derrida describes the core of his experience with Deleuze's work. He writes

> Since the beginning, all of his books (but first of all Nietzsche, Difference an Repetition, The Logic of Sense) have been for me not only, of course, provocations to think, but, each time, the unsettling, very unsettling experience - so unsettling - of a proximity or a near total affinity in the 'theses' - if one may say this - through too evident distances in

what I would call, for want of anything better, 'gesture,' 'strategy,' 'manner': of writing, of

speaking, perhaps of reading. As regards the 'theses' (but the word doesn't fit) and

particularly the thesis concerning a difference that is not reducible to dialectical

opposition, a difference 'more profound' than a contradiction (Difference and Repetition),

a difference in the joyfully repeated affirmation ('yes, yes'), the taking into account of the

simulacrum, Deleuze remains no doubt, despite so many dissimilarities, the one to whom

I have always considered myself closest among all of this 'generation.' I never felt the

slightest 'objection' arise in me, not even a virtual one, against any of his discourse, even

if I did on occasion happen to grumble against this or that proposition in Anti-Oedipus (I

told him about it one day when we were coming back together by car from Nanterre

University, after a thesis defense on Spinoza) or perhaps against the idea that philosophy

consists in 'creating' concepts. One day, I would like to explain how such an agreement

on philosophical 'content' never excludes all these differences that still today I don't know

how to name or situate.[71]

The interest of this passage is that, in it, Derrida seems to affirm that he and Deleuze are 'saying

the same thing in different words', to put the matter colloquially. Derrida seems to employ—

though under the quasi-erasure of scare quotes—something like the distinction between content

and form. The claim appears to be that he and Deleuze are expressing the same content in

different form. In this first passage, though, Derrida does not mention the event in the course of

giving examples of 'theses' on which he and Deleuze agree, highlighting instead his agreement

with Deleuze on the status of difference.

But the event does appear in a second passage, which comes from the very first paragraph

of text. Derrida opens by saying

> Too much to say, and I don't have the heart for it today. There is too much to say about
> what has happened to us here, about what has also happened to me, with the death of
> Gilles Deleuze, with a death we no doubt feared (knowing him to be so ill), but still, with
> this death here, this unimaginable image, in the event, would deepen still further, if that
> were possible, the infinite sorrow of another event. Deleuze the thinker is, above all, the
> thinker of the event and always of this event here. He remained the thinker of the event
> from beginning to end.[72]

That Deleuze is a thinker of the event is hard to deny given what was said in Chapter One, so the sentiment with which Derrida ends can easily be agreed to.

When this second passage is read in light of the earlier one, a certain consequence would seem to follow. If Deleuze is the thinker of the event and Derrida agrees with all of Deleuze's 'theses', then it would seem that Derrida would also support and affirm Deleuze's specific way of thinking the event. After all, if Derrida and Deleuze agree on everything, they must agree on this. So, though Derrida does not mark that agreement himself in the first passage, it would seem to be implied. The conclusion seems to be that Derrida and Deleuze put forward exactly the same way of thinking the event. But such a conclusion would be hasty.

Derrida does note that, though he feels no 'objection' arise in him when reading Deleuze, he nonetheless 'grumbles' against some of Deleuze's propositions. Though it is unclear what exactly the difference is between grumbling against something and objecting to it, it seems that the former is not as strongly negative of a response as the latter. In any case, the only actual proposition of Deleuze's that Derrida lists as grumble-worthy is the proposition that philosophy is the creation of concepts. That he places quotes around the word 'creation' suggests that it is

that notion in particular, rather than that of the concept, that is the object of whatever dissatisfaction Derrida feels at Deleuze's proposition.

But in Deleuze's work the idea that philosophy is the creation of concepts is intimately linked to his thinking of the event. He writes that "The task of philosophy when it creates concepts, entities, is always to extract an event from things and beings, always to give them a new event: space, time, matter, thought, the possible as events."[73] To say that philosophy creates concepts, then, is to say that it is creative activity which is the site of philosophy's special relationship to events. If it is the 'creation' with which Derrida feels some dissatisfaction, then it is not necessarily the case that he seeks to resist Deleuze's linking of philosophy to the event wholesale, but only that he resists locating that linkage where Deleuze does. In other words, the thought implied by Derrida's wording here seems to be that it is in something other than creation wherein philosophy has its connection to the event.

Such an implication fits well with what was said in earlier chapters. In discussing Derrida, it was seen that deconstruction is a subversive inhabiting of conceptual structures and that it is through the movement of such subversion that one is exposed to the event. Hence, for Derrida, it is not the creation of a concept that constitutes the site of the event's happening, but the subversive opening of a set of concepts. The distinction between creation and subversion, then, seems to constitute one of the fault lines which runs between Deleuze's and Derrida's work, despite Derrida's claims of total agreement. Though Derrida might suggest that this difference is one of form rather than content, it is in any case substantial enough that it is reflected in the performative dimension of Derrida's text itself.

Such a dimension is indeed present in Derrida's writing in "I'll Have To Wander All Alone." As Derrida himself suggests in the second passage cited above, Deleuze's death is itself

185

an event to which Derrida's own text is a response. Indeed, this situation seems constitutive of the 'eulogy' genre. The movement performed in Derrida's text is the same subversive or turbulent movement described in Chapter Two, rather than a movement of creating concepts. Among all his fond memories of Deleuze and his sense of immense loss, Derrida also writes that he does not know how to name or situate the differences between them. Though, as already noted, he invokes various ways of naming the distinction between form and content, he is always sure to distance himself from those formulations with the partial erasure of scare quotes. What this suggests is that there is a disturbance of a certain conceptual structure occurring in Derrida's eulogy. The structure of identity in which two philosophers with their own separate thoughts are relatable to each other seems, in Derrida's experience, to cease operating. The model in which I think X, Deleuze thinks Y, and the relationship between X and Y is R is broken down.

The distinction between creation and subversion, then, can be glimpsed at the performative level of the text as well. This outcome should solidify the sense that the distinction captures a conceptual fault line between Deleuze's and Derrida's ways of thinking the event.

Though Badiou has not written about Derrida as thoroughly and repeatedly as he has written about Deleuze, he nonetheless says enough to provide a sense of the contrasts between their ways of thinking as he sees them. The nature of that contrast falls unintentionally out of Badiou's reading of Derrida. The essay in which Badiou presents his reading of Derrida comes from a collection of essays, each one dedicated to one of Badiou's "philosophical friends"[74] who are now gone. The book thus constitutes a "set of tributes to philosophers who are no longer with us..."[75] The section on Derrida is no different, being described by Badiou as "A philosophical tribute" to him.[76]

Badiou's essay begins by setting up "a few preliminaries"[77] consisting of some key points familiar from *Logics of Worlds*. In particular, Badiou recalls the ideas that, in a specific world, there is always a 'transcendental' which names the degree to which elements of that world appear. There is, in other words, a possibility of assigning any item within a world to a position on a scale of apparent intensity, with different elements of a world appearing more strongly than others. In the essay, Badiou draws particular attention to the fact that this concept of a 'transcendental' scale implies that, in a given world, there will always be some element which has the lowest, minimal or zero degree of appearance.[78] As Badiou points out, this means that "having a minimal existence in the transcendental of a world is tantamount to having no existence at all there."[79]

With these conceptual reference points established, Badiou writes

> In my view, what is at stake in Derrida's work, in his never-ending work, in his writing, ramified as it is into so many varied works, into infinitely varied approaches, is the *inscription of the non-existent*. And the recognition, in the work of inscribing the non-existent, that its inscription is, strictly speaking, impossible. What is at stake in Derrida's writing—and here 'writing' designates a thought-act—is *the inscription of the impossibility of the non-existence as the form of its inscription*.[80]

For Badiou, in other words, what Derrida's work aims to achieve is to allow that element of a given world—the world of a particular body of texts, concepts, and the like—which has a minimal degree of existence or appearance to show itself in some way in its very non-appearance, with all the tension and threat of contradiction that this project entails.

And Badiou does indeed have a sense of the strategic difficulty of inscribing or letting appear a minimal degree of appearance. In describing the difficulty and Derrida's solution to it, Badiou employs some telling language. He writes

> Derrida accepted that the experience of the world is always an experience of discursive imposition. To be in the world is to be marked by discourses, marked even in our flesh, body, sex and so on. Derrida's thesis, Derrida's conclusion, the source of Derrida's desire is that, whatever form that discursive imposition may take, there is a point that escapes that imposition, and that we can call a vanishing point. I think that, here, the expression has to be taken in the most literal of senses. A vanishing point is a point which, of course, flees the rule of the *dispositif* of imposition.[81]

Here, Badiou renames the minimal degree of appearance in which Derrida is interested a 'vanishing point,' a point which flees from an imposition. The challenge of Derrida's work, then, is to "locate that point" without "grasping it", "Because grasping it would destroy it."[82] In this respect, Badiou adds,

> Derrida is the opposite of a hunter. A hunter hopes that the animal will stop, so that he can shoot. Or so that he can mow down the animal's flight. Derrida, however, hopes that the flight will not cease fleeing, that we can show the 'thing' (the vanishing point) in all the obviousness of its never-ending flight. And, therefore, in its incessant disappearing.[83]

In the course of this passage, the minimal appearance—a vanishing point which flees impositions—is redescribed once again as a disappearing. 'Disappearing', though, is not quite the same as not appearing at all. That which disappears isn't simply the absence of appearance, but something which appears in and as a slipping out of appearance—it is that whose appearance appears only long enough for it to be reduced. One might then worry about the internal

188

consistency of Badiou's various descriptions, since something which disappears in a world does not exactly not exist in that world, but rather exists in an extremely limited and momentary way. But to the extent that a vanishing or disappearing *comes to have* a zero degree of appearance, Badiou's different descriptions do seem to fit together properly insofar as the existing and the not existing are understood as two distinct temporal phases.

That Badiou is, in putting forward such an explanation of Derrida's theoretical motivations, attempting to pay tribute to him leads one to expect a convergence or agreement to emerge, in much the same way that Derrida himself expressed his agreement with Deleuze. The admiring tone of Badiou's writing in this essay fits this expectation. Further, the introduction to the book seems to suggest something like this as well, as Badiou writes "In my view, there is only one true philosophy, and the philosophies of the fourteen whose names find shelter in my little pantheon would not want anything more."[84] His view would seem to be that he and Derrida therefore share the 'one true philosophy.' But Badiou's interpretation of Derrida is unintentionally revelatory of a different possibility.

Notice that Badiou does not mention by name the concept of the event in his discussion of Derrida. Instead, he describes Derrida's interest in that which vanishes from appearance or which disappears, saying that this vanishing point cannot be grasped without killing it, and adding that this concern animates "the endless sliding of [Derrida's] prose."[85] But this is strikingly similar to what was said about Derrida's concept of the event in Chapter Two. There, it was pointed out that the event, too, is something which flees from being grasped, since it withdraws from attempts to represent or comprehend it. And it was this inappropriability of the event which necessitated the turbulent movement of Derrida's own writing, or what Badiou might call the sliding of his prose. Given this strong analogy, it appears that Badiou is in fact

interpreting Derrida's concept of the event in this text, even though he mentions it under other names.

If Badiou and Derrida share the 'one true philosophy', one would expect Badiou's concept of the event to align well with what he finds in Derrida's work—one would expect Badiou's concept of the event to be a concept of disappearance. Yet, this is very far from what is actually the case. As Chapter Three already argued, for Badiou the event is, like a flash of light, the sudden transition from minimal to maximal appearance of an element of a world. For Badiou, then, the event is a strong appearance, rather than a disappearance. To this extent, Badiou and Derrida actually have distinct notions of the event. In much the same way that Badiou described himself and Deleuze as taking opposite sides of the interruption/becoming distinction, it would seem that he and Derrida take opposite sides of the appearance/disappearance distinction.

With all the published exchanges between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou now having been dealt with, it can be seen that the divisions that have appeared make sense in light of earlier discussions of the Stoics and Heidegger. It will be worth explaining at this point how the differences between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou correlate to their different reactions to Heidegger in particular.

Consider Deleuze. As described above, Deleuze wants to 'reverse' the subordination of difference to identity and immanence to transcendence present in the Platonic tradition, and it is the resources in Heidegger which can help in that reversal upon which Deleuze draws.

Given that it is these specific features which Deleuze focuses upon in the Platonic tradition and in Heidegger, it makes sense that his notion of the event would construe it as an inexhaustible, intersectional entity. For if, as Deleuze said, the way to reverse Platonism is to put events in the place of Platonic essences, then the event should share certain features of those

essences, so long as they are not the features which render essences suspiciously metaphysical. This is indeed what can be observed. As was pointed out in Chapter One, the Deleuzian conception of the event treats it as intersecting with, but not exhausted by, any of its instances and the same can be said of Platonic essences—no individual table can fully embody tablehood. However, the event for Deleuze does not have any of the more troublingly metaphysical features of essences: events are not atemporal, unitary, transcendental, and so on.

And, further, if the placing of identity over difference and the transcendent over the immanent is a worry, then the event should be thought in such a way that identity and transcendence cannot get ahold of it. Emphasizing the event's inexhaustibility accomplishes this, for the fixing functions performed by identity and transcendence do not work on an inexhaustible entity: the event keeps happening in new instances, despite whatever identity or transcendence is supposed to regulate that which encounters the event. The suggestion here, in other words, is that the specific inflection which Deleuze gives to the Heideggerian break with the Stoics lines up closely with both his specific take on the rethinking of Platonism and with the features of his specific encounter with Heidegger's work.

This pattern can also be seen to hold for Derrida and Badiou. Derrida seeks to subvert the metaphysics of presence which Plato launches, worried as he is about its strangulation of otherness and expulsion/repression of the other from within itself. And what Derrida takes from Heidegger is the idea of the event's expropriation, which becomes for Derrida the event's inappropriability. Such a strategy makes sense, for if the event is not to be captured by presence, then describing the event as inappropriable guarantees this outcome, for what cannot be appropriated *at all* can surely not be appropriated by presence.

Finally, it was seen that Badiou seeks to refound Platonism and that his criticism of non-

refounded Platonism centers on the concept of the One. Though Badiou's worries about Heidegger's attachment to the One seem not to hold, it is still true that, in drawing on Heidegger, Badiou has a reasonable motivation for construing the event as incomplete and interruptive. For, once one uses 'Being' to refer to the collection of beings, one does thereby affirm a conception of being as radical multiplicity, graspable by set theory, and the concept of the event as an incomplete interruption falls out naturally once one goes that far.

It is not surprising, then, that the exchanges between these thinkers suggest (whether explicitly or implicitly) that each does or should have worries about the others. For what is at stake between the different ways of thinking the event is the wider project of rethinking Platonist metaphysics; for, if the event is not thought in the right way then that metaphysics is allowed to survive intact.

What differences there are between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, then, arise out of their attempts to locate themselves in different subsections of the space opened by the Heidegger's move away from a Stoic, metaphysical thinking of the event. Those differences are thus differences in each thinker's sense of what character must be attributed to the event in order to think it in way which preserves or intensifies that break.

Conclusion

This historical and comparative chapter has suggested the wider context of the ways of thinking the event interpreted in Part One.

Platonic thought bequeaths to Western philosophy certain patterns of valuing and thinking. These are reflected in Stoic thought, in which an event is determined in its occurrence by an outside force or being which ensures that the ethical life of the virtuous sage cannot be

192

punctured or disturbed by it. The rethinking of Platonism initiated by Nietzsche and furthered by Heidegger eventually leads Heidegger into a thinking of the event in which, against Stoicism, the event happens apart from any entity or force which would claim to determine it; the event is 'detached' from those entities or forces.

Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each take up the anti-Stoic dimension of Heidegger and intensify it in directions defined by their differing senses of what the rethinking Platonism means and by their different encounters with Heidegger. Though they each detach the event from what would determine its occurrence and could offer similar arguments against the Stoics, the conceptual space constituted by that detachment is variegated rather than uniform.

It should be noticed that the conclusion just stated only concerns each thinker's conception of the event itself, and on its own does not provide any information about relations between their conceptions of ethical thought. It was briefly mentioned earlier that the Stoic view of the event underwrites Stoic ethical ideals, and that calling into question that view—as Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each do—also calls into question those ideals. The next task is to turn to the issue of ethical thought itself more directly to explain more fully the ways in which the triad of philosophers at hand break with traditional conceptions of ethical thought and where those breaks lead.

NOTES

1. Gilles Deleuze. <u>Difference and Repetition</u>. Trans. Paul Patton. Columbia University Press, 1994. Pg. xv. This text will be cited as DR in later notes.
2. DR, 266. All italics in this and later quotes are in the originals.
3. DR, 134.
4. DR, 131.
5. DR, 147.
6. A phrase Deleuze uses throughout DR, Ch. III, "The Image of Thought." See DR, pgs. 129-167.
7. Deleuze uses the phrase on DR, 29.
8. DR, xv.
9. DR, xix.
10. Gilles Deleuze. <u>The Logic of Sense.</u> Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. Columbia University Press, 1990. Pg. 53. Cited as LS below.
11. This list of names includes authors of texts on which Derrida comments in various of his works including <u>Dissemination</u>, <u>Margins of Philosophy</u>, <u>Of Grammatology</u>, and <u>Speech and Phenomena.</u>
12. This list is drawn from figures to which Badiou devotes a chapter in his <u>Being and Event</u> and his <u>Logics of Worlds.</u> See a) Alain Badiou. <u>Being and Event.</u> Trans. Oliver Feltham. Continuum Press, 2006; b) Alain Badiou. <u>Logics of Worlds.</u> Trans. Alberto Toscano. Continuum Press, 2009. These texts will be cited as BE and LW, respectively.
13. A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley. <u>The Hellenistic Philosophers, Vol. 1.</u> Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pg. 331. This text will be cited as "Long and Sedley" below. The source of the passage is Plutarch's <u>On Stoic Self-contradictions.</u> 1050c-d.
14. Epictetus. <u>The Discourses.</u> Trans. Robin Hard. Everyman, 1995. Pg. 33.
15. Ibid, 169.
16. Ibid, 67.
17. Long and Sedley, 394.
18. See Aristotle. <u>Nicomachean Ethics.</u> Book I, chapters 1 through 7 for his version of this argument.
19. Long and Sedley, 363.
20. Long and Sedley, 379.
21. I allude here to Hegel. <u>Philosophy of Right.</u> Trans. T.M. Knox. Digireads, 2010. Pg. 19. This translation reads: "What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational."
22. See LS, throughout.
23. LW, 382.
24. Alain Badiou. <u>Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil.</u> Trans. Peter Hallward. Verso, 2001. Pg. 75.
25. At the very least, none of the works in the Gesamtausbgabe seem to chiefly concern the Stoics. I could also not find a single substantial discussion of Heidegger's relationship to the Stoics in the secondary literature
26. See Martin Heidegger. <u>Basic Writings.</u> Pg. 373.
27. Martin Heidegger. <u>Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event).</u> Trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu. Indiana University Press, 2012. Pg. 278. This text cited as 'C' below.
28. C, pgs. 5 and 6 respectively. I will stick to the standard spelling of 'Being' throughout for sake of simplicity.
29. Martin Heidegger. <u>The Event.</u> Trans. Richard Rojcewicz. Indiana University Press, 2013. Pg. xxiii. Cited as 'E' below.
30. C, pg. 207.
31. E, pg. 156.
32. C, pg. 196.
33. C, pgs. 25, 201, 204, 205, and 272.
34. E, pg. 109.
35. Martin Heidegger. "Time and Being." in <u>On Time and Being.</u> Trans. Joam Stambaugh (ed). The University of Chicago Press, 2002. Pgs. 22-3
36. Ibid, pg. 22.
37. DR, 35.
38. There are a few other positive passing references to Heidegger in Deleuze, which do not affect my overall point and which I thus leave out here.

39. DR, 66.

40. Gilles Deleuze. <u>Nietzsche and Philosophy.</u> Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. Columbia University Press, 2006. Pg. 220, n. 31.

41. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. <u>What is Philosophy?</u> Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. Columbia University Press, 1994. Pg. 95. Cited as WIP below.

42. WIP, 47.

43. WIP, 160

44. See <u>Being and Time</u>, Section 7 of the Introduction.

45. Jacques Derrida. "The Deconstruction of Actuality." <u>Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001.</u> Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (ed). Stanford University Press, 2002. Pg. 93.

46. Jacques Derrida. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides." In <u>Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida.</u> Giovanna Borradori (ed). The University of Chicago Press, 2003. Pgs. 90-91

47. Jacques Derrida. <u>Aporias.</u> Trans. Thomas Dutoit. Stanford University Press, 2003. Pgs. 31-2.

48. As stated on page 19 above, I have only tried to describe one dimension of Derrida's complex relationship with Heidegger, so it would be hasty to generalize from the descriptions given here to conclusions about Derrida's relationship to Heidegger in its entirety. But given what has been said, it seems clear that Habermas, Raffoul, and Gasché are right to point to Heidegger's influence on Derrida, and that Habermas and Raffoul are correct that Heidegger's *ereignis* is a key site of that influence. See 1) Jurgen Habermas. "How to Answer the Ethical Question." In <u>Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida.</u> Trans. Bettina Bergo and Michael B. Smith. Bettina Bergo, Joseph Cohen, and Raphael Zagury-Orly (eds). Fordham University Press, 2007; 2) Rodolphe Gasché. <u>Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida.</u> Harvard, 1994; 3) François Raffoul. "Derrida and the Ethics of the Im-possible." *Research in Phenomenology*, vol. 38. 2008.

49. See Martin Heidegger. <u>Basic Writings.</u> Pg. 373.

50. BE, 2.

51. Badiou. "The Question of Being Today." In <u>Theoretical Writings.</u> Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (eds). Continuum, 2005. Pg. 41.

52. BE, 9.

53. Both quotes from Badiou. "The Question of Being Today." Pg. 41 and Pgs. 41-2 respectively.

54. Ibid, 43.

55. BE, 9.

56. This I gather from Derrida's discussions of sending, the gift, and dissemination from various texts.

57. See the earlier passages from Heidegger's "Time and Being."

58. WIP, 151.

59. All ibid.

60. Ibid, 153.

61. Ibid, 152.

62. Alain Badiou. <u>Deleuze: The Clamor of Being.</u> Trans. Louise Burchill. University of Minnesota Press, 1999. Pg. 11.

63. BE, 23-4.

64. LW, 382.

65. <u>Deleuze: The Clamor of Being</u>. Pg. 98.

66. Ibid, pg. 99.

67. Ibid, pgs. 3-4. Badiou also affirms the same on pg. 89 "For my part, I am Mallarméan." For a poem containing themes influential for Badiou, see Stéphane Mallarmé. "A Throw Of The Dice." <u>Collected Poems: A Bilingual Edition.</u> Trans. Henry Weinfield. University of California Press, 2011. Pgs. 124-45.

68. LW, 382.

69. LW, 384. This is the first of the four 'Axioms' Badiou presents to articulate his own position. They are the negations of the four axioms in which he presents Deleuze's view in the same section.

70. Jacques Derrida. "I'll Have To Wander All Alone." From http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/1/derrida.html. Accessed 26 October 2010. No pagination.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. WIP, 33.

74. Alain Badiou. <u>Pocket Pantheon: Figures of Postwar Philosophy.</u> Trans. David Macey. Verso, 2009. Pg. xi. All

remaining notes refer to this text.
75. vii.
76. 126.
77. 126
78. All 126-9.
79. 130.
80. 132
81. 133
82. 134
83. 134
84. ix
85. 142

CHAPTER VI

THE RECONFIGURATION OF ETHICS: POST-EVENTAL CARTOGRAPHY AND

AN-ETHICS

Introduction

The previous chapter argued that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each develop the ways in

which Heidegger's thinking of *ereignis* breaks with the Stoic conception of the event as an

expression of *logos*. This convergence between the three thinkers concerns most directly their

thinking of the event itself rather than of the nature, status, or meaning of ethics. Though it was

noted earlier that the ways in which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou think the event implies—

contra Stoic ethics—the radical vulnerability of ethical life to the event, what consequences are

in store for what ethics is and what ethics tells one about one's life has so far been left

unexplored. This chapter argues that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each reconfigure ethics as a

post-evental cartography. On this conception, ethics is neither a study of the good life, a defense

of morality, or the pondering of man's dwelling, but instead a description of options opened by

an event's puncturing of ethical life.

The argument of this chapter will unfold in a few distinct stages. The first section

establishes as a base line the influential views of the nature, status, and meaning of ethics taken

by the Stoics, Kant, and Heidegger. The second section defines the concept of a post-evental

cartography and describes its relationships with the Stoic, Kantian, and Heideggerian views of

ethics. Section three argues that the interpretations of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou given earlier

suggest that they each fit the description of post-evental cartography rather than of the

alternatives, despite some differences between them at this level, which are explored in the fourth section. The final, fifth section suggests that generalizing and intensifying the departure from traditional ethics made by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou generates a conception of ethics as an 'an-ethics'; that is, a study of the ways in which ethical life can fail, go wrong, break, dissolve, and deteriorate.

The Nature of Ethics

The previous chapter read the Stoics as conceiving ethical life as a harmonious totality of activities which, when lived properly, cannot be disturbed by the event. But what is ethics itself—understood as a branch or dimension of philosophical inquiry—for the Stoics?

The Stoics divide philosophical study into the areas of physics, logic, and ethics. Ethics consists in standards, rules, and practices one could employ to lead a good life. Recall Epictetus' saying "To what purpose, then, do philosophers have precepts to offer? To this purpose, that whatever happens, we keep and continue to keep our ruling faculty in accord with nature. Do you think this a small thing? No, but the greatest."[1] The same point is made elsewhere in Epictetus' *Discourses*, when he rhetorically asks "But what is it to study philosophy? Is it not to prepare yourself for future events?"[2] Now since Epictetus (and the Roman Stoics more generally) largely identifies philosophy with ethics, one can infer that ethics consists in a set of 'precepts' one can employ to live a specific kind of life. And one finds Epictetus prefacing one such precept with the words "The only way to a happy life (keep this rule at hand morning, noon, and night) is…",[3] a statement which suggests that ethics consists of guidelines or advice for leading a happy life.

Though the Stoic view of ethics can be found in some form in much of ancient ethics, Kant's conception is more influential in the 19th and 20th centuries. For Kant, ethics is an

198

examination and defense of morality. This can be seen in the relation between the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*. In the *Groundwork*, Kant's very first words are a nominal endorsement of a Stoic-style division of philosophy into physics, logic, and ethics, which he follows with the assertion that ethics is the science of the laws of freedom.[4] This is divided into a pure and an empirical part. The pure part, which is "actually *moral science*"[5]—on which "all moral philosophy rests"[6]—"gives him [man], as a rational being, laws a priori." That is, it gives us the "supreme norm" of morality.[7] Kant writes: "The present groundwork, however, is nothing more than the identification and corroboration *of the supreme principle of morality…*"[8] By the end of the text, the reader has learned that morality is founded upon the assumption of freedom. The second *Critique* examines at greater length why this assumption can be made, for "a critique of practical reason as such…gives an account of the principles of the possibility of duty, of its extent and limits, without particular reference to human nature."[9] The two works, taken together, identify the basic structure of morality and then prove that structure sound, at least within certain limits.

For Heidegger, ethics in an originary sense is not the study of the good life or of morality, but of the dwelling of man in Being that makes them both possible. For Heidegger, traditional ethics, inclusive of the Stoics and Kant, lacks a firm ontological basis. As he states in *Being and Time*, with metaphysics one "limits oneself 'initially' to a 'theoretical subject,' in order to then complement it 'on the practical side' with an additional 'ethic.'"[10] This early insight develops into the thinking of ethics found in his "Letter on Humanism." This thinking has both a negative, critical side and a positive, constructive side.

Negatively, Heidegger alludes to the Stoic division of philosophy, saying "Even such names as 'logic', 'ethics,' and 'physics' begin to flourish only when original thinking comes to an

end....Said plainly, thinking is the thinking of Being."[11] In other words, the Stoic division only arises after fundamental ontology has been lost. There is also trouble with the natural assumption that ethics concerns values, for "Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be."[12] Traditional ethics, then, is a modern misinterpretation of Being. It is fitting, then, that at the very beginning of his lecture on "Time and Being", in which he will eventually come to say that Being happens as *ereignis*, Heidegger writes that "the thinking that is called philosophy...is supposed to offer 'worldly wisdom' and perhaps even be a 'Way to the Blessed Life.' But it might be that this kind of thinking is today placed in a position which demands of it reflections that are far removed from any useful, practical wisdom."[13] Here, Heidegger's distance from the Stoics can be easily discerned.

Positively, though, Heidegger suggests the possibility for a more originary ethics. He writes "If the name 'ethics,' in keeping with the basic meaning of the word *ethos*, should now say that 'ethics' ponders the abode of man, then that thinking which thinks the truth of Being as the primordial element of man, as one who eksists, is in itself the original ethics."[14] In this passage, originary ethics is identified with fundamental ontology: ethics just *is* ontology's pondering of how man dwells in Being.

These three conceptions of what ethics is and of what it tells one about life will provide crucial reference points with respect to which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou can be located. It should be noted that these three conceptions form a logical sequence. The Stoics see ethics as telling one how to lead a good, happy life. But for Kant, ethics concerns the system of moral duties which, if one's will conforms to it, would "constitute the indispensable condition even of the worthiness to be happy."[15] That is, Kant, ethics is concerned with an object that is supposed to be logically prior to the object with which Stoic ethics is concerned. And for Heidegger, ethics

thinks man's dwelling, which is the condition of possibility of any moral system or way of life whatsoever. Heidegger's originary ethics, then, concerns itself with an object logically prior to the object with which Kant's ethics is concerned. Each view of the nature of ethics tries to locate true ethics a level deeper than the view that preceded it, focusing on what would appear to be the condition of possibility for the earlier view.

On Post-Evental Cartography

The previous chapter explained how Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou converge in their detachment of the event from what entities or forces could be thought to determine its occurrence. This section argues that the detachment described there imposes certain restrictions on what concept of ethics is appropriate in the face of the vulnerability of ethical life to the event. The first part of this section explains those restrictions. The second part of this section argues that the Stoic and Kantian conceptions of ethics violate them. The third part of the section, finally, defines the concept of a post-evental cartography and proposes it as a conception of ethics which properly harmonizes with the detachment of the event from the entities or forces which would determine it, and suggests that such an ethics is implicit but undeveloped in Heidegger. In the next section of the chapter, these points will be brought to bear on Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou.

The detachment of the event from what would determine it places some restrictions on what ethics can be. If what happens is not made to happen by some entity or force which produces or causes it—a point which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou all draw from Heidegger—then ethical life is radically vulnerable to and puncturable by the event, for there is no entity or force which, when contacted, worshiped, or understood, can guarantee that events happen in

specific ways or at specific times. If this is so, then any ethics which aims to make life secure, transparent, coherent, unified, or otherwise invulnerable to events is ruled out, because ethical life cannot have these qualities. It follows that ethics cannot be about securing our lives or protecting them. That is, ethical philosophy cannot offer us the guarantee of a successful life; it cannot offer us theories or practices which will assist us in achieving such a goal. If it did, then ethics would be attempting to mitigate or avoid the consequence of the detachment of the event. To do so would be to indirectly deny that detachment itself.

This first restriction suggests a second, of which the first is an instance. Though the point may seem obvious, the restriction is that ethical thinking must be construed in such a way that it necessarily preserves, rather than possibly denies or forgets, the detachment of the event from what would determine it, both in its form and its content. The details of what this restriction rules out are less obvious.

Generally speaking, to not deny or forget the detachment of the event means that ethics must not take as its object of inquiry a life to which no event has occurred. To do so would be to act as if the event was nothing—it would be to ignore it and the ways it could happen to or in a life. Put positively, whatever ethics is to be, it must be something capable of holding in thought both the event and that to which or in which it occurs.

Because there are many items to which or in which an event can happen, this restriction can be specified and multiplied further. An event can befall our attempts to realize our goals, our lives, our values, our states, and our complexes of actions. So if ethics is conceived as, say, the study of the goals one should have, then the general restriction would be violated because an event can interrupt and prevent me from realizing my goals. Similarly, if ethics is conceived as

the study of which set of values is correct, the restriction is violated again because the occurrence of an event can call into question whatever set of values I hold, correct or otherwise.

It follows that the restriction and its multiplications rule out Stoic and Kantian conceptions of what ethics is and of what ethics says. The good or happy life, and morality and its values, are among the items to which or in which an event can happen, and so must be ruled out as the exclusive foci of ethics.

For the Stoics, ethics is a guide to a good and happy life. If an event happens in my life, the course and movement of my life is disturbed. The unity and coherence that my life would need to have for it to be good or happy are destroyed. This is not to say that an event must ruin my life or make me unhappy, only that an event makes it impossible for my life to have the qualities it would need to have for 'good' or 'happy'—or their contraries—to properly apply to it. An event pushes my life beyond goodness and happiness. An ethics which would be a guide to a good and happy life, then, is an ethics which ignores, denies, or avoids the possibility of the event.

For Kant, ethics is an examination and defense of morality—the system of duties by which a free will regulates itself. Here, much the same argument that held for the Stoics can be applied. What a Kantian ethics would produce if followed to the letter is a coherently moral life, but an event would be the disturbance of that coherence. When an event befalls my life, it might well be that my sense of what is a universalizable obligation is thrown into question, as could be my identity as a moral being or my desire to be moral. An ethics which only examines and defends morality is, thus, also one which treats the event as irrelevant.

But what would ethics be if the restriction is respected? What is ethics if not the guide to the good life or the study of morality? Below, an alternative concept of ethics is defined and its consistency with the above restriction is described.

First, a general definition. A post-evental cartography is a mapping of the ethical aftermath of an event. It is the description of the ethical world opened by an event; a description of the options for acting, living, or comporting oneself that are available to a life to which an event has happened. It shows one the paths one might take now that an event has occurred.

So as to be more precise, a few features of this general definition can be distinguished. First, there is the question to which a post-evental cartography responds. That question is 'what now?', rather than the more classical ethical questions like 'what should I do?' or 'how should I live?' Second, there is the target of the description or the things described. The things described by a post-evental cartography are options or possibilities. There are many types of option or possibility, but the kind of possibility described in this case are possible forms that the dimensions of one's ethical life might now take—possibilities of action, comportment, and so on. Third, there is the information given about these possibilities. Here, the information presented is that concerning the type of relationship that obtains between the option under consideration and the event on the heels of which it comes. In other words, what one is told about the ethical options is what relationship to the event they embody.

The term 'post-evental cartography' is appropriate for this sort of ethics. The term 'post-evental' is clearly warranted because the description is given only on the assumption that an event has happened to or in a life. The term 'cartography' is appropriate because cartography is the science of mapping—of making apparent the features of a territory—and this sort of ethical

thinking does so, though the territory consists of a tissue of possibilities rather than a plot of land.

Much more than the Stoic or Kantian views of the nature of ethics, post-evental cartography fits the restriction mentioned earlier. The goal of a post-evental cartography is not to make life invulnerable to an event. Indeed, that would be impossible, for the very presupposition of this sort of ethics is that an event has befallen a life. And this ethics does not concern itself only with that to which an event happens because part of what it concerns itself with is the relation between our options and an event itself. This means that this form of ethics does not act as if no event has or could happen. It does not treat the event as nothing, but instead treats it as the beginning of ethics.

Nonetheless, there are two other worries one could have about the concept of a post-evental cartography that do not concern whether or not it meets the restriction. The first worry is that a post-evental cartography is a type of *representation*. To say that a post-evental cartography describes options for life after an event would seem to imply that this type of ethics represents pre-existent options to a consciousness. To interpret Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou as engaging in such a philosophical practice would be inconsistent with the ways in which they each critique the very concept of representation and concern themselves with its limits. The second worry is that the idea of a post-evental cartography assumes a set of temporal divisions—before the event, during the event, after the event—which are inconsistent with what Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou have told us about the event. Deleuze, after all, writes that the event

has no present. It rather retreats and advances in two directions at once, being the

perpetual object of a double question: What is going to happen? What has just happened?

The agonizing aspect of the pure event is that it is always and at the same time something

which has just happened and something about to happen; never something which is

happening.[16]

So, the worry would be that the temporal categories presumed by the 'post-' in 'post-evental

cartography' are inadmissibly presentistic.

Neither one of these worries is severe enough to undermine the concept of a post-evental

cartography or to suggest that it fails to capture the thinking of Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou.

Concerning the first worry, to say that a post-evental cartography describes or maps the ethical

possibilities opened by the event only presumes a concept of representation if one assumes that

all descriptions or mappings are ways of representing entities to a consciousness. But that

assumption need not be made. A description or mapping can be taken as a creative construction,

as a process of unconcealment, as a form of writing, and so on, and none of these understandings

of what a description or mapping is invokes representation. The visual dimension of

topographical maps is not an essential part of the concept of cartography.

Concerning the second worry, it is indeed true that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each

frequently emphasize the ways in which events call into question or escape the standard

conceptual distinctions most people tend to employ—including a division of time into past,

present, and future modes. But since the calling into question of these distinctions arose from a

thinking of the event, the calling into question can itself only be described as an effect or

consequence *in thought* of the event; that is, it must be described as an intellectual possibility

which the event calls forth. But this means that the very way in which the event calls into

question the 'post-' of 'post-evental cartography' needs to be understood in terms of something

like a post-evental cartography. In this way, it seems that the worry about post-evental

cartography must presume the viability of the concept on some level.

One final point is also worth making. A post-evental cartography is not simply a negation of an ethics that would only think values, life, and so on. Such a negation would consist in thinking only of something other than these items, but a post-evental cartography does not do so. Instead, it concerns itself with the event, and with Being, life, and so on, as well as with the relation between them.

Heidegger's originary ethics can be interpreted as on the way to this sort of ethics. For Heidegger, originary ethics ponders the dwelling of man in Being. But, Being as Heidegger thinks it is *ereignis*, happening or occurrence. Thus, originary ethics must ponder the way in which man dwells in the space that the event opens. Heidegger's descriptions of such modes as reticence, forgetfulness, and so on can be taken as describing different ways of inhabiting that space. This puts Heidegger's conception of ethics quite close to a post-evental cartography. However, this aspect of Heidegger's ethics is left largely implicit in his work. The theme of *ereignis* is absent from the 'Letter' in which Heidegger's conception of ethics is presented, and Heidegger's discussions of *ereignis* in the *Contributions* and elsewhere are not explicitly tied that conception. Though the connection is discoverable, Heidegger does not go out of his way to draw attention to it. It falls on others to make those connections more explicit.

Three Cases of Post-Evental Cartography

This section explains how the ethics of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each fit the description of a post-evental cartography given in the previous section, and thus explicitly presents the sort of ethics toward which Heidegger's originary ethics tends. Examining Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou for both the positive and negative features of their conception of ethics, and noting similarities and differences between those features and the features of Stoic, Kantian, and

Heideggerian conceptions of ethics, will suggest that in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou ethics takes the form of a post-evental cartography. In short, the way in which they each *practice* ethical thinking shows them to be engaged in a post-evental cartography.

Is Deleuze's ethics a post-evental cartography? That Deleuze's ethics is distinct from a Kantian defense of morality and that he does not only focus on the states of affairs to which an event happens are both points that are easy enough to show. That Deleuze's ethics is distinct from the Stoics' and Heidegger's is somewhat harder, but it will emerge from these considerations how Deleuze is performing a post-evental cartography.

Firstly, the positive features of a post-evental cartography are present in Deleuze's ethical thinking. The mime's counter-actualization is a possible mode of being in which one comports oneself toward an event in a way that liberates it from its instantiations. This means that an event must be taken to have happened or to have befallen one's life for the question of whether to counter-actualize or not to even arise. In this way, Deleuze ethics is clearly post-evental—the mime needs an event to re-perform. And Deleuze describes a distinction between the mime's counter-actualization and ways of relating oneself to an event, such as denial, coopting, and so forth. This means that he presents a set of possibilities that are available in a post-evental situation. In other words, he gives a cartographic description of post-evental possibilities. In this way, Deleuze's conception of ethics has all the positive features of a post-evental cartography.

At the same time, it is clear that Deleuze does not only focus upon the item to which the event happens. For Deleuze, events happen to or in states of affairs when those states of affairs change. But Deleuze's ethics does not only tell us about states of affairs, but also about the relationships that can obtain between states of affairs and events. In this way, Deleuze's ethics fits the restriction which a post-evental cartography also fits.

208

These pieces of evidence are positive, but the differences between Deleuze and others reinforce the same conclusion. As was argued in Chapter One, one of the starting points of Deleuze's thinking is a Nietzschean distinction between ethics and morality which favors ethics over morality. Deleuze's ethics, it follows, is not an attempt to defend the key principles of morality. Quite to the contrary, for him ethics is a direct competitor to a moral view of the world due to the ways in which ethics puts immanence over transcendence, modes over subjects, and so forth.

Though Deleuze has many positive things to say about the Stoics in *The Logic of Sense*, his ethics is distinct from theirs. Deleuze's ethics is not an attempt to preserve or achieve a life unruptured by an event for, as has been argued, his ethics begins from the occurrence of an event. This means that Deleuze's ethics is not an attempt to achieve a good life, but is an attempt to describe what arises after the possibility of a good life has been precluded.[17]

Similarly, Deleuze's differences from Heidegger show him to be more explicitly presenting a post-evental cartography than was Heidegger. Deleuze's ethics presents different possibilities for relating to the event after it has occurred to or in one's dwelling. His ethics offers different possibilities for dwelling after an event has befallen one's prior mode of dwelling or, put differently, it ponders dwelling along with the ways in which it can be forced to change. Hence, in Deleuze, one finds a clearer tie between ethics and the event—or what Heidegger would call the pondering of dwelling and *ereignis*.

The same is true for Derrida. His ethics consisted in constructing textual sites which draw one into movements of ethical self-questioning about one's relation to events. In this way, one's relation to events was left open as a perpetual ethical question. This means that Derrida's ethics is post-evental, for the question of one's relation to events only arises in their wake. His ethics is

also a cartography, for it describes different possible attitudes into which one can enter after an event: one can keep in question one's relation to events, or shut down and suppress that question.

For Derrida, that to which or in which the event happens are various structures such as identity, the imperative, the 'S is P' propositional form, Kantian ethics, habitation, and other forms of presence. Three points immediately follow from this. First, Derrida's ethics does not think only the structures to which the event happens, but also the event itself and our relations to it. He does not only describe what imperatives or identities are, but also their exposure to events. In this way, Derrida's work meets the restriction described in an earlier section. Second, Derrida's ethics is distinct from Kant's. It is certainly true that Derrida is deeply concerned with questions of responsibility and this fact could be taken to mean that Derrida's ethical thinking is on a par with Kant's. However, there is a difference between, on the one hand, attempting to defend or prove that one has a specific set of responsibilities or is bound by obligations generally and, on the other, being open to the call of the other that can bind one in responsibility. It is the latter route which is taken by Derrida. Though his thinking can be understood as arising out of a response to the other, it nonetheless deconstructs the principles and structures of morality rather than attempting to defend or prove them. And third, Derrida, like Deleuze, has a conception of ethics which draws out the implicit side of Heidegger's. By letting his thinking show the points at which structures of dwelling have been subverted by events, the tie between ethics and event is again made more clear than it was in Heidegger.

Derrida does not comment on Stoic thought, but his view of ethics can be seen to be distinct from the Stoic view as well, for he does not attempt to provide any conception of the good life. Indeed, to the extent that a good life would be a structured, self-identical life in which ethical imperatives are realized, Derrida's ethics centers on the event as a subversion of that life.

The same general pattern can be seen in Badiou as well. As was argued in Chapter Three, Badiou's ethics describes the formal structure of the different singular ethical ways of being that one can take up after an event. The mode called 'fidelity' is defined by the maxim 'keep going!', but non-faithful modes are clearly possible in Badiou's thinking. Each of these modes can only arise after an event, and Badiou's ethics gives their description. Once again, the key features of a post-evental cartography are present here.

Likewise, Badiou does not only focus on that to which an event happens. In Badiou's terminology, it is Being that is affected by an event. But his ethics is not a theory of Being, for this is the role of mathematics. Instead, ethics revolves around the exception or 'paradox' of Being. Put in Heidegger's terms, though, this would be to say that ethics ponders *ereignis* and different ways of dwelling in the space it creates. Here again, Badiou is making more explicit and detailed the type of ethics that Heidegger presented but left undeveloped.

The relationship of Badiou's conception of ethics to that of the Stoics and Kant may seem harder to pin down. But his book *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* presents a sustained attack on both the idea of human rights and on what Badiou sees as a problematic version of a 'return to ethics.'[18] Of the last, he writes that "The contemporary 'return to ethics' uses the word in an obviously fuzzy way, but one that is certainly closer to Kant (the ethics of judgment) than to Hegel (the ethics of decision)."[19] Badiou's ethics, then, is separated from Kant's in a way similar to what was seen with Deleuze. That is, ethics in Badiou's sense is not concern with moral obligations. And though his book makes only one brief, evaluatively neutral reference to the Stoics,[20] their focus on a good or happy life is criticized in extremely strong terms when Badiou writes "in a certain way, every definition of Man based on happiness is

nihilist."[21] Here too, then, Badiou's concept of ethics is quite different than the Stoics as well. Ethics is also not a theory of the good life for Badiou.

Taken together, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each reconfigure ethics as a post-evental cartography. Their concepts of ethics not only fit the description of a post-evental cartography and respect the restriction from which it arises, but are also related to Stoic, Kantian, and Heideggerian concepts of ethics in the ways one would expect of post-evental cartography.

Some Differences

The claims of the third section do not imply that there are no differences between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. The idea of a post-evental cartography can be instantiated and inflected in different ways. The purpose of this section is to outline some of those differences and argue that they do not undermine the claim that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each reconfigure ethics as a post-evental cartography, but rather allow those differences to appear in the proper light. Three such differences deserve comment.

The first difference has to do with that to which or in which an event is said to happen. For Deleuze, an event happens to or in states of affairs; for Derrida, it happens to structures like concepts, imperatives, the 'S is P' propositional form, and so on; and for Badiou, the event happens to Being or to the situational arrangements of Being. At the very least, that to which the event is said to happen is named differently by each philosopher.

Still, there is enough overlap between the items thus named that this difference need not be understood as a disagreement. For, firstly, it still also seems right to say that, for all three authors, the event always also happens to *us*, that is, that it happens to or in some individual's ethical life. One's ethical life—that complex tissue of actions, desires, obligations, goals, values,

and so on—involves existing in and moving through states of affairs; it is partly constituted by structures like concepts and imperatives, and it is one aspect, dimension, or sector of Being. So, whichever of these items one chooses, it would nonetheless follow that when the event happens to it, the event also forces one to find some way of relating oneself to it. In this way, the differences between Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou at this level seem not to undermine their convergences on the nature of ethics.

Secondly, there is some overlap between the items in question. Situations of Being and states of affairs seem to be coextensive with each other. Concepts or imperatives are often present in them or are deployed in them. So when Deleuze, for example, speaks of events happening in states of affairs, Derrida could easily agree with him despite his own focus on propositional forms and the like. The same point holds for other combinations of the three thinkers. In other words, the ways in which the different items upon which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou focus are wrapped up with each other would make it hard for this difference to be a disagreement or contradiction.

The second difference is that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each seem to describe different post-evental options. Deleuze divides options into counter-actualizing and non-counteractualizing. Derrida, however, seems to present the options of standing in the space of questioning opened by the event's turbulence or of closing that space. And Badiou presents the options of heroic fidelity to the event, contrasting it with unfaithful modes of relation. Each of these sets of possibilities seems to be different in both name and content.

Nevertheless, there is a common structure that can be observed here. Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou each describe what could be called a 'de-eventalizing' option or possibility. For Deleuze, one possible course that can be taken after an event happens is to not counter-actualize

an event or to fail to become worthy of it. For Derrida, one might avoid being pulled into the questioning that the event opens, instead suppressing the movement of questioning. And for Badiou, one may fail to display fidelity to the event. These options each have an important feature in common: they each involve some mode of denying, avoiding, or covering over the positive possibilities opened by the event. To not pursue becoming worthy of the event is to act as if the event requires no alterations of our identities. To suppress the questions opened by the event is to act as if there were no such questions. And, to not try to be faithful to the event is to act as if no such fidelity were necessary. But, to take any of these routes is ethically on a part with pretending that no event has happened at all.

This feature of the de-eventalizing possibility described by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou provide grounds for its non-normative critique. For notice that the de-eventalizing possibility denies that there are any possibilities opened by the event, even though the de-eventalizing possibility is itself one of those possibilities opened by the event. The de-eventalizing possibility, then, is a possibility which denies its own conditions. One might say that it is not willing to admit what it is; namely, one mode of response to the event. This is not to claim that this possibility is somehow morally wrong or worthy of shame and punishment. Rather, it is to say that the de-eventalizing possibility is logically unstable, necessarily involved in the performative contradiction of denying its own status.

The third difference is that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou seem to have different perspectives on morality. Deleuze criticizes the very system of morality in favor of the ethical, thereby providing what would seem to be an 'external' critique of morality. Badiou seems to follow him in this. Derrida, on the other hand, opens up the system of morality from within its own resources. These are different sorts of critique. However, this does not undermine the earlier

214

points made about Kant, for none of these different types of critical stance on morality are attempts to defend or 'prove' it. To read and think with any of the three thinkers, always involves gaining a certain distance from morality as it is commonly understood, even if, as in Derrida's case, that reading and thinking is itself motivated by a call of responsibility.

For each of the dimensions of difference discussed above, then, a certain pattern emerges. In each case, what would seem to be a radical or incommensurable difference gives way to some sort of deeper convergence. Hence, those differences do not undermine the claim that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are each presenting an ethics as post-evental cartography.

From Meillassoux to An-Ethics

The previous sections of this chapter have argued that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou reconfigure ethics, transforming it from a study of the good life, of morality into a post-evental cartography. This section introduces a different but intimately related question: if the idea of ethics as post-evental cartography is taken as a point of departure, and Deleuze's, Derrida's, and Badiou's contributions to it taken seriously, what projects of inquiry are bequeathed to philosophical ethics? In other words, what does all this mean for the future of ethical thought? The first part of this section will be negative, suggesting that the ethics constructed by Quentin Meillassoux is not the answer, despite its seeming claims to be. The second part of this section will be positive. It will suggest that the transformation of traditional ethics wrought by the reconfiguration of ethics as post-evental cartography can be intensified and extended, turning ethics into what will be called 'an-ethics.'

The work of Quentin Meillassoux and the 'speculative realist' school of which he is the ostensible inspiration and head tends to present itself as a return to a genuine mode of

philosophizing whose goal is to grasp the nature of the real rather than to deconstruct texts, construct genealogies, or describe human experience.[22] Whether that self-presentation is warranted and, if it is, whether Meillassoux's speculative realism is a viable philosophical framework remains to be seen. But what is true of Meillassoux, as will become evident, is that his ethical thinking draws on Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. Indeed, his dissertation was written under Badiou's supervision.[23] He is the only thinker of which I am aware to present an original ethical framework which attempts to draw together aspects of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou and to see where they lead. His work thus requires consideration, for it is the only attempt to answer the question at hand.

Meillassoux's work mainly focuses on ontology. Against what he calls 'correlationism', he reaffirms thought's power to grasp the real. However, the real as he sees it consists in chaos. Meillassoux gives an ontology of absolute contingency without an absolute being.[24] As he sees it, "everything and every world *is* without reason, and is thereby *capable of actually becoming otherwise without reason.*"[25]

Meillassoux also aims to develop an ethics which draws the implications from his chaotic ontology. For him, ethics must affirm the possibility of an immanent immortality in which justice would be realized. Thereby, it guides one toward an attitude—which Meillassoux calls 'fervor'—in which an agent experiences joy at the possibility of the justice and immortality he describes.

With respect to his view of Being as chaos, Meillassoux writes that "This ontology is the condition of philosophy, or rather its end: namely, the constitution of an immanent ethics based on such an ontology."[26] What sort of an ethics is this?

As the world is now, human beings do not experience bodily resurrection. But an immanent ethics would, Meillassoux thinks, need to affirm that this is possible because it is the

only way in which this-worldly life is affirmed as worthy of desire.[27] Thus, "philosophical ethics

consists solely in *demonstrating* that *this life* possesses in itself the dimension of

immortality…"[28] His own ontology can accomplish such a task because, according to it, "since

everything logically possible is really possible, then since *the rebirth of bodies* is not illogical it

must also be possible."[29]

What one should do in the time in between now and the never-guaranteed realization of
Were the possibility of resurrection to come about, it would be a boon, not just for the

obvious reason that people would not permanently die, but because it would give to humanity a

world in which its ideals of justice could finally be inscribed in Being. In a world with

resurrection, lives that go horribly wrong could be made up for, since they could be lived over

again.[30] If one can be reborn, one can start over. If one is oppressed in one's first life, one's next

life might go better and thereby make up for the initial injustice.

What one should do in the time in between now and the never-guaranteed realization of

the possibility of resurrection is twofold: first, perform acts of justice and, second, embody an

attitude Meillassoux names 'fervor'. In support of the first point, Meillassoux offers an argument

structurally similar to William James's 'will to believe'; namely, that the possibility of justice will

not be realized unless we act in its favor in the present.[31] Justice is not fated, so for the possibility

of it to ever become real requires us to act in just ways now. Concerning the second point,

Meillassoux writes:

> Faced with the overwhelming opposition between atheist resignation and religious ardor,
>
> the philosopher aims at what one calls *fervor*: that is to say, the jubilation that results
>
> from rational knowledge of the ontological accord between the immeasurable
>
> requirement of justice and the absurdity of a world without God.[32]

Now it should be said that, properly speaking, there is no *accord* between justice and being, only a *non-discord*. 'Accord' suggests that it is somehow guaranteed or probably that justice would be realized in Being, though Meillassoux's point only appears to be that there is no guarantee that it will not be realized, that is, that there is no reason to think that there is any discord between justice and Being. Hence, fervor could be described as a joy that arises when one arrives at the conclusion of that non-discord. It is to feel joy because of the fact that a just world is possible.

Meillassoux's ethics transformatively appropriates specific elements of Deleuze's, Derrida's, and Badiou's ethics. Like Deleuze, he claims the name of an 'immanent' ethics which focuses solely upon this life, its possibilities, and its intensification. Like Badiou, Meillassoux's ethics incorporates a non-traditional notion of immortality consistent with a materialist outlook. Derrida's conception of justice was not discussed in Chapter Two, but that conception seems to be the point at which Meillassoux is influenced by Derrida's work as well. In "Force of Law", Derrida distinguishes between the law and justice, writing that "the deconstruction of all presumption of a determinant certitude of a present justice itself operates on the basis of an infinite 'idea of justice'…"[33] After contrasting this idea of justice with both Kantian regulative ideas and with the idea of a messianic advent,[34] Derrida goes onto say that justice "has no horizon of expectation (regulative or messianic). But for this very reason, it *may* have an *avenir*, a 'to come,' which I rigorously distinguish from the future that can always reproduce the present."[35] Though this point will need qualification later, it is clear that Meillassoux's conception of justice shares something of the radically futural quality found in Derrida. What it appears Meillassoux is trying to do is take a next step in ethics just as he tried to do, or claims to do, in ontology; to learn what can be learned from Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou and to treat it as a point of departure for his own investigations.

The problem is that Meillassoux does not treat a post-evental cartography as a point of departure. Indeed, his ethics is inconsistent with it.

It does seem clear that 'fervor', 'atheist resignation' and 'religious ardor' are alternative modes of being. In this way, Meillassoux's ethics turns from dwelling to the different possibilities of dwelling in much the same way as Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. However, these are not post-evental possibilities for Meillassoux. The attitudes he describes do not require any event to have happened for them to arise as options—fervor, resignation, and ardor are all attitudes that are open to one whether an event has happened or not.

And, though the resurrection for which Meillassoux hopes would be a quite extraordinary occurrence, that occurrence would not have the character of the event as Deleuze, Derrida, or Badiou would understand it. The reason for this is that resurrection would be an occurrence in which a value which we now hold—justice—finally becomes fully realized in the world while, for Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, an event is, at least in part, that occurrence which shatters or exceeds our current values, requires the construction of new values or a rethinking of old values, and so forth. Similarly, the attitude of fervor found in Meillassoux is not a response to a break in Being, but rather to a knowledge of Being itself.

This point holds even given the radically futural quality shared by Meillassoux's and Derrida's concepts of a justice. Meillassoux's justice is not a justice to come, but one which might actually be fully and perfectly realized in the world. But that is exactly what is denied by Derrida's 'to come'. The thrust of that idea was that, to the extent justice is realized in a present, it is not justice. Thus, Derrida's justice is futural in a more radically inappropriable sense than Meillassoux's

As was mentioned earlier, fervor should not properly be said to be jubilation at an *accord* between Being and value, but at a *non-discord* between them. But if our values may or may not be realized by the world, it is possible that they will be radically upset by it—if anything that is possible might happen, then the failure of justice to be realized might happen too. Deleuze's, Derrida's, and Badiou's ethics both seem to concern themselves with just such an eventuality. From that standpoint, they might suggest that fervor is too optimistic and obscures the real ethical challenge we face: that of how to respond when such eventualities befall us.

More broadly speaking, then, the locus of the problem with Meillassoux's ethics is its desire to underwrite the success or realization of values in the world. That desire is a forgetting of the event, for it ignores what the event does to a life: upsets the values and goals that structure it. Put briefly, one could say that Meillassoux's ethics is too *triumphal* to be a viable way forward from the ethical thinking of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou.

Negative though this conclusion is, it also indicates the character which a positive way forward—one which furthers, rather than abandons the insights of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou—would need to have. The examination of Meillassoux suggested, firstly, that his forgetting of some of what the event does to a life was a problem. It also suggested that the idea of the event as an upsetting of goals and values could be used by Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou to critically pressure Meillassoux. Any more viable way to further develop their work would need to keep these points in the foreground.

The question, then, is: How can this idea of an upsetting of goals and values be kept properly in the foreground of ethical inquiry? The most foregrounded position that something can take in an inquiry is to be the theme or object of inquiry itself, so it would seem that the answer is to take ethics itself as the study of how goals, values, and lives can be upset, thwarted,

or otherwise troubled. This study could be called 'an-ethics'. More precisely, let us call 'an-ethics' a way of thinking which concerns itself with the vulnerability of *ethical items* to *defeat*. This definition requires some elaboration.

'Ethical item' denotes anything that plays a structuring or constitutive role in an ethical life. Examples of ethical items include ways of life, ways of being, values, sets of ethical goals, moral codes, systems of duties, forms of care and concern, and so forth. These ethical items develop from or are suggested by various sources. Cultural mores, religious creeds, art, and even philosophy all suggest them.

Clearly, not every feature or aspect of one's life counts as an ethical item, for not every goal, plan, habit, or duty plays a structuring or constitutive role in one's life. My goal of going to a movie later this evening or my habit of tying my left shoelace before my right shoelace clearly fall into this category because they could change or be abandoned without the character of my life changing in any drastic way. It is worth noting that whether or not something counts as an ethical item is a matter of degree. Certain of my values, for instance, might be profoundly central in my life, while some of my values are no more than passing fancies to which I am hardly dedicated at all and which shape my life little. Yet other values can fall somewhere in between. But to the extent to which my way of life, values, goals, etc. could not change without leaving the identity of my life altered, that way of life, value, goal, and so forth counts as an ethical item.

'Defeat' denotes any entity, force, occurrence, situation, or process which renders an ethical item's realization or existence impossible. For any given ethical item, there will be a set of necessary conditions without which the existence or realization of that item would not be possible. These necessary conditions can be ontological, ontic, historical, social/political, or of various other natures. A defeat is that which makes the necessary conditions of an ethical item

unfulfillable. So, a defeat is that which makes one of my core values unable to shape the world or to be acted upon, one of my chief goals for my life unable to be obtained, or one of my primary habits inoperable. It is a 'worst case scenario' for a given ethical item.

Here too, not every upset in my life is a defeat. Minor delays, setbacks, and other sorts of frustration would not count as defeats because they do not render a goal, value, etc. impossible, but at most harder to realize or less likely to be realized. Indeed, it may be heartening to remember the difference between these sorts of setback and a defeat when one of those setbacks arises.

In any case, to practice an-ethical thinking would consist in taking a given ethical item and determining the conditions upon which its realization relies, then inverting those conditions to explore its possible defeats, then finally presenting what information one can about whether those defeats are likely and what might be done about them. An illustration will help clarify and allow some additional points to be teased out.

Imagine that the central goal[36] in terms of which I define my life is the goal of becoming a grandmaster in chess. It is clear that there are many necessary conditions without which this goal is unrealizable. The game of chess must exist and I must live in a culture which has access to it; I must know how to play chess; there must be other beings against whom I can play chess; there must be some organization that grants the title of 'grandmaster' and I must be eligible to earn that title.[37] If I miss the plane that would take me to the chess match where I would win my title, then my goal will not be defeated, since it is likely that I can wait for another such match. However, if I were expelled forever by the organization which grants the title of 'Grandmaster', or if I permanently forgot how to play chess, my goal will have been rendered impossible and

222

thereby have been subjected to a defeat. Barring some rather extraordinary circumstances, it seems quite unlikely that any of these defeats would occur in the normal course of life.

Now the specific defeats to which this goal is subject arise from the specific features of the goal in question. Not just any goal can be defeated by someone forgetting how to play chess. But, the fact that this goal is subject to some defeat or other is independent of its specific character. Any goal, whatever its specifics may be, has a set of conditions without which it cannot be realized, and at least one of those conditions may fail to obtain, so there is at least one defeat to which any goal might be subject.

One might think that there are counterexamples. For instance, couldn't I, on my 50th birthday, take up as a goal having lived 50 years? Or couldn't I adopt as my goal being mortal? It would seem that both of these goals cannot fail to be realized: the first because it has already been realized, and the second because it will be realized come what may. Two responses are available. First, it doesn't seem right to say that these examples are actually examples of goals at all. The very idea of a goal seems to involve a future accomplishment to which one's own actions and choices contribute. The first case is not a case of a future accomplishment, and the second case is not a case in which one's choices and actions make any contribution. Second, if we assume for the sake of argument that the two cases are genuinely cases of goals, then it does start to seem that we can imagine their defeat. If one's goal is to have lived fifty years, the necessary conditions for the goals realization include the fact that the past is sealed and unchangeable. But, we can imagine that the past may, perhaps, be affected by actions in the future or present—perhaps we are wrong about time—and that a present or future action can prevent me from having had reached my fiftieth birthday. If that were so, my goal would be defeated. If one's goal is to be mortal, we could imagine the actuality of immortality being accomplished

technologically and forced on one, in which case that goal, too, would have been defeated. So, a first major conclusion to which an-ethical thinking leads is: all ethical items are open to defeat.

But of course the question that is most likely to weigh on one's mind is what to do in light of a possible or actual defeat of an ethical item. Using the case from earlier, what should one do, given that one's goal of becoming a grandmaster might be defeated by forgetting how to play chess? What should one do if one actually does forget, and a possible defeat becomes actual? Now, these questions seek advice or recommendations about what courses of actions to take, what choices to make, or what attitudes to have. But part of the thrust of the type of ethics found in Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou is exactly to have broken with the usual practice of the ethical thinker providing ethical advice to others. Given that an-ethics is an attempt to carry forward the insights of that lineage, it is best to stick with that practice and refrain from telling our potential grandmaster what specific course of action to take.

Still, the question of what to do is real and always pressing, and it also seems that an-ethical thinking, by its very nature, must at least advocate that one recognize, acknowledge, or somehow take into account the possible defeat of one's goals. That is, one must at least act in a way consistent with an-ethical thinking in general, at least act knowing that the defeat of one's goals is possible and may already have happened. From this observation, we can construct a division between those attitudes that do not take into account the vulnerability to defeat of one's ethical items and those that do.

It is clear that there are ways of comporting oneself toward one's goals or values that occlude, deny, ignore, or otherwise cover over the fact that they can be defeated. Consider the case of the religious fanatic, who believes that his political goals are underwritten by a divine being. Such an attitude or way of being treats one's goals as guaranteed to be realized—if there is

224

nothing more powerful than God, and God wants my goals to be realized, then nothing can prevent my goals from being realized. In this way, the attitude of fanaticism treats certain goals as if they were unable to be defeated, so such an attitude is inconsistent with an-ethical thinking.

Other attitudes besides fanaticism function similarly. Any sort of absolute confidence or certainty that one's goals will be realized, any sense that they are fated or destined, must be ruled out in the same way. Even if I only think that my political goals will be realized because the deterministic movement of history guarantees it, the relation to those goals that I have still treats them as invulnerable to defeat.

But there are attitudes one can have about one's goals, values, etc. that are consistent with the movement and results of an-ethical thinking. Within this group are both attitudes that are merely consistent with that thinking and those that more strongly take it to heart and positively reflect it.

In the first subdivision are attitudes like hope, worry, or (non-fanatical) confidence which include an admission that a goal may be defeated. To hope that one's goal will be realized is to admit that it may not be realized: one does not need to hope where one is certain. The same can be said of worrying that it may not be realized or being confident—but not certain—that it will be realized. An-ethical thinking cannot rule out such attitudes, for they do not deny the fact that any goal is vulnerable to defeat. However, these attitudes only implicitly admit or accept that fact, but do not explicitly affirm it or, so to speak, put that fact on center stage.

In the second subdivision are attitudes which do, attitudes which fully take to heart the vulnerability of a goal or value to defeat. Consider the grim determination of our future grandmaster who decides to play in a tournament even when he knows the decision to expel him has been made and will soon be handed down, barring him from ever gaining his title. The

attitude displayed here involves the full admission and awareness of the goal's openness to defeat. To act with the prospect of a goal's defeat firmly in mind in this way is not merely consistent with an-ethical thinking, but reflects it in action.

It is this third set of attitudes—what could be called 'defeat-affirming attitudes'—which an-ethics must recommend. So, for a given goal with its related set of possible defeats, an-ethical thinking would also suggest the spectrum of defeat-affirming attitudes that accompany them.

This is only the briefest sketch of an-ethical thinking. Instead of a study of the good life, a study of how lives can go wrong; instead of a proof of morality, a study of how a morality can fail to find traction in the world; instead of jubilation at the possibility of justice, a consideration of its becoming impossible. 'An-ethics' is an appropriate name for this way of thinking, for just as 'an-archy' indicates a breakdown or dissolution of legal and political order, 'an-ethics' considers the breakdown or dissolution of the ethical orders within which one finds oneself.[38]

It is also important to note that an-ethics generalizes the sort of ethical inquiry in which Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou engage. A defining feature of their post-evental cartography is the move from a type of ethical thinking mainly concerned with the good life or morality to a type mainly concerned with the event. And the event is of interest for ethical thinking because it is an occurrence which punctures the fabric of one's ethical life.[39] But as the examples discussed above suggest, there are objects, processes, entities, facts, and other things which can puncture one's ethical life in much the same way as an event. That is, if the event is of interest because it punctures ethical life, then there is a whole universe of other things—'defeats'—which should also be of interest. An-ethics is the study of that universe. The post-evental cartography that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou draw from Heidegger is a first opening of the sphere of defeats to

investigation, and an-ethics proposes furthering that investigation. An-ethics is thus an intensification or extension of post-evental cartography's move away from more traditional kinds of ethical thinking.

So, the move from a post-evental cartography to an-ethics does not leave behind the event in such a way that the restrictions mentioned in section II above are violated. Those restrictions, recall, ruled out 1) any ethics with a goal of making life invulnerable to events, 2) any mode of ethical thought that concentrates solely on that to which the event happens to the exclusion of the event itself. An-ethics does not aim to make life invulnerable to events, for its focus on ethical defeat makes central the vulnerability of life to both the event and to whatever else similarly punctures ethical life. Likewise, even though an-ethics concerns itself with non-evental defeats of ethical items, this need not be to the exclusion of the event or in favor of that to which it happens—to include the event and more under one's purview is not to exclude it.

Conclusion

The Stoics, Kant, and Heidegger each present a conception of what ethics itself is and what it tells one about one's life. In Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, the conception of ethics at work is that of a 'post-evental cartography' which is distinct from the Stoic and Kantian options and which makes explicit aspects of Heidegger's conception which he leaves undeveloped. Though Meillassoux draws on Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou in his immanent ethics, he retreats from certain key insights through which they broke from their predecessors. An-ethics is a more promising route forward, for it does not retreat from those insights, but instead intensifies them. In short, in Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, the detachment of the event leads to an ethics of the

event that takes the form of a post-evental cartography, a form which can be extended into an

'an-ethics'.

NOTES

1. Epictetus. <u>The Discourses.</u> Trans. Robin Hard. Everyman, 1995. Pg. 169.

2. Ibid, pg. 171

3. Ibid, pg. 252.

4. Immanuel Kant. <u>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.</u> Trans. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge, 2012. Pg. 3.

5. Ibid, pg. 4.

6. Ibid, pg. 5

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid, pg. 7.

9. Immanuel Kant. <u>Critique of Practical Reason.</u> Trans. Lewis White Beck. Library of Liberal Arts, 1993.

10. Martin Heidegger. <u>Being and Time.</u> Trans. Joan Stambaugh. SUNY, 2010. Pg. 302.

11. Martin Heidegger. "Letter on Humanism." In <u>Basic Writings.</u> David Farrell Krell (ed). Harper, 1977. Pgs. 195-6.

12. Ibid, pg. 228.

13. Martin Heidegger. "Time and Being." in <u>On Time and Being.</u> Trans. Joam Stambaugh (ed). The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

14. "Letter on Humanism." Pgs. 234-5. See note 11 above for full reference.

15. Kant. <u>Groundwork.</u> Pg. 9. See note 4 above for full reference.

16. Gilles Deleuze. <u>The Logic of Sense.</u> Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale. Columbia University Press, 1990. Pg. 63.

17. Taken in concert with the discussion of Deleuze on pages 10-11 of the previous chapter, these last points suggest the great extent of Deleuze's distance from the Stoics, despite their being an inspiration and point of reference for his work. Deleuze does not see events as an expression of *logos*, nor does his ethics center on a conception of the good life or an ideal of sagehood. Though Colombat, Patton, Buchanan are right to think that, like certain Stoic thinkers, Deleuze sees events as incorporeals, Bowden and Sellars are also correct when they note that Deleuze is not concerned with the Stoic virtues and that there is no conception of providence at work in Deleuze. I would suggest that Bowden's and Sellars' observations about the differences between Deleuze and the Stoics need to be pushed further, for both Deleuze's basic anti-Platonic philosophical commitments and his entire model of thinking the event and ethics is fundamentally opposed to a Stoic model. So though it may be true that Deleuze takes on the Stoic conception of event as incorporeal change, this point of agreement must be seen against a backdrop of quite stark opposition. See 1) André Pierre Colombat. "November 4, 1995: Deleuze's Death as an Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996; 2) Paul Patton. "Concept and Event." *Man and World*, vol. 29. 1996; 3) Ian Buchanan. <u>Deleuzism: A Metacommentary.</u> Edinburgh University Press, 2000; 4) Sean Bowden. <u>The Primacy of Events</u>. Edinburgh University Press, 2011; 5) John Sellars. "An Ethics of the Event: Deleuze's Stoicism." *Angelaki,* vol. 11, no. 3. 2006.

18. Alain Badiou. <u>Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil.</u> Trans. Peter Hallward. Verso, 2001.

19. Ibid, pg. 2.

20. Ibid, pg. 1.

21. Ibid, pg. 37.

22. Other thinkers often counted as speculative realists include Graham Harman, Ray Brassier, and Iain Hamilton Grant. See, for instance, the journal *Collapse III*, the 2007 edition of which features written versions of texts given at a conference titled "Speculative Realism" at which Meillassoux, Harman, Brassier, and Grant were the main presenters. On pages 307 and 308 of that journal, the editor's introductory comments advertise their work as aiming to "boldly problematise the subjectivistic and anthropocentric foundations of much of 'continental philosophy'…" and states that "a common feature of the work presented was the implication that from a genuine interrogation of the continental tradition necessarily ensues a repudiation of the orthodoxies symptomatic of that tradition's conceptual exhaustion…".

23. Badiou has also written a preface to the book that Meillassoux published soon after the dissertation. See Quentin Meillassoux. <u>After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency.</u> Continuum, 2008. Trans. Ray Brassier.

24. Ibid, pg. 34.

25. Ibid, pg. 53. Italics in the original.

26. Excerpts from Meillassoux's as-yet unpublished *L'Inexistence divine* have been published in English translation in Graham Harman. <u>Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making.</u> Edinburgh University Press, 2011. I will cite this text as 'QM' below. The quoted passage is on page 187.

27. Ibid, 187-8.

28. Ibid, 188.

29. Ibid, 189.

30. Ibid, 191-2.

31. See QM, 215. Meillassoux does not cite James, but the similarity is unmistakable. See James's essay "The Will to Believe." <u>The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition.</u> John J. McDermott (ed). The University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pgs. 717-735.

32. QM, 195-6.

33. Jacques Derrida. "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundations of Authority." Trans. Mary Quaintance. *Cordoza Law Review*, vol. 11. 1990. Pg. 965.

34. Ibid, pg. 965 and pg. 967.

35. Ibid, pg. 969.

36. To keep the illustration simple, I will discuss only the case of a personal goal. This is meant to suggest neither that all defeats involve purely individual matters rather than those of public concern, nor that all defeats involve only goals rather than duties, obligations, virtues, and so on. The darker chapters of European history include enough ethnic cleansings, holocausts, wars, terrorist attacks, and natural and cultural disasters to provide a long list of ethical defeats. Discussing these examples adequately might require either a large amount of historical study or the making of a number of possibly unwarranted assumptions to determine what specific ethical items are defeated and how, so I leave them for another time. Cf. note 39 below.

37. Notice that these examples are exclusive to the goal of becoming a grandmaster—not knowing how to play chess would not defeat the goal of, say, becoming a doctor. In the conclusion, I will discuss defeats which are not tied to specific goals, but which defeat many or even all goals.

38. My choice of the term 'an-ethics' can be compared to Peirce's use of the term 'ant-ethics.' Peirce, speculating on the three 'normative sciences' of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, claims that he would call the second 'ethics' "if this did not seem to be forbidden by the received acception of that term," and instead suggests the term "*Antethics*, that is, that which is put in the place of ethics…" The move being made here is roughly similar, though the positive meaning Peirce gives to his term ("*antethics* should be the theory of the conformity of action to an ideal.") is not intended here. Hence, I have chosen an-ethics as more appropriate. The hyphenation helps make explicit the distortion of 'ethics' being enacted. See Charles S. Peirce."The Basis of Pragmaticism in the Normative Sciences." In <u>The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, V. 2.</u> Peirce Edition Project (eds). Indiana University Press, 1998. Pg. 377.

39. Notice that this conception of the event as an occurrence which punctures the fabric of ethical life fits the historical cases which are no doubt in the background for Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou. Chief among these are May '68, September 11th (for Derrida), and the Holocaust. Much could be said about any one of these examples, so only a few rough comments can be made here.

Though the case of May '68 may seem unobjectionable, at least three worries arise with the other two cases, especially that of the Holocaust. The first objection is textual, as it seems that in *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, Badiou goes to great lengths to argue that Nazi politics involved *simulacra* of events rather than actual events (see pgs. 62-77). The second objection is that the attacks of 9-11 and the extermination of Jews by the Nazis were both intricately planned, programmed occurrences, and thus do not have the character of events at all. The third and most worrying objection is an ethical one. Given the thinking of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou, to say that the Holocaust or 9-11 are events would seem to commit one to saying that we should mime those occurrences, or let ourselves be drawn into their turbulence, or be faithful to them. That would seem to involve us in the quite repulsive conclusion that these events were good and need to be repeated.

The first, textual, objection only seems right at first glance, and does not stand up to a more detailed reading. In those pages from *Ethics*, Badiou never actually denies that the Holocaust is an event. Rather, he only denies that the Nazis were practicing a fidelity to revolutionary events like those of 1792 or 1917, despite their claims to be doing so.

Regarding the second worry, the fact that certain occurrences were produced by planning does not necessarily prove that they are not events. Even when Derrida mentions 'surprise' as a feature of events, the term is usually used in concert with others. He writes, for instance, that "The event is what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend comprehension…" (see page 103 above for the full quote). Indeed, Derrida seems to suggest that it is not so much the surprising nature of some occurrences that makes them events as it is their ability to remain surprising *despite* and even *against* the causal stories that explain them. In this way, Auschwitz can

be said to be an event, for even when the historical factors behind it have been narrated, its horror is not lessened. One remains just as surprised—just as morally shocked—as before.

Finally, the third objection misunderstands the consequences of the claim that a particular occurrence is an event. A few key points should be recalled. First, to call something an event is not to say that it is good. Second, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou must each be interpreted as giving a post-evental cartography which describes different ethical options without normatively endorsing any of those options in any straightforward way. And third, even if each of the three thinkers were read normatively, the specific features of mime, turbulence, and fidelity do not imply that the event in question should be reproduced, celebrated, or otherwise enjoyed. Instead, these three ways of relating to an event only imply need to engage in the difficult work of reshaping one's life in such a way that the 'eventality' of the event is not denied. In these particular cases, that would mean facing up to the changes one must make in one's way of being now that something has happened, rather than trying to forget that it has happened and simply 'get back to normal.' Figures like Primo Levi and Viktor Frankl, who have reflected deeply on the meaning of their experiences during the Holocaust and have written about them eloquently, can be understood to be doing just that.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL CONCLUSION: INVERSIONS

The task of the previous chapters was to determine what could be learned from studying Deleuze's, Derrida's, and Badiou's ethical thinking of the event together, rather than separately, as has hitherto been the pattern in relevant secondary literature. What emerged is a picture of the location of Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou relative to each other and to the lineage of ethical thinking of which they are a part, as well as a sense of where that lineage might be taken.

The Stoic model of the ethics of the event conceived the event as an occurrence which was produced or cause by a force or entity distinct from it and which could act as a guarantee of its harmony with ethical life. The Stoic sage who embodies virtue is unharmed and undisturbed by what happens: he maintains his 'good flow of life' despite events. Heidegger's development of a non-metaphysical, non-onto-theological thinking of Being is a decisive break with this model. For Heidegger, Being itself is sheer happening, unbounded by any force or entity which would act as its cause. Ethics, at best, is the consideration of the ways in which man might exist toward or with that sheer happening.

Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou are, in this sense, decidedly post-Heideggerian thinkers, for their thinking of the event and ethics teases out the sometimes unstated possibilities implicit in the Heideggerian break with the Stoics, intensifying that break by showing what it means about the vulnerability of ethical life to events. For Deleuze, the event is a haecceity in changes to states of affairs that is not exhausted by those changes, and ethics is an ethology which categorizes one's relation to the event. For Derrida, the event is an inappropriable occurrence

which withdraws even from its own concept, and ethics involves remaining in the posture of self-questioning which it initiates. For Badiou, the event is a paradox of being, and ethics presents the different modes of fidelity and infidelity which realize (or leave unrealized) its consequences. Whereas Heidegger is open to various metaphysical misunderstandings due to his language of appropriation, the 'giving' of Being, and so on, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou develop concepts of the event which highlight its expropriating, destabilizing nature and effects on ethical life. Where Heidegger left implicit the connection between *ereignis* and originary ethics, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou make it central to their thinking. And whereas Heidegger only roughly sketched a vision of originary ethics, Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou present in detail versions of the post-evental cartography which it suggests.

To take yet further the departure from the Stoic model, the way in which the event upsets ethical life must be made the central concern of ethical thinking. An-ethical thinking performs this intensification by concerning itself with all the occurrences, processes, entities, and forces which upset ethical life in a fashion similar to the event. It would not be wrong to describe it as an inversion of Stoicism.

These conclusions do not suggest specific courses of action which one must take, nor do they reveal obligations, give commandments, or otherwise practically bind or regulate behavior. It is natural to want such advice from those who claim to love wisdom. When a friend or loved one dies, one wonders how to feel and how to behave. But all that can be said is that this death is one of the many possible ways in which ethical life can be punctured by what happens. Where that death came from, what it means, and what it is cannot be decided with any finality. The process of dealing with it might not have a clear ending or clear borders. But there are options for that process. It is always possible to cover over the fact of that death and the fact that it

233

cannot be pinned downed, but it is also possible to relate to it as does the mime or the hero, or to remain properly in its turbulence. This means not just admitting the puncturability of one's life, but living in light of it, knowing that happiness, virtue, and the preservation of identities are no longer what is at issue.

But what if this were carried even further than the brief sketch of an-ethics given in chapter five? The suggestion there was that specific ethical items have necessary conditions without which they become impossible and that the set of defeats correlated with a given ethical item depend on its individual features.

There can be two other types of defeat besides these 'single' defeats which make impossible only a single ethical item. First, there can be defeats which render impossible a set of multiple ethical items. For example, the goal of attending college and the goal of teaching at a college would both be rendered impossible if the university system no longer existed. So, the collapse of the university system would defeat multiple goals. These defeats could thus be called 'multiple' defeats.

Going still further, there could also be what could be called 'total' defeats. These defeats would not only render impossible one ethical item or a group of ethical items, but any and all ethical items. There may be a set of necessary conditions which all ethical items share and without which they are all impossible. For example, it is hard to see how any goal could be realized unless actions have effects, so in a world in which actions were without effect, any and all goals would be defeated. Or, consider Kant's postulates of pure practical reason. In the second *Critique*, Kant writes "it is necessary to assume…practical progress as the real object of our will. This infinite progress is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called the immortality of

234

the soul. Thus the highest good is practically possible only on the supposition of the immortality of the soul…"[1] The idea here, roughly, is that morality only makes sense if there is an immortal soul, so one must assume for practical purposes that there is such a soul. Kant, of course, thinks that morality does indeed make sense and that the existence of an immortal soul must be assumed. But Kant's point, if correct, could be inverted to indicate that the mortality of the soul would defeat any and all moral systems. An-ethical thinking, in this case, would require assuming that the soul is mortal and proceeding from there.

Now, Kant may not be right that morality cannot hold without the assumption of an immortal soul, and he may not be right that the immortality of the soul, freedom, and the existence of God are the only conditions without which morality would not hold. In that case, an-ethical thinking would require the execution of a specific philosophical project. First, it would require determining what possible total defeats there are. Second, it would then require assuming hypothetically that all of those total defeats actually hold. If Kant is right, this would be to imagine experimentally that the world actually is a place where there is no God, no immortal soul, and no freedom. Then, finally, the remaining third requirement would be to ask where that leaves us. This philosophical project would consist in trying to imagine what could be thought of as "the *worst* of all possible worlds", to invert Leibniz's famous phrase. It would consist in trying to conceptually envision what the world would have to be like for values, goals, and ways of life to be unable to get a foothold in it, and then to ask how one might live, if at all, in such a world. What would Being have to be like for it to be utterly repulsive or inimical to all ethical items? What is left to us if that really is what Being is like? To answer these questions is to propose an *an-ethical ontology*. Such an ontology would seem to bring to its highest pitch the an-ethical

thinking that Deleuze, Derrida, and Badiou make possible. It would also be an inversion of Meillassoux's affirmation of the accord between Being and justice.

Moreover, perhaps the relationship between Being and value, or between ontology and ethics, must be thought differently than it has been by any of the figures discussed in the pages above. It may not be that ethics can be derived from ontology (Stoics), nor that ethics is identical to ontology (Heidegger) or that it is an ontological categorization of the ethical (Deleuze), nor that ethics concerns what interrupts ontology (Derrida and Badiou). Rather, perhaps one must do ontology in light of the worst fears of ethics.

NOTES

1. Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Practical Reason.* Trans. Lewis White Beck. Library of Liberal Arts, 1993. Pg. 129.

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