

## Book Review

### **The gospels of the manifesto moment: Insurrection after God.**

A review commentary on: An Insurrectionist  
Manifesto. Four New Gospels for a Radical Politics

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Foreword by Peter Rollins, Preface by Creston Davis, and Afterword by Catherine  
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A manifesto sets out an impassioned political and social argument, while traditionally the religious equivalent has been a creed. Yet read from the position of a radical theology and secular political theology, the historic and institutional nature of a creed acts as a barrier and limitation on radical and political theology, reducing radical theology and especially political theology to sectarian disclosure and closures. A manifesto on the other hand, overtly political in nature and outlook, becomes the open call to possibility that sits at the heart of both radical and political theology. These four new gospels are a powerful and prophetic work of political theology. They operate out of what Mary Ann Caws terms 'the manifesto moment' which is its positioning 'between what has been done and what will be done, between the accomplished and the potential, in a radical and energizing division',<sup>1</sup> a moment of crisis expressing 'what it wants to oppose, to leave, to defend, to change.'<sup>2</sup>

The following takes seriously these gospels *as gospels*, undertaking a hermeneutical reading as a commentary, seeking within them the manifesto moments of good news. It proceeds by naming

each text wherein the hermeneutic response occurs and also, in the manner of commentary, names the page in the text to which each point responds.

### Commentary 1: Introduction. What Is Insurrectionist Theology?

I wish begin by stating a reworking of the manifesto moment wherein the manifesto moment is not only the proclamation of the Gospels but also *the gap* into which the Gospels are proclaimed. That gap is of course the crisis of contemporary capitalism. This insurrection is therefore an insurrection from within capitalism. But what is an insurrection? I wish to offer that an insurrection is a state of Being, not a project to be completed such as a revolution but rather an ongoing act of what, for better or worse, could be termed resistance. Resistance is, as later comments will demonstrate, a problematic term, but here, at the beginning let us proceed from a named starting point of insurrection as an act of resistance as affirmation; that is, not resistance *against* but resistance *for*. And what is this resistance *for*? *Nothing less than the good news proclaimed in these gospels.*

The introduction begins with a statement of belief, of belief “in the Insurrection, not the resurrection- whether it be of Jesus Christ or of anyone else.”<sup>3</sup> This is belief as the negation of what was, in Christianity, the claimed basis of belief. The belief in the Insurrection is a proclamation of faith in human – not divine – action to proclaim truth, challenge evil and offer hope. Furthermore, Insurrection is a collective human event *as politics*, as the process to overcome in the way religion may promise but seldom if ever satisfactorily delivers. It is “a new kind of political theology”<sup>4</sup>, but can indeed political theology be remade without being renamed; or is the Insurrection for this *possibility* against the limits of political theology as it exists? While such a political theology “would constitute an insurrection not only with theology but also against theology in itself”<sup>5</sup>, I wish to push the Insurrection further asking, should it not also be an Insurrection against politics itself? Why leave politics untouched and intact? Because if the Insurrection is only against Theology whereby “theology must free itself from the sovereign One, or God”<sup>6</sup>, if there is not a simultaneous Insurrection against politics, does not Politics itself become the sovereign One, the God? So, if we are to,

correctly, critique Theology then we must also critique Politics and therefore must free Politics as much as we seek to free Theology.

It becomes clear that the Insurrection is firstly versus the ongoing desire and claim for the Resurrection of God and Gods. This means Insurrection is not just “within the tradition of American death of God theology”<sup>7</sup>. To understand this, we need to remember that the biblical gospels have often been proclaimed as arising from the traditions of both Jewish and Greek thought [of course if only it were that simple and simplistic!]; that is, not from any singular origin or tradition. Therefore Insurrection as gospel is Insurrection from within both American death of God theology *and* the theology arising from Continental thought: an Insurrection positioned against the resurrection of God and Gods in such thought. It also means that God is the politics and statement (the wording and word) of God – and God’s death.

While it is stated “The point is that the death of God always accompanies (faith in) God like a lining or a shadow, and it is there from the start”<sup>8</sup>, I would suggest a counter-reading that the death of God is only what is present to us, analogous to the light from the star that is no more, yet we still see. The problem of the postmodern turn was that it allowed the “Not-Dead God”<sup>9</sup> to return as the claim of value of and for groups that sought to exert not only ecclesial but more so, political power. So only if the death of God is truth event can it oppose such politics.

So, what can it mean to say “this curled-up Real is the “source of insurrection”<sup>10</sup>?; only that Insurrection is not a new political theology but rather a theological politics of the Real as that which prevents the recourse to either God or Politics as the symbolic seeking totality. This means the statement “we discover that the Real is better understood as the irreducible distortion of our knowing, which makes it impossible to simply grasp the Thing in itself”<sup>11</sup> is itself the theological politics of Insurrection. Reading further therefore out of the engagement on the Real via Deleuze – and Deleuze and Guattari – this means that the Insurrection is the articulation, the proclamation of the Gospel of the Real. Insurrection is the ‘good news’ of the distortion that opens the gap within the Real and the Thing. What we access is the Gap between the Real and the Thing, and this Gap is the moment of the manifesto: the call to

and from Insurrection that is by necessity incomplete. In opposition to the use of Laruelle, I would say that we think not *from* the Real but from the Gap of the Real – for if we claim the Real as accessible then we claim a politics of power, and such a politics is the inverse, the perversity of Insurrection.

What we gain from the use of Malabou's plasticity is that both the Real is plastic and the Thing is plastic and so Insurrection is the political plasticity of the Gap; and because "Plasticity means there is no dualistic separation of mind and body, matter and spirit, an ultimately, form and energy"<sup>12</sup> there is therefore the need for a politics of plasticity or a plastic politics.

What this means is developed in the discussion of Žižek's engagement with the cry of "irreducible gap or split within the divinity"<sup>13</sup> that occurs within the crucifixion. This gap is the Gap of Insurrection whereas the claim of Resurrection is the attempt to overcome and negate the gap. *So only by denying the Resurrection can the Insurrection occur.* For Death is Death and the task now shifts to – or rather is reclaimed by – materialist humanity, *in and for* the material world. The Good News is therefore good news for all those excluded by the politics and theology that dominates – for it is such exclusion that Insurrection opposes. That "*An insurrectionist theology is an experimental theology*"<sup>14</sup> means that what is theology is therefore the same as politics and so we must not fall into the trap of privileging politics as existing in a way that we know theology does not. This also means that, like theological subjectivity, political subjectivity is also "thetic" and caught between "the drives of the symbolic and the semiotic"<sup>15</sup>; which means politics too "must be willing to lose itself to find itself"<sup>16</sup> – and I would extend this even further to Being losing itself to find itself; for Being is that which enacts – and claims a constitution derived from – both theology and politics.

What then of the announcement of "a new synthetic *nomos*"<sup>17</sup>? This *nomos* is both plastic and materialist; and this announcement of the *nomos* is a world that is – if not recognized – not a world to come. The prophecy is as the claim of an alternative or correction to what is, not a new event of action. This arises from the plasticity of *nomos* itself. So, the Insurrection is a human project of a theological politics of plastic materialism.

## Commentary 2: Earth

I begin by stating that *Earth* is the apocalyptic gospel, the gospel of the end of this world and the hope for a new world. It is the gospel of “a state of crisis in our relationship with the Earth”<sup>18</sup>. What can be the good news of such a crisis? Perhaps it is firstly the naming of the crisis: the good news that we see and name it as such. And here I wish to position it also as KRISIS. For whereas crisis is problem, KRISIS is expressed as time of decision, challenging that which is and demanding a decision in response. KRISIS operates as a rupture, an iconoclasm of that what humanity in crisis, holds as meaningful. This means an insurrectional political theology responds to and as KRISIS – to crisis.

The discussion of money and energy and the start in the 1970s of a financial economy “where the stock market was detached from the real economy and it spiraled off into stratospheric heights”<sup>19</sup> raises a question of what if we see the financial economy as a transcendent economy, an economy separated from the world of things? Is the first step of Insurrection the need to return to an earthly economy, a materialist economy? For the question is whether transcendent capitalism – that is financial capitalism – actually comes up against real ecological limits? And, we must then ask why did capitalism go transcendent as financial capitalism – and even further more recently, as digital capitalism? The answer is because “capitalism does not continue to function in an environment of decline”<sup>20</sup>. So just as an insurrectionist theology “allows a thinking of material reality that avoids consumer materialism”<sup>21</sup> we would push this further from crisis to KRISIS and state that therefore materialist theology is centrally opposed to what can be termed the transcendent supersessionism of financial and digital capitalism.

What is a materialist theology of the earth? It is the “deformation”<sup>22</sup> into a religion of the Earth: an ultimate concern of and for the Earth. Insurrectionist theology is therefore a standpoint: from where and how we stand on the earth – and in relation to the Earth and all that exists upon it. It is, as stated, not ecotheology because ecotheology is still in reference to the memory of transcendence as a justification; further, it expresses both antimodern and a historical utopianism. In short, ecotheology is just another fall narrative.

Rather we must follow Žižek's articulation of the radical separation or splitting of God, humanity and nature which "testifies to an irreducible excess"<sup>23</sup> and so we argue that it is this excess that acts against the closure, against finality, which means death is the ending of excess, the end of energy on an individual level.

It is the turn to Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* that enables a new articulation of theology whereby insurrectionist theology itself is repetition *as the repetition of difference*; whereas too often theology is the attempt to deny the difference. Deleuzian-derived theology is therefore in response to Intensity; it is a theology both derived from repetition and the theology of genuine repetition – and this is Insurrection. Because "energy is material"<sup>24</sup>, in a theology of Earth this means a material theology is a theology of Energy – of energy as the ground of our being – and of how Energy takes form in the material world, as the material world and as all that is within it.

The introduction of Deleuze & Guattari's *territorialization* and *detrterritorialization* helps us understand Energy as repetition and difference. But this also leads to a different understanding of contemporary capitalism than that put forward by Deleuze and Guattari in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. We need to remember that this text was first published in 1972 and so refers to a different epoch of capitalism. But what we can do is apply *territorialization* and *detrterritorialization* to contemporary capitalism and extend the hermeneutic frame whereby we can now see that with Finance [and its most recent extension of digital capitalism] wealth has become *exterritorialized* and this is why Finance is so problematic and also why it is so opposed to Earth, which is territory. We can now say that Finance is nomadology as *exterritoriality* which is opposed to both territorialization and detrterritorialization because it has no relation to the world of things or to any form of territory. Therefore, materialist theology must first oppose the *exterritorialization* of finance in order to bring capitalism and its effects and influence back down to earth. Only then can it be held accountable.

So, what then is the good news of Earth? It is the "constructive thinking of a new earth, the composition of a perspective of Earth as a whole"<sup>25</sup>; that is, the proclamation of the task, the project, the event of

hope as something to live, work and orient toward. To this end, the proclamation that we as beings “are not the goal of evolution, but we are a kind of witness”<sup>26</sup> is the *end* therefore of the misguided self-absorption of both anthropology and of any claim of theology as anthropology. This also means, in light of the understanding that “Energetic repetition organizes life”<sup>27</sup> that we therefore need to end the teleology of anthropological thinking because we as beings are not the ontology of existence and not the ontology of evolution. The good news is proclaimed as Deleuzean: “repetition leads to complexity, articulation, and reproduction. It also leads to depletion, devastation, destruction and reproduction”.<sup>28</sup> An insurrectionist theology is, like *deterritorialization*, a *demasking* whereby that what is, is not and is not to be – and this is hope; and conversely, an insurrectionist theology arouses the fear of those who benefit from the claimed thought, the settled and the masked. And because “theology is energy”<sup>29</sup>, ontology is therefore a theology of energy as *difference*. This means ontology, not anthropology is the face and form of insurrectionist theology.

What is to be done? The answer is clear: “We need to follow Marx and set Hegel back on his feet, where spirit is material and energetic”<sup>30</sup>; to understand this we need to be clear that spirit occurs nowhere but the material world, as spirit as and for the material world. This opens up the option of calling “theology in and for itself” psychoanalysis which can perhaps be extended to rename theology as ontological psychoanalysis. The gospel concludes with insurrectionist theology being named “a form of psychoanalysis”<sup>31</sup> wherein a spilt of critique and affirmation occurs; or as I would put it: insurrectionist theology is the claim that holds within it both the limit and excess of possibility.

### Commentary 3: Satellite Skies

If, as stated, “Insurrection is an invitation...without which we find ourselves unhelpfully lost and hopelessly asleep”<sup>32</sup>, then by what are we to be *found* and what are we *when* we are found? Is it only that we are found *awake*?

What of the archival Gods?<sup>33</sup> Is this not like our seeing the light of stars that no longer exist? We may still respond to them, perhaps even

attempt to navigate by that and to that which is no longer there. Or are archival Gods even more like the point of Aries?

Here I refer to my discussion in *Bibles and Baedekers* (2008)<sup>34</sup> of Geoffrey Moorhouse's *The Fearful Void*.

Moorhouse's book details his trek through the Sahara. Before setting off, he visits a Russian Orthodox church. Considering his faith, he ruminates on the existence of a navigational tool called the Point of Aries. This is where the sun's path intersects the celestial equator on March 21 each year. Moorhouse notes that, while all zodiacal bodies are related to this point, there is no actual entity called Aries; rather it has been invented by astronomers and navigators. It is Moorhouse's reflections upon this conundrum that are, I believe, crucial to understanding the modernist(ic) theological endeavour:

It is because Aries exists that the navigator is able to make his calculations, and so fix his position on earth. This is the focal point of activity for all those millions of light specks we call stars. It regulates their relationships. It also gives man, trying to find his way across the wilderness of the earth, a security that he can find it, if only he learns the secret of using Aries correctly.

Perhaps...God should be thought of as a spiritual Point of Aries...Without an awareness of this God, without a sense of common relationship with God and with each other through God, without being able to refer to God, we are quite lost; people spinning helplessly and hopelessly through a fearful void of the spirit. <sup>35</sup>

Is theology an account of this sort of traveler and navigator, exploring the realm of the other, taking as read a guide which in reality is nonexistent – except in the form of a created and imagined necessitated existence?

A more recent discussion of a similar occurrence occurs in McKenzie Wark's ruminations of life with a Global Positioning Satellite. Each meditation is headlined by his GPS data-life location lived under the eye of a technological god/Point of Aries:

29 Jan 2001 3:55pm EST

To leak into the cracks in a perfect world and flee along them. That might be what home is now. A home that could be anywhere. Not elsewhere; anywhere. Life need not be elsewhere, always pressing nose to glass. Home can be here. But here is anywhere. This where, now: Homing. *It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home.*

[emphasis: Wark] It is the ethos of the ethical to embrace anywhere as part of another home.<sup>36</sup>

Wark's issue is that of the authentic location of home in a dislocated world; a world where, under a GPS system, you are permanently located yet dislocated. The Point of Aries was fixed – if imaginary – and a collective belief gave it permanence. With the GPS things have changed. If the Point of Aries was real but non-existent, now with the GPS we have a new axis that is real but artificial. The distinction is an important one.



For in the twenty years between Moorhouse's and Wark's texts, the question of the real seems to have changed. Moorhouse seeks refuge in a faith he orientates around a God who is necessary – but not real. God is the focal point that links and positions us, ensuring we are not lost. By the mid-1990s, the traveler can guarantee they will not be lost: not by investing in faith but by investing in human technology. Now while the turn to the security offered by modern technology ensures the traveler is no longer lost, what is lost is the location of home. For, claims Wark (reading from Adorno), to be able to be located anywhere is, in fact, to be dislocated from any authentic, real home. This claim may initially be read as an ethical statement in that it discourages partisanship and stresses the universality of humanity. Yet, perhaps fundamentally overlooked by Wark's re-reading, is the point that such ethical purity comes with a real-world price. That is, only those with access to money and technology can actually afford to be dislocated in such a sense.

But to return to the text, *pistis* forces a break “within the order of *nomos*”<sup>37</sup> and thus is proclaimed the insurrectionist gospel of satellite skies “and its *pistis* of a chance solidarity”<sup>38</sup>. So what does *pistis* do? It is *pistis* that ruptures *nomos*, it is *pistis* that drives, that locates Insurrection, it is *pistis* that operates in and from hope.

We turn then to the discussion of Heidegger's “The Onto-Theological Nature of Metaphysics” whereby we ask is not insurrectional theology what can be labelled ‘The Onto-Theological Nature of Materialism’? Then, we can further ask if it has to be a decision between “Telos or ground”<sup>39</sup> suggesting this only occurs if our approach is that of metaphysics. Because, if our approach is materialist, then our new onto-theology of materialism is that of deferring *and* presences. Here we return again to Deleuzian repetition and suggest there is also an as-yet unnamed Deleuzian deferring *as* presencing and presencing *as* deferring. This also means we wish to qualify the statement that we are all stranded, living as actants in *the hyphen* of “onto-logy, theo-logy, onto-theology”<sup>40</sup>. Rather we suggest that it is not *the hyphen* where all actants live; rather all actants *exist as the hyphen: the hyphen is the actants*.

What can be labelled “The Age of Consumptive Presence”<sup>41</sup> is nothing more and nothing less than a multiplicity that is increasing repetition. For the multiplicity drives the desire for either the return of the One – or for an increasing polytheistic expression. But of course, our “Our intensities are not transgressive”<sup>42</sup>; for what is there now to transgress – except transgression itself? And this is not transgression but rather excess as expression. It is in this logic that we can make sense of the

insight of “a transcendent life which ever needs to feed back upon us for more”<sup>43</sup>. For it is the parasitic nature of transcendence whereby transcendence is the inverse of repetition: *the re-play*; the singular re-played again and again.

So, what of Heidegger's Sky? How might we think of it today? We suggest it is still the sky of the point of Aries, still transcendent, not yet Wark's sky full of material technologies, now full of data transmission. Today, Sky has been colonized, politicized and financialized by technology and data. Sky now has a primary political, economic and military value. The Sky has become profane, transcendence itself made materialist, for it is now we mortals who gaze upon – and intervene into – earth from the sky.

And what of urban skies? For, since 2007-08 more than 50% of humanity is now urban: we are now an urban species. What is the urban sky glimpsed between human constructions, from between and beneath the glare of human illuminations? We also remember Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* is perhaps another insurrectionist gospel of Earth and Sky; a response to the urban, modern closing off of sky as the symbol of the utopian desire for the free movement and consumption of modernity.

Other questions arise. If, correctly, “Heidegger is a kind of intensified Marx inasmuch as the fourfold names our being expropriated from the modes of production *whereby we manufacture ourselves*”<sup>44</sup>[*emphasis added*], then what, in a Marxist-derived question, is the opiate of our self-manufacture? Is it still religion? Or is it, we suggest, Ontology?

So, transcendence occurs in two ways in contemporary capitalization (our current and dominant mode of self-manufacture); firstly, as financialization, as the freeing of capitalism from material things and secondly (and deriving from the first), as digitalization, which is a material transcendence involving both Earth and Sky. For Sky is now looked for in all our digitalization, in all our entertainment, in all our distraction, for Sky is that through which so much passes: the vampire that feeds on all and through all.<sup>45</sup>

What then is the Insurrection of Sky? Is it not an Insurrection *against* onto-theology? Is it not the call to a world *without* onto-theology? A world that is *not* feasted upon by the transcendent capitalist tick?

What we do have is “the need for a new *discipline*”<sup>46</sup> wherein a new Sky is one made within materialism. For without Earth there is no Sky and vice versa, but we must remember that Sky is looking *outward* from Earth, not looking downward in surveillance upon it. So, Sky is not up but *out* – and so always experienced *from* Earth. If we carry this thinking onto the Gods, then Gods are *out* not *up*; the *outing* of Gods is Gods made open, disclosed, not hidden – and this outing of Gods is the repetition: a repetition as “social solidarities”.<sup>47</sup>

The discussion on Deleuze’s *Cinema* and how “Thought finds itself taken over by the exteriority of a “belief” outside any interiority of a mode of knowledge”<sup>48</sup> raises a question of what if we read this in reference to Sky and transcendence whereby transcendence and its associated Sky is the exteriority of belief?

Further questions arise in the discussion of the consumer economy (p.87ff) out of which Insurrection can be rearticulated. What if the Insurrection is that which occurs therefore *within but against* a consumer society whereby we insurrect versus ourselves as producers as much as we do as consumers; whereby the surplus of production and the surplus of consumption becomes the basis for the event of Insurrection – *as surplus*. The insurrectional surplus is that which thereby inverts the values of the intention of *both* producer and consumer, so as to open up the insurrectional gap between desire and values; or to take it back to Paul, between *nomos* and *pistis*. For the surplus is not just within law, it is also within faith – and the Insurrection is as much against faith as it is against law, because we need to be set free from faith as much as law, otherwise we exist in faith in a continual negation relative to *nomos*.

All of this means that the “seizure of chance”<sup>49</sup> is the manifesto moment, the gap of the possibility enacted, whereby the Insurrection as a discipline *is* this manifesto moment, the moment itself as repetition. The moment is one of archiving, a moment *within* the now as repetition, so Insurrection is always in the now *as* repetition. For if we wait for or even call for Insurrection we put ourselves in the role of anticipatory passivity; and nor can or should we look back in nostalgic longing. Rather Insurrection occurs *within* every act of repetition which is, in its difference, an Insurrection too often dismissed, ignored or unseen.

## Commentary 4: A Theory of Insurrection.

### Beyond the Way of the Mortals

What can it mean if the way of the mortals is “a brutal savagery of consumption: to eat or be eaten?”<sup>50</sup> Is not the savagery of consumption also that which sits at the heart of capitalism, which is why capitalism has, post-1989 in particular, become normalized as ‘the natural order of things’ in socio-economics and political economy? Therefore, Insurrection has to be aware of the ground upon which it occurs.

It is also important to emphasize there is “no resurrection”<sup>51</sup> and so we must stress that the Insurrection is not *the* resurrection or is it *a* resurrection. In fact, resurrection acts to negate Insurrection and so we can say that Marx was right: the religion of the resurrection *is* the opiate of the masses. What is the Insurrection? It is a materialist ontology, a political ontology of justice and humanity. What we have to move past is the resurrection of *only one* insurrectionist, for this resurrection has become transcendent spiritualizing, a resurrection that spiritualizes and depoliticizes the Insurrection: the resurrection as dematerialized opiate. This is why the discussion of Cone’s challenge of the horror and scandal of lynching (p.111ff) is so important. The lynching is re-crucifixion without resurrection and so seeing lynching in this way also returns crucifixion to its de-spiritualized event. So, can we therefore read crucifixion and lynching as Deleuzean repetition?

The discussion of *Cloud Atlas* (p.113ff) raises questions as to how we encounter texts compared to film. For whereas Mitchell positions the ambiguity of a text against the final cut of the film in its drive towards specificity, this seems to create a limited sense of how a film is viewed and encountered. For just as there was the much-heralded Death of the Author, in film, given its multiple readings and interpretations by the audience, can we not also claim the Death of the Auteur? For the film is read in as many ways as the text – and is not film a two sense experience, as is the text? For we forget a text is sounded, is heard, in our heads in the act of reading? So, is this the actual difference between a text and film, in that a text is exteriority and interiority combined whereas a film operates on the level of exteriority? And so, is not film a type of

transcendence within the material world? Which is why the book is the means of the gospel of Insurrection?

Further out of the discussion of *Cloud Atlas*, we raise the question of whether Insurrection is therefore the deconstruction of resurrection: the differentization and temporalization of the hope contained in the claim of resurrection? Is it that Insurrection deconstructs resurrection which results in hope without the exteriority of resurrection; that is, hope made temporal? This temporalization of time reminds us of Graham Ward's statement in *Cities of God* that the question theology "does not handle" is the question concerning "what time is it?"<sup>52</sup> To which we can now answer: the time is the time of Insurrection – not resurrection. For Insurrection is repetition and exists materially as an ongoing series of manifesto moments.

This all occurs within a wider question of nature and if via Crossan (p.121ff) we return to the creation narratives we must also remember that in the Eden narrative, having eaten of the fruit of the tree of Knowledge the only difference between mortals and the divine is eternal life – and so if the fruit of the tree of Eternal Life is eaten...

Therefore, it is mortality itself, only mortality itself that makes us different to the divine. Nature is therefore *our* creation, what can be termed a materialist technology, a creation by humanity that we name and then divinize, spiritualize. Civilization, in its experience as unjust and violent, is also our creation, our technology; and so, our creation "of God's radical vision for nonviolent, distributive justice"<sup>53</sup> is our counter-technology, the basis for our insurrectionist theology that positions itself versus the claimed "normalcy of an unjust and violent civilization".<sup>54</sup> Suffering is exposed in the Bible (itself a human technology) as being a human technology – that we wish to transcendentalize and spiritualize. This is only apparent when we undertake an insurrectionist reading of the Bible as a hermeneutic technology in constant repetition. So, what is the gospel of the mortals? It is the good news that 'the natural order of things' *can be and should be* resisted and undone and that so too 'the cultural order of things' *can and should* likewise be resisted and undone. For we hear proclaimed that Violence is the sign of failure.

How then might we read of the violence of God in Job? Negri reads it "as a staged ontological break"<sup>55</sup> to which we ask, is it actually

ontological? Or is it more so theological and Job offers an ontological possibility: that God acts in such a way *despite* our ontology? And so perhaps Job is actually a teleological problem, a teleological break ‘with direct ethical and political implications’?

We then turn to the discussion of Negri’s announcement that ‘Marx’s theory of value is no longer adequate for the culture of late capitalism’ and ask whether postindustrialization is not a system of production but rather a system of extraction?; for it is now not so much what we produce but rather what can be extracted from what we *do* – and therefore a shift from making to doing. So we agree that “*Notions of fairness and justice must be rethought in nonquantitative terms*”<sup>56</sup>; that is, within the rubric of doing – but in so remembering that *many are still making* and so late capitalism is itself not a singularity and there is no singular system or solution within the multiple expressions and experiences of late capitalism. How can we return this to Job? We do so via Negri as Insurrection because, in short, Job calls God to account even when God fails to be held properly accountable. So, the Insurrection is the proclamation of the holding to account of amoral power by “remaining totally exposed” to pain, but not fear. For if pain is understood by self and others in an empathetic fashion it becomes the basis of ontological choice – *for self and others*. We must constantly be aware that suffering itself is not redemptive; rather it is our response to suffering that offers the possibility of insurrection. Therefore, we suggest that ethical ontology is Insurrection versus the God who acts unethically and that God’s silence is the beginning of our Insurrection, but *only* if we are also always aware that divine silence is first and foremost *our* mortal silence, *the silence of our technology*.

The introduction of Malabou’s plasticity (p.134ff) also helps us articulate what is the failure of postmodernism: the triumph of flexibility without value. Against this is positioned resistance which can be labeled plasticity because it is in plasticity that repetition can occur. However, the use of the term ‘creative destruction’<sup>57</sup> is problematic because in 1943 Joseph Schumpeter described the process of Capitalism as “creative destruction”<sup>58</sup> yet this was a capitalism that in the post-war period was subject to a series of logics of control. Since the 1980s however, the creative destruction has been split in its effects, with capitalism being

creative on an individual level for those who profit but destructive on a societal level. To also use such a term in reference to “a natural passage from life to life”<sup>59</sup> could, problematically be used to make an argument that capitalism itself is a type of ‘natural process’ and so in accordance ‘with human nature’. Therefore, we wish to suggest a way forward: if we acknowledge capitalism as a human creation (a technology), what if, in a heretical statement, we suggest capitalism is an amoral ontology of plasticity. Insurrection is therefore not so much resistance as a *challenge* to the creative destruction – and so Insurrection is proclamation of alternatives *to* the expression and valorization of creative destruction. This is why we need the good news of alternatives *as* manifestos. This means that not only is Insurrection “*nature’s ownmost possibility*”<sup>60</sup>, it is *culture’s ownmost possibility*, for is not ontology and teleology either the proclamation or negation of Insurrection?

This means the good news is that of “To be is to resist”<sup>61</sup>; or as we can expand it, *to be is to insurrect*, for Insurrection should not be thought of as a challenge to being. What we must constantly stand against are the false claims of natural and cultural being which are the attempts to negate insurrectional, plastic being.

### Commentary 5: The Gospel of the Word Made Flesh

We begin with the endorsement of the statement that contra Heidegger “God cannot and will not save us”<sup>62</sup>. Insurrection is therefore the rejection of Heidegger’s fatalistic despair; for it is not that we need to be saved, rather we need to liberate ourselves and this liberation is the infolding: the infolding that overcomes alienation. For while Estrangement may be the ground of our being<sup>63</sup> it is not, we will argue, our ontology unless it is an ontology of Insurrection versus Estrangement. This insurrection is an infolding of earth, sky, mortals and divinities within a new materialism. But a new materialism that does not seek to change and challenge is merely the secularization of the old transcendence and continues the old problems in new guises.

What the discussion on *writing* (p.144ff) exposes is the necessity that Insurrection is a manifesto, an Insurrection whereby writing itself is and as a transformative act. What can this mean for ontology? I suggest that it is not that we exist in reference to ontology, rather ontology is

rethought as our plastic hermeneutic of self as Being. This raises new possibilities for radical theology (p.145ff) whereby to have to proclaim a radical *secular* theology is a sign of the failure of both theology and ontotheology. For in the infolding Insurrection of materialism, theology is *only ever* radical and secular. The problem is that of ontotheology, because of its metaphysics and its transcendence. The question of being and difference (p.146ff) therefore opens us to provocative possibilities. The plasticity of being means Being never *is*, Being performs *as* change, transformation and hope. Therefore, Insurrection is the performance of being *as difference within difference*. So, Insurrection performs *within* resistance but is not the singularity of resistance. That “flesh can differ with itself”<sup>64</sup> means, for a word made flesh, that a word too can differ with itself as far as flesh can differ with itself and this is what can be understood as repetition. So central to any claim of word made flesh is this double repetition of plasticity. Therefore, word made flesh is not a singular event but a performative repetition as a constant conformation of Insurrection; this is what can be named the manifesto moment. Word made flesh is therefore Insurrection, not resurrection; not a singularity but rather the performance itself of a materialist ontology, a theology of the Insurrection as both the limit and excess of possibility. What then of the statement that “a theology of insurrection operates within fate”?<sup>65</sup> We can agree if we acknowledge that fate is nothing more than the existence that we name as life and the choices and actions made within existence by self and others.

What then of global capitalism? (p.149ff) Our insurrectionist reading states that global capitalism is the noun of an abstract metaphysical ontology with materialist effects. For we would argue that it is not global capitalism that blurs – as if it is a transcendent divinity – rather global capitalism is nothing more and nothing less than humanity itself making and not making choices. The blurring is not that of the abstract noun; the blurring is the decision, choices and readings we choose to make. So, we can say that in everything, but especially in global capitalism, it is mortals all the way down – to nature and culture – and mortals all the way up to transcendence and abstractions. Thus, all four elements of the Insurrection are the result of the self-consciousness of our mortality. Therefore “*The way we live now*” ( p.150ff) is at heart the



dehumanization, the reductive dehumanization, the limitation and the rejection of the humanity of others. The Insurrection is therefore first and foremost in the name of a shared humanity and operates out of being able to see lies in the claims of 'the truth' of "a great coming of some sort, a new world order"<sup>66</sup>. This is the manifesto moment of Insurrection: when we see the lies within the proclamation of truths; and in our current situation this is focused upon the lies within the proclamations of the 'truth' of capitalism.

The discussion of Barber's "Immanent Refusal of Conversion" (p.154ff) raises the question of, is not conversion itself the logic of creative destruction: the old self, the old identity, the old allegiance, even in some cases the old being is 'destroyed' in the name of the shift to the new identity? Therefore, given Schumpeter's description, is not capitalism itself an on-going expression of both ontological and econo-ontological conversion – including conversions within the rubric of capitalism to different market identities? This means that capitalism is nothing less than humanity converting itself and demanding the conversion of others, in materialist, ontological and teleological forms. Insurrection is therefore firstly positioned against this hegemony of capitalist conversion that presents itself the 'truth' of a new world order'. Insurrection is therefore also against belief and its ontologies. This also means there is not *a* theology of Insurrection<sup>67</sup> because that itself, in its singularity becomes hegemonic; rather, as in these gospels there are *theologies* of Insurrection. For Insurrection is an on-going series of manifesto moments that respond to that (person, event, system, structure) which demands the statement: "*there are lies in this truth*"; and in response Insurrection proclaims: "*this is why they are lies and so, this is what we should do*".

As is discussed (p.162ff) this is also an Insurrection against the hegemony of Christian whiteness, against the colonization that is so linked to this "structural sin"<sup>68</sup>, against "the equation of Western civilization with Christianity"<sup>69</sup>: an Insurrection versus the lies in the claimed truth of whiteness which is nothing less than "the denial of the failure to be Christian; it is the denial of the failure of the messianic, it is the denial of the death of God; it is not recognizing one's own despair, but instead reconciling any dissonance by blaming and projecting one's own sin on

the Other.”<sup>70</sup> The Insurrection is therefore nothing less than an Insurrection against Christianity *as it is* and the identities, cultures and civilization Christianity *claims* to have engendered. It is an Insurrection that draws upon Camus’s “moderate position” of “justice for all”<sup>71</sup>, a justice that always occurs within “the burden and bind of inheritance”<sup>72</sup>. From this arises ‘the seed of new life’ that is “Insurrection from within”<sup>73</sup>.

### Commentary 6: Afterword

What then is the good news? It is in fact the good news of death, the good news that – as the last gospel concluded – we are “but to live once and for all”<sup>74</sup> and so, like the seed, it is death that gives us life. *What life?* is therefore the choice – and so in my life, out of my choices, what life *do others* experience? For my life *is for all* – or it is for nothing. This good news is repetition, the repetition of good news that has been proclaimed before and will be proclaimed again: it is not the negation or supersession of good news, for good news is *Insurrection for humanity*. Insurrection is life itself, lived for all unto death with no hope or desire of resurrection. The good news is that “we do not escape entropy and death”<sup>75</sup> and this is good news for it stops the recourse to the opiate that allows the pain to continue as a system that dehumanizes. Because if we proclaim the good news that there is no escape, no outside, no transcendence from this world, in response the materialist theology of Insurrection is that of how we create *the best life for all, now*. “Life before death!”<sup>76</sup>

What is Insurrection? It is a rhizomatic theology<sup>77</sup> that in its inclusivity and multiplicities occurs as the repetition of moderate theologies of Insurrection that articulate a new possibility of life: *to change things for all* before death. That is, Insurrection is the materialist theology of hope and action in the name of *the best life for all before death*.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Ann Caws, *Manifesto: a century of isms*, Lincoln (Nebraska), xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *An Insurrectionist Manifesto*, 1

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.,; 7

<sup>10</sup> Ibid; 9

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; 10

<sup>12</sup> Ibid; 13

<sup>13</sup> Ibid; 14

<sup>14</sup> Ibid; 15

<sup>15</sup> Ibid; 16

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid; 18

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 22

<sup>19</sup> Ibid; 26

<sup>20</sup> Ibid; 28

<sup>21</sup> Ibid; 28

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; 29

<sup>23</sup> Ibid; 36

<sup>24</sup> Ibid; 47

<sup>25</sup> Ibid; 51

<sup>26</sup> Ibid; 52

<sup>27</sup> Ibid; 56

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 57

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 57

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 58

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 61

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 62

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Mike Grimshaw, *Bibles & Baedekers. Tourism, Travel, Exile and God* (London: Equinox, 2009), 49-50.

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Fearful Void* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974), 37–38.

<sup>36</sup> McKenzie Wark, *Dispositions* (Applecross, WA and Cambridge, UK: Salt Publishing, 2002), January 29, 2001 3:55 PM EST.

<sup>37</sup> *An Insurrectionist Manifesto*, 63.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>52</sup> Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p.2.

<sup>53</sup> *An Insurrectionist Manifesto*, 123.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Schumpeter,(1996) *Capitalism, Socialism & Democracy*, (London: Routledge),83.

<sup>59</sup> *An Insurrectionist Manifesto*, 136.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 167.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 171 &173.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 177.