

polemic as logic in the work of alain badiou

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What has not yet been satisfactorily discussed in the extensive and expanding secondary commentary on the work of Alain Badiou is the particular way in which he orients and structures almost all his philosophical work, from his brief notes all the way up to his major treatises. Yet the structure of Badiou's writing is crucial to his argument, and in several ways. The key to this structuring is the order-relation that he establishes between the subsections of his presentations. Every beginning in Badiou invariably and explicitly takes on a form of *self-situation* in order to proceed through targeted argumentative negations to affirmative, constructive propositions—and this very organisation is itself intended to enact and exemplify the work of affirmative reconstruction that it calls for in the world.

This article limits itself to identifying, isolating, and describing this recurrent characteristic polemical structure in Badiou, as a prolegomenon to further investigations into the crucial relationship between polemic, logic and assertion in contemporary philosophy more generally. Its more general significance is directed towards establishing how certain philosophical conditions of presentation come to be presented in and by the presentation itself *as* a crucial conceptual task. If such a focus on formal questions can prove tiresome, the stakes here are to expose how particular “thematics” or “contents” can remind blind to un-thought implications of their own form.

In the present context, we offer a close exegesis of Badiou's rhetorical procedures. If such exegeses can seem to imply an uncritical adherence to their subject—perhaps precisely through their obsession with minor formal details—we do not intend this to be the case. Quite the contrary: the point is rather to ensure a rigorous basis from which a real confrontation can thereafter be rigorously launched (if there will unfortunately be only minimal space for that here).

Certainly, it is not the case that Badiou's *stylistics* have gone entirely unremarked. Almost every commentator has noted—whether with enthusiasm or repulsion—Badiou's aggressive and declarative tones.¹ Moreover, some go further. As Bruno Bosteels remarks in a section of his “Translator's Introduction” to *Theory of the Subject*, which “adopts the format of a seminar inspired by Lacan's example. Badiou's fidelity to this model is actually quite extensive.”² Bosteels proceeds to note the very different styles of Badiou's three great treatises, noting that each:

adopts a unique generic format, following three different models in the history of philosophy: *Theory of the Subject* is a Lacanian-inspired seminar; *Being and Event* is made up of 37 Cartesian or post-Cartesian meditations; and *Logics of Worlds* adopts a structure vaguely reminiscent of Spinoza's *Ethics*.³

Leaving aside the quibble that Lacan's seminars may not be so much an event in the history of philosophy as in psychoanalysis (or perhaps in “anti-philosophy”), Bosteels's suggestive indications don't draw out the conceptual implications of the form of presentation that is at stake beyond noting several broad generic and syntagmatic differences. For his part, Oliver Feltham identifies three different *figures* of the philosopher at work throughout Badiou's oeuvre, which he calls “the eagle,” “the old mole” and “the owl.”⁴ If such an identification usefully analyses the weave of heterogeneous *conceptual attitudes* that traverse Badiou's oeuvre, it nonetheless cannot account for the self-conscious formal unity of each of Badiou's texts. In a long review of *Logics of Worlds*, Justin Clemens makes several suggestions regarding the immanent tensions between structure and presentation in Badiou's work, including that, developmentally speaking—both in the sense of its historical becoming and at the level of individual philosophers—philosophy really requires a concept of the “sequel” to account for the regulated transformations of philosophy from text to text.⁵ Such “sequelization” should at once attempt to account for the drive-to-form exhibited by each text, the emergence of an immanent conceptual tension out of this form, and the subsequent attempt to

return to and treat that tension in another text, another form. Yet Clemens's account also lacks the appropriate attention to the 'little texts' that come between the 'major' ones, although this may well be precisely the places where the auto-thematization of unthoughts emerge point-by-point. Finally, although the philosophical commentary is usually happy to add that Badiou is a playwright, a novelist and librettist, it just as often sets aside the questions of form, genre and style thereby raised. Yet it is not a priori clear that philosophy can avoid the challenges of form without hamstringing itself.

We therefore ourselves begin with Badiou's *beginnings*, drawing from a simple example which stages this development in a stark and clarified form. In the short essay "Philosophy and desire," Badiou opens by invoking Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé, before moving to a sketch of the *doxa* of the contemporary world. From there, Badiou moves to an analysis of the dominant modalities of contemporary philosophy, before offering his own account of the current tasks for philosophy:

This philosophical investigation begins under the banner of poetry; thus recalling the ancient tie between poetry and philosophy. Rimbaud employs a strange expression: "*les révoltes logiques*," "logical revolts." Philosophy pits thought against injustice, against the defective state of the world and of life. Yet it pits thought against injustice in a movement which conserves and defends argument and reason, and which ultimately proposes a new logic.⁶

The beginning of this essay thus constitutes a rapid double-shift. Its *incipit* is an astringent form of *captatio benevolentiae*, a recommendation deriving from classical rhetoric: open with an appeal of some kind, an anecdote or allusion to put the audience onside. Here, the allusion is to the 'ancient quarrel' that Plato speaks of between philosophy and poetry. We are at once returned to the most familiar and the most contested territory of the origins of philosophy and its first and greatest enemy. Yet this allusion also scrambles the received doxography around the polarities of poetry and philosophy, for Rimbaud and Mallarmé are invoked here in order to provide watchwords for philosophy itself. In doing so, they establish the terms in which the rest of the essay will be played out: revolt, logic, universality and risk. As such, they are immediately arrayed against the dominant tendencies of our world, which demands the liberty of commodities over revolt, inconsistent communication over logic, fragmented specializations

over universality, and security calculations over risk. Note, moreover, that this allusion at once establishes a direction *and* a directive or declaration: it directs us to the key terms whose discussion will constitute the bulk of the subsequent essay; it declares its position in such a way as to offer directives for contemporary thought in general.

What follows this opening is extremely illuminating in its operations. From the establishment of the key terms in a *general* polemical context, then, Badiou outlines three *specific* tendencies that have flourished in, even govern, this contemporary philosophical context (in this case, the late 1990s): hermeneutics, analytic philosophy, and postmodern philosophy. As he remarks, “together they form the most global and descriptive geography possible of contemporary philosophy,” and further specifies, “these orientations correspond, in some measure, to three geographical locations.”⁷ In line with the theme of self-situation, let us emphasize the term ‘geography’ here, for ‘spatial’ terms are implicitly deployed over and above ‘temporal’ ones (we shall return to this feature below). Note, too, that the late 19th century French poets are thereby treated as if they were *as contemporary as the contemporary philosophical orientations that they will simultaneously be shown to at once found and rebuke*. (We will explain these points further below.) Badiou himself makes it clear that he is using the poets at once “positively” and “negatively” (although these terms are probably inadequate here): *positively* insofar as they provide the crucial directives for our initial orientation to the problems, *negatively* insofar as these directives will paradoxically require us to depart from them in order to follow them.

At the moment that these poets are invoked to scramble the received distinctions between poetry and philosophy from within philosophy itself, they also prove exemplary acts of analysis and foundation. For Badiou these three philosophical tendencies share something which has been derived from these poets (perhaps without knowing it), as they simultaneously fail to live up to their challenges. The philosophers have followed the poets without knowing it—but have failed to draw all of the consequences. Moreover, even though Badiou himself is clearly drawing something essential from these poets, he is also, as we will specify, seeking to exceed the situation which their injunctions presuppose, expose and address. The paradoxes are clear: existing philosophies are covertly determined by poets that they perhaps ignore or rebuke; to escape these determinations, one must confront these poets by *affirming* the truly radical status of their utterances; in doing so, one must go *all the way*...and not tap out before the consequences are fully drawn.

As those already familiar with Badiou's work might recognise, Badiou's rhetoric here is implicitly stringently governed by his own *conditions*. He is taking Rimbaud and Mallarmé with an absolute philosophical seriousness. Yet to be conditioned is not simply to have to say this or that about this or that. Alternatively: even if one indeed make certain assertions on the basis of a conditioning, such assertions—however stringently or strongly expressed—do not thereby constitute a dogma or doctrine. Rather, they become the index of a *non-dialectical point* for what we will call the directives of philosophical *excession*.

Badiou's summary of the key aspects of these three orientations purports to target their key concepts, methods and aims. Hermeneutics, identified with the names of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, has *interpretation* as its key concept, its method to *confront* the nihilist technological closure, and its aim to *open* the 'closed' to meaning. Analytic philosophy has *the rule* as its key concept, its method a logico-grammatical analysis of propositions, and its aim is a therapy of meaning, "to shew," as Wittgenstein famously has it, "the fly the way out of the fly-bottle."⁸ Postmodern philosophy has the deconstruction of modernity as its key concept, propounds a rigorously mixed method, and proposes detotalization as its goal.

What Badiou then identifies are two features which these otherwise heterogeneous orientations share. First, there is the common conviction of the "end of philosophy": "the ideal of truth as it was put forth by classical philosophy has come to its end,"⁹ as evidenced in the work of Heidegger, Rudolf Carnap and Jean-François Lyotard. Second, there is the "central place accorded to the question of language" by all three.¹⁰ These two features, the first negative, the second positive, thereby link these orientations according to a logic that they themselves are resistant to examining—which exposes an initial moment of a non- or anti-philosophical tenor at the heart of contemporary philosophy itself.

Badiou then makes two further moves. First, he criticises these commonplaces on a number of grounds, above all in their resistant complicity with the general situation of thoughtlessness he had previously sketched. As he puts it, "if philosophy is essentially a meditation on language, it will not succeed in removing the obstacle that the specialization and fragmentation of the world opposes to universality."¹¹ Hence the tendency within each orientation to locate—with some desperation—a mode that will stabilise the generalising corrosion of global communications. Heidegger famously reverts to the priority of (the German)

language itself; analytic philosophy sutures itself to an image of scientific language (above all, to an image of logic); postmodern philosophy prefers and promulgates the elucubrations of literature and art. In each of these cases, an explicitly political, scientific, or aesthetic mode not only fails to establish itself universally, but falls into a unjustifiable condemnation or exclusion of other forms of thought. In Heidegger's engagement with Nazism, the deleterious implications are perhaps most evident, but they are certainly there too with the other orientations.¹² As Badiou points out, analytic philosophy's suture to scientific language leads not only to contempt for all other forms of thought, but an extraordinary political blindness to the fact that "even today the overwhelming majority of humanity is out of reach of such a language."¹³ Such sutures, in other words, entail and encrypt a certain esotericism and elitism, even when they genuinely attempt to speak "universally." This is not to say that universalisms cannot be elitist or "aristocratic" (an adjective Badiou himself employs at various points); only that the nature of such elitism would need to be laid out and justified, that is, established as egalitarian.

Second, Badiou uses this trinity of negative examples to forge his own position in a polemical fashion. To do so, however, Badiou has to locate the aforementioned "fixed point, a point of interruption" that is not corroded by the methods of these existing orientations. It is at this point that he once again has recourse to extra-philosophical elements, to his own conditions and to their enemies. Philosophy must confront commodification, media, technocratism and security. Having begun with a preliminary excursus in philosophical self-situation, Badiou turns to the world *outside* philosophy to show how the philosophies he is examining are simultaneously attempting to follow the directives of the poets yet, precisely because they are also sutured to one other condition above all, remain too in fee to the non-philosophic situation. The non-philosophical horror, the corruption of the world, must be confronted by philosophy as a foundational requirement. But the world too still yearns for philosophy, even at the very height—or depth—of its corruption.

This is a post-dialectical procedure on Badiou's part, then. One must establish oneself with regard to both contemporary philosophy and to non-philosophy at once. Such an establishment must break with both. But it can only do so by reference to both. One seeks the points at which philosophy falls back into the corruption of the world; but one also seeks the points at which the world itself demands philosophy. "Corruption" itself must be given a philosophical bearing:

a drive towards particularity, totality, inconsistency, injustice that nonetheless demands the restitution of universalism, infinity, consistency and justice.

But in this recourse to extra-philosophical elements, Badiou simultaneously has recourse to *an interpretation of the history of relations between the concepts and forms of presentation of philosophy itself*—a recourse that is simultaneously an auto-differentiation. We give two references here, although examples could be multiplied. The first announces the necessity of attending to variations of genre in philosophy, as well as to their necessity of their (self-) justification in and by the “genre” of philosophy itself. In the “Author’s Preface” to *Theoretical Writings*, Badiou begins: “Philosophical works come in a peculiar variety of forms...basically, anything whatsoever that can be classified as ‘writing.’”¹⁴ Does this statement not seem to return us to the very priority of language with which Badiou wishes to break? Certainly not. It is to raise a vital question that has rarely been explicitly raised (in analytic philosophy at least until recently), regarding *the generic status of the presentation of philosophy itself as integrally bound to the problem of conceptualisation*. As we shall see, this question is so important for Badiou that it perhaps constitutes the very heart of his philosophy: to anticipate radically, it will turn out that conditions are generic, while philosophy itself is a conditioned trans-generic enterprise.

Tending to rely on a particular form of the professional journal article or the technical treatise and a mode of proceeding that privileges the logical form of the proposition, analytic philosophy only rarely comes to recognise this genre *as genre* and, to the extent that this remains the case, it is therefore unable to recognise, let alone think, the institutional conditions that enable and corral it in the first place. Its formulas of thought, which it doesn’t know are formulas—or, worse still, thinks that these are the only proper modes appropriate to thought, thereby pathologising and indiscriminating its rivals—are thus essentially *transmissions-of-unthought*. This is especially peculiar given that the great progenitors of analytic thought were themselves extraordinary inventors of forms of presentation. Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein, and J.L. Austin were all creators of new forms, new styles of thinking, whose attention was captured by the full gamut of conceptual requisites ranging from the most minimal, technical marks of inscription to the structuring or anti-structuring of the full-length treatise itself. Take Frege’s invention of new inscriptive systems in his revolutionary works; Russell and A.N. Whitehead’s vast treatise; or Wittgenstein’s own radical self-reinvention between the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Such styles are forged because it is clear that, in thinking, there must simultaneously be what Harold Bloom calls a “breaking of the vessels” (of-received-form), in a way that is precisely *non- or anti-rhetorical* (if we accept the received modern sense of ‘rhetoric’ as persuasive-speech-without-any-necessary-rational-foundation). As such, for Badiou too, *polemic is separated from rhetoric*. To be polemical is not just to present contrary declarations or propositions, new methods and counter-methods, but is to engage an entire modality that must be up to the challenge of the ideas with which it is itself struggling. This is also why Badiou is very fond of the genre of the *Manifesto*, for essential philosophical as well as of course “political” reasons. A manifesto is a genre that declares its own generic status, from its title onwards.¹⁵ To put this another way, whose import will be evident to those already familiar with Badiou, the manifesto is a genre that generically declares its own genericity. As we have been suggesting, moreover, certain elements characteristic of the genre of the manifesto are found in Badiou beyond the self-denominated instances, above all in the structuring by self-situation, the declarative passages, the rhetoric of rebellion.

Yet if the modern continental tradition has tended to be more (explicitly and centrally) attentive to these questions than is often in evidence in the analytic tradition—since, especially in the wake of Heidegger, the technologies of philosophy themselves come to be considered finite means of revealing, with their own generic limitations emerging as a result and as a further goad to more profound trans-philosophical investigations of the vicissitudes of extra-propositional thought—this very attentiveness has paradoxically often induced thinkers to a concomitant dissemination or dissolution of the questions of truth, being and the subject. Heidegger himself is exemplary here, especially given that the thematic of technology is central to his oeuvre. Take the very famous early analysis of the “damaged tool” in *Being and Time*:

in a *disturbance of reference*—in being unusable for...—the reference becomes explicit. It does not yet become explicit as an ontological structure, but ontically for our circumspection which gets annoyed by the damaged tool... The context of useful things appears not as a totality never seen before, but as a totality that has continually been seen beforehand in our circumspection. But with this totality world makes itself known.¹⁶

What is crucial in the present context is what becomes of this analysis in the

so-called “later Heidegger” following “the turn.” Here, it is the “disturbance of reference” that, in rendering impossible the execution of a task through accident or happenstance, forces out the exposure of a predigested totality and, through it, the contingent revelation of the contingency of *any* actual sense of the world. The damaged tool, in being damaged, simultaneously draws attention to itself as ‘unusable’ and the task that was to have been accomplished as un-doable, and thus has a double implication. The first is that the materiality of the thing, its thingness beyond-one’s-own-world-within-one’s-own-world begins to appear as such; the second is that this ontic exposure reveals the already-implicit structuring of one’s-own-world qua preconceived totality by constituting a local, punctual exception to it from within.¹⁷ This double operation of the disturbance of reference through a banal technological mishap—a completely quotidian non-event, suffused with ordinary everydayness—exemplifies the genuine radicality of phenomenology’s emphasis upon daily occurrences as having the potential to give rise to everyone’s coming-to-philosophizing in the first place. The forgetting-of-forgetting effected in and by the enacting of embodied know-how can also always already find the potential for anamnesiac restitution by means of the little failed encounters of the everyday, towards materials always in excess of their context of use and towards thoughts always in excess of their context of consciousness.

What happens to Heidegger’s thought after his so-called “turn” with respect to the poem takes up these early analyses of technology-as-revealing-essence-in-its-breakdown by coupling it with an affirmation of poem-as-extra-legal-event-of-opening-to-Being. Why, then, and how? Simultaneously taking up and confronting the Nietzschean analysis of the work of art as the essence of form-giving-will-to-power, Heidegger comments that, for his great predecessor, “Art is not only subject to rules, must not only obey laws, but is in itself legislation. Only as legislation is it truly art. What is inexhaustible, what is to be created, is the law.”¹⁸ For Heidegger, however, it is not simply that great art establishes law as such, but that it opens a more fundamental relation of dwelling-with-Being. Because, as Heidegger notoriously announces, “Poetry that thinks is in truth the topology of being,”¹⁹ great poems become not merely legislators or legislative, but *events*: they are events which at once constitute a breaking-of-form (the novelty of the poem exceeding the limits of contemporary language and its genesis), a concomitant revelation of the status of the forms-that-they-have-broken (the “background conditions” of the constitution of language as such that they expose in the rupture), and a new bringing-of-truth that exceeds any technical closure or operation of knowing, which, in its very presentation qua re-gathering of the

disparate, opens the possibilities of different modes of thinking beyond any proposition or prescription.

We should briefly pause here to consider some of the key ways in which Heidegger elaborates this doctrine. First, if language is primary in the order of thinking, then we must interrogate the language, and the forms of language, in which thought has come to present itself *as* thought. Second, in this formal auto-interrogation of formal interrogation, it becomes clear that such forms are essentially contingent, finite inheritances, passed down to us without the passing-down itself becoming available as such: indeed, such forms necessarily entail an occlusion of precisely what they purport to transmit, and for a number of reasons. Third, language as such must therefore become a topic for thought, albeit in modes that are themselves localised by their (unthought) situation. Fourth, what leads us to thought cannot simply be what already passes-for-thought, but neither can we simply rupture with what conditions the historicity of our thought on the basis of any putative will-to-think. Fifth, this situation directs us towards the poem as the place in which the preceding concerns are exposed and re-framed, with a form of language-recreation that is tantamount to the event-advent of thinking itself.

On the “analytic” side, then, we have an invention of forms that are occluded *as forms* by the very tradition that comes to take up their challenge, while on the “continental” side we have an invention of forms that come to complicate the generic distinction between philosophy and its others to the point of dissolution of every traditional philosophical point of distinction. On the “analytic” side, we also have the privileging of mathematics and logic; on the “continental,” that of poetry and art. Yet these divisive tendencies simultaneously extend themselves *on the basis of shared convictions* about the ultimate priority of language over thought. Notably, such analyses set up precisely a structure of *situation* and *site* to which Badiou himself will directly respond in *Being and Event* and all his subsequent works, if sometimes covertly and with entirely different tasks in mind. It is perhaps remarkable that, in the secondary commentary to date, these connections have gone altogether unmade, even in writing dedicated to the links between Heidegger and Badiou.²⁰

Let’s consolidate these remarks by invoking a moment in which style and philosophy are explicitly examined by Badiou; indeed, our reference here further specifies the import of these operations with respect to a crucial founding figure: Descartes. At first glance, however, Descartes does not seem to be a key

interlocutor in any of Badiou's major texts: if we take, for example, the thinkers surveyed in the various meditations of *Being and Event*, we naturally find highly detailed technical meditations dedicated to Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz and Hegel, as well as to mathematicians and poets, including Cantor and Mallarmé. The final meditation is entitled "Descartes/Lacan," but one finds very little detail about Descartes there and certainly not an intervention of the order of the other meditations. On the contrary, this meditation explicitly announces Badiou's own program for a step-beyond the conception of the subject-qua-cogito, even in the limit-version of Jacques Lacan, where that subject has become "void, cleaved, a-substantial and ir-reflexive."²¹ Nor is there any direct or extended encounter in *Being and Event* with modern thinkers who are clearly in the Cartesian tradition: no Kant, no Husserl, no Sartre.

Yet, in his latest "great work" *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou expressly nominates Descartes as one of three key thinkers for him and his work, along with Plato and Hegel.²² Why? When we start looking more closely, Descartes is everywhere in Badiou. For Descartes announces a radical break of a kind that produces a new thinking of style along with a new thinking of thought in an inseparable "act." Hence Badiou declares in the very essay on which we are focussing here: "My position is to break with these frameworks of thought, to find another philosophical style, a style other than that of interpretation, of logical grammarian analysis, or of polyvalence and language games—that is, to rediscover a foundational style, a decided style, a style in the school of a Descartes for example."²³ The Cartesian reference is therefore no accident—on the contrary. Yet it immediately raises the question of the relation between style and thought, not least in a context that Badiou himself marks as marked by Lacanian psychoanalysis, for which, following Buffon, "style is the man."²⁴

In 1637, Descartes publishes in the French vernacular the unprecedented work *Discours sur la méthode*. Badiou notes that Descartes incarnates a division between the language of the people and an appeal to the savants of the Sorbonne, a division that continues—despite all the stylistic, temporal, philosophical and institutional differences—to be maintained in French up to and including Lacan and Deleuze themselves in the form of an irresolvable equivocation between philosopher and writer. Yet Descartes, in doing so, separates thought from natural language—which is why he can write so happily in either Latin or French.²⁵ Certainly, this is also a beginning in the French language—entirely unexpectedly by the way—of the seduction of women as an elementary democratic step. Not the learned gentlemen

of the Latin Sorbonne, but French *women* become the affirmed addressees of first philosophy. Yet this means that Descartes must also reject etymology as determining of sense, in favour of a syntactically-restricted semantic field. As Badiou glosses, Descartes' thus becomes "a language of decision, principle and consequence."²⁶

This further gives a political, polemical aspect to Descartes' style, which, in making a new incision into the language, means "in French, syntax politicises every philosophical utterance."²⁷ He continues: "the privilege accorded French has nothing to do with the language as such."²⁸ Indeed, Descartes never meditates on the singularity of the French language at all—in notable contradistinction from the German tradition whose peak moments are Hegel and Heidegger, both of whom expatiate at length and with often-bombastic profundity about the extraordinary priority of the Greek and German languages as such. Rather, we see the emergence of an explicit philosophical writing that simultaneously egalitarian and public in its language, as it takes upon itself the task of elaborating a subject that is absolutely universal. In doing so, it enjoins its public to undergo a singular meditation of their own, to follow the instructions it elaborates and justifies as a form of ethical reorientation to the fundamental problems of philosophy. Such an address is irrevocably *translinguistic*.

Recovering Descartes from the now-familiar image of the deleterious thinkers who introduced the Western self-present subject as correlate of imperial sovereignty, Badiou shows how Descartes instead develops: a philosophical style that privileges no natural language (it can be read in Latin or French or another translation); justifies its own clarity rationally; calls for rational ripostes to its claims (think of the "Objections" that are published with the *Meditations*); is eminently polemical, directed against the faults of other philosophers; is pedagogical (anybody can try this at home); experimental (nothing like this has been written before); separates truth from knowledge, insofar as the foundation of the cogito becomes that certain point at which thought touches being; and arrogates to itself a radical contemporaneity.

It is at this point that we begin to see the extraordinary powers of Badiou's method also operative in the little occasional essay "Philosophy and Desire" with which we began. He has begun by extracting paradoxical directives from certain poetic formulae which he arrays against a global context of thoughtlessness; in a second stage, he outlines the three major variant forms of philosophical thought current

in the context, in order to identify something that they unexpectedly share; in doing so, he pinpoints a fourth position that all the dominant tendencies reject; finally, in returning at another level to the directives with which he began, *he establishes himself in this impossible fourth position with a concomitant modification of the form of philosophical presentation itself.*

Let us quickly verify the recurrence of this approach in 3 further texts: *Being and Event*, *The Century*, and *Logics of Worlds*. In *Being and Event*, this is extremely clear. We cite from the very beginning of the treatise:

Let's premise the analysis of the current global state of philosophy on the following three assumptions:

1. Heidegger is the last universally recognizable philosopher.
2. Those programmes of thought—especially the American—which have followed the developments in mathematics, in logic and in the work of the Vienna circle have succeeded in conserving the figure of scientific rationality as a paradigm for thought.
3. A post-Cartesian doctrine of the subject is unfolding: its origin can be traced to non-philosophical practices (whether those practice be political, or relating to “mental illness”); and its regime of interpretation, marked by the names of Marx and Lenin, Freud and Lacan, is complicated by clinical or militant operations which go beyond transmissible discourse.²⁹

As we might now expect, Badiou outlines a fourth position—his own—on the basis of this initial self-situation. To do so, he “draws a diagonal” (a favoured image of Badiou's, whose provenance goes back to at least Plato) through the three, simultaneously showing their differences, what they inadvertently share, how they can be used to confront each other, and what can be taken from them. This procedure creates a position that none of them could affirmed on their own, and which indeed could not be even minimally sketched without such a foundational and introductory self-situation.

We encounter this once again in *The Century*, on the face of it an altogether different kind of investigation in that it attends to major cultural achievements of the twentieth century, from Malevich through Freud and the Surrealists and beyond, rather than to a formal meta-ontological reconsideration of the status

of mathematics. *The Century* opens precisely by discussing three plausible contemporary accounts of the twentieth century. In Jan Voelker's words, "the Century is a time frame which can be counted threefold: as the 'communist century,' from the war of 1914-18 through the end of the Soviet Union, or as the 'totalitarian century,' dating from 1917 to 1976, the year of Mao's death. Then it can also be counted as the liberal Century, the 'victory of Capital,' lasting thirty years from the 1970s onwards."³⁰ Although Voelker has quite rightly discerned the introductory import of this "threefold," he does not expand further upon its function beyond remarking that "the threefold count seems to indicate that its intention is not historical." This is of course quite correct, but, in line with our demonstration here, we need to say a little more.

To summarize: each of these narratives (the communist, the totalitarian, the liberal) is indeed plausible; they nonetheless cannot all be held together without inconsistency; yet they must be held together; in placing them in apposition with each other, their respective strengths and limitations are exposed; this then also exposes their statist (representational) nature insofar as they don't take the century on its own terms although they precisely do! So we now have another conceptual implication to add to Badiou's procedure: in exposing the representational claims of such partial meta-narratives to each other, it also exposes the necessity to return to the sources themselves. "Back to the things themselves!" was of course a critical phenomenological catchcry, but it is one of the recurrent moves of philosophy. Badiou likes to (mis)quote the *Cratylus* in this regard: "We philosophers do not take as our point of departure words, but things."³¹ So such a self-situation further justifies a return to the matter beyond its representational capture, while using these contemporaneously dominant representations as an initial orientation.

Badiou's very staging of such dissensions in his opening self-situations is, let us say, a contemporary form of Platonic dialogue: not simply in the received terms of a strenuous local discussion between historical or fictional personages, but an analysis of the irreducibility and partiality of even the strongest forms of representation, by placing them in the same space, and thereby reducing them at once to their key operations *and* to the aporias which they cannot think. Note this also has the effect of making the allegedly old or outmoded newly contemporary, to return to it its powers as *forever young*.

A final example here: *Logics of Worlds*. This example, however, is exceptional, as

it is one of the few places where the representative triplet breached by a fourth construction is not immediately in evidence. We therefore include it here as a kind of confirmation-through-exception of Badiou's formal approach. Indeed, as has been pointed out, Badiou doesn't begin with a particular philosophical situation but a much more general cultural one.³² He opens with a little thought experiment: "What do we all think, today? What do I think when I'm not monitoring myself? Or rather, what is our (my) natural belief? ... Today, natural belief is condensed in a single statement: *There are only bodies and languages*. This statement is the axiom of contemporary conviction. I propose to name this conviction *democratic materialism*."³³ Indeed, this is a first reason why "materialism" is no longer a very good signifier of anything: it literally signifies everyone and everything, if not in a good (philosophical) way. Neo-Darwinians, neo-liberal economists, neo-neos, all wrap themselves in the signifier's capacious embrace, with the usual consequences. As Badiou proceeds to unpack the standard view: "The humanist protection of all living bodies: this is the norm of contemporary materialism... Our materialism is therefore the materialism of life. It is a bio-materialism."³⁴ Second, this materialism presents itself as essentially democratic: "the assimilation of humanity to animality culminates in the identification of the human animal with the diversity of its sub-species and the democratic rights that inhere in this diversity."³⁵ In fact, the only thing that is intolerable for democratic materialism is intolerance itself: "intolerance" being implicitly defined as precisely those discourses and practices that refuse this total reduction to life. Confronted by those discourses that reject their own submission to democracy, military intervention to crush the intolerant becomes the paramount duty of the tolerant materialist powers of the present.

Badiou's own response is as follows: "After much hesitation, I have decided to name *materialist dialectic* the ideological atmosphere in which my philosophical undertaking conveys its most extreme tension."³⁶ He immediately continues:

What a way to conjure up a phrase from the realm of the dead! Wasn't my teacher Louis Althusser, more than thirty years ago, among the last nobly to make use of the phrase "dialectical materialism," not without some misgivings? Didn't Stalin—no longer what he once was, even qua exemplary state criminal (a career in which he's been overtaken by Hitler in the last few years), though still a tactless reference—codify, under the heading *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, the most formalist rules of a communist subjectivity, the source of whose paradoxical radiance no one can locate any longer?³⁷

Badiou, in other words, is well aware not only of the term's desuetude but its anachronistic offensiveness. Take the three terms at stake, *materialism*, *historical* and *dialectical*. Dialectical materialism was to be distinguished from historical materialism, insofar as the adjectives bore the brunt of doctrinal affiliation and practical methodology. Both dialectical and historical materialism were materialist insofar as they polemically directed themselves against the idealisms that stemmed from German idealism, and were to be rediscovered as always-already active in bourgeois thought of all kinds. Yet dialectical materialism as a general phenomenon adhered to and promoted, first and foremost, the proper mode of attention to all phenomena, positing them as inherently limited, entering via their very self-limitation into relations of contradiction with their negation, and, in doing so, progressing through a dynamic struggle out of which would eventually pop a third, unprecedented term. Whereupon the whirligig would be repeated at a higher level, forever preserving as interiorized difference the contradictions that had been incorporated in prior struggles in transformed and transforming presentations. "The real is the rational and the rational is the real" and "the whole is the true" are its notorious philosophical slogans, drawn from Hegel himself, and above all from the great "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Historical materialism, by contrast, in general foregrounded *chronological locales* over *method*, in order to, in its most sophisticated forms, confront the dialectical method with the historicity of its own emergence and hence its own non-dialectically-absorbable nature. When *dialectical* was the adjective, the emphasis was placed on contradiction, struggle, and the necessary self-overcoming of the Two; when *historical* wore the pants, as the expression has it, the singularities of the sites it designated led to multiplicity, negotiation, and contingencies of redescription, "concrete analysis of concrete situations." In both cases, of course, the point was political revolution; the problem was how to best hasten the triumph of the coming revolution.

Even Althusser's radical position turns out to have relied upon a variant of these presuppositions. Badiou, again:

Althusser regarded Marxism as a complex ensemble because it contained two creations (that of a science, historical materialism, and that of a new philosophy, dialectical materialism) enveloped in a single break, a single historical discontinuity.... Two breaks—one philosophical (dialectical materialism) and the other scientific (historical materialism) were

contained in a single intellectual *dispositif*, which took the form of a worldview: the proletarian ideology, Marxism-Leninism.³⁸

For Althusser, there was thus a necessity to think this double creation from a single historical rupture *and* the single *dispositif* from two conceptual ruptures as themselves constituting a dialectical advance. There is the further paradox that this chiasmatic dialectic constituted a break with traditional forms of ideology-critique, precisely because ideology could no longer be thought of as any kind of false-consciousness, but rather the *practical condition* for entering into any field of struggle in the first place. Under Althusser's description, ideology becomes transcendental and constitutive, and it is from *within* ideology that science and philosophy essay to break with its current structuring principles.

When “materialism” becomes naturalised and generalised, however, it pulls the rug out from under the critical power both of the adjectives and the programs they designated. As we regularly experience today, the discourses that have done best out of such naturalism are science and religion—or, more accurately, the parodies of science and religion that are scientism and fundamentalism. Their avatars will now undoubtedly continue to appear to be struggling with each other worldwide, at the very moment that what has been foreclosed from such discourse is the very matter at stake: the matter of the political. Under the descriptions offered by such socio-biologists, human politics is just another form of animal interaction; under the descriptions offered by such fundamentalists, human politics is just another form of fallen animal interaction. The apparent struggle is a *false* one—that is, *it cannot itself be thought dialectically from either of its poles nor within their antagonism*, not least because, if there is even any contradiction involved, the negation does not enter into a relation of self-transformation with its assertion—and the “debate's” very ubiquity and virulence is a further effective distraction from the default of the political itself.

Despite these considerations regarding the fate of materialism, Badiou continues relatively undismayed. For him, the tenets of democratic materialism remain viable, only he adds: “except there are truths.” It is these truths—politics, art, love and science—that thus constitute exceptions to the democratic materialism of the present. In his parlance, then, calling his project a material dialectic not only has the rhetorical force of its syntagmatic inversion, but the process of struggle itself is primary. Whereas dialectical materialism, like historical materialism, like our contemporary democratic materialisms, implicitly had materialism as a

substantive, thereby encrypting the primacy of substance at its base, with Badiou the substance disappears from materialism. *Material* becomes adjectival; as it does so, the *dialectic* itself must rearticulate the “real and the rational” which was the essence of Hegel’s program. This rearticulation leads to a shattering of the unity—as well as the duality!—of the dialectic. Or, rather, the new materialist dialectic articulates being and becoming in such a way as to make any movement between the two non-dialectical, non-total, and non-temporal.³⁹

What, then, is privileged by Badiou’s construction? It is the primacy of situation and the irreducibility of struggle. Here, it is absolutely crucial to understand how Badiou’s rationalism founds his position vis-à-vis “diversity.” The “materialist dialectic” bespeaks a unified approach to diversity. What is this diversity? In *Logics of Worlds*, it is the diversity and intensity of appearances themselves, and such diversity and intensity require a phenomenology. What sort of phenomenology? It can be neither of the Hegelian kind, despite the reprise of the term phenomenology itself, nor of the Husserlian or Heideggerean varieties. Why not? Because the former’s phenomenology depends on a logic of the becoming of contradictions as totality and teleology. For Badiou, contemporary logic neither tolerates contradiction as dynamism, nor totality as a consistent concept. There are forms of logic—such as paraconsistent logic—which, even if often allegedly inspired by Hegel himself, only tolerate true contradictions under very specific circumstances. These contradictions, moreover, are not dynamic relations. All forms of modern logic resist the category of the whole, which Bertrand Russell showed to be inconsistent in a famous 1904 letter to Frege (and of which Badiou makes a good deal in many of his metamathematical arguments throughout his *oeuvre*). On the other hand, Badiou also rejects the descriptive phenomenology whose peak moment in the twentieth century was Heidegger. Such a phenomenology places the emphasis on a linguistic-historical unfolding of the site into which *Dasein* is thrown, and tends towards an in-principle unlimited hermeneutics of opening to being against its nihilist closure in technology (we have already briefly touched on this above).⁴⁰ Nor is Badiou happy with allegedly naturalistic descriptions of the phenomenal world: for him, evolutionary biology remains a wild mess of empirical observations, and not a real science at all.⁴¹ Finally, and in the most rigorous perspective, the challenge boils down to the recreation of an acceptably contemporary problematic of negation. In an interview with *Critical Inquiry* in 2008, Badiou asserts: “Contrary to Hegel, for whom the negation of the negation produces a new affirmation, I think we must assert that today negativity, properly speaking, does not create anything new. It destroys the old, of course, but does

not give rise to a new creation.”⁴² He immediately proceeds to reiterate “our contemporary need to produce a non-Hegelian category of negation.”⁴³

In *Being and Event*, Badiou drew on post-Cantorian set-theory in order to explore his claim that “mathematics is ontology.” Mathematics is the paradigm of rationality, necessary for all empirical sciences, as well as in itself establishing the limits of the pure structures of thought. But a phenomenology is not and cannot be an ontology in this sense, since it is not dealing with such structures and their limits, but with intensities of appearing. Given that Badiou is unwilling to abandon reason to think appearing, he has recourse at this point to contemporary logics to formalise and ground his approach. In fact, he defines logic as the cohesion or consistency of appearing; outside of such logic, one has only the extra-rational if not entirely irrational claims of “experience.” Several key points follow. First, unlike the Hegelian dialectic and its Marxist inheritors, there must be a gap for Badiou between being and appearing that is irreducible in principle. This gap cannot be thought as “base” to “superstructure,” and, if one wishes to retain such metaphors, the articulation between them must be reconfigured in rationalist and not empiricist terms. Badiou’s genius is to propose that the historically-unstable relationship between pure mathematics and logic maps onto the relationship between being and being-there, ontology and phenomenology. Pure mathematics becomes the science of being qua being, being as such, being *without* its appearance in a world. Pure logic, however, must be then a science of appearing without its being; being-in-its-appearing, that is, localised being. Mathematics becomes an axiomatic ontology, logic a transcendental phenomenology.

One of the many benefits of such an approach is that it enables a genuine critique of the oppressiveness of situations, of real situations, as themselves not merely irrational, but oppressive insofar as they are anti-rational. Rationality, moreover, can thereby be shown to be *inherently egalitarian*—refusing all and any claims of authority in its elaboration. As such, it is also necessarily atemporal, or what Badiou would call *eternal*. It’s not that mathematics and logic aren’t historically variable; rather, it’s that this variability or development is absolutely and in principle independent of authoritarian dictates; moreover, every radical renovation of maths and logic enables its predecessors to be rewritten without loss in its own terms (but not vice-versa). This means that contemporary mathematics and logic are differing limit-inscriptions of reason, whose *actual* limits they establish and enforce as such. It is on the basis of such rational principles, and such principles alone, that Badiou can maintain that political action, for example, is *ultimately*

independent of economic directives, both theoretically and practically.

Although this is not the appropriate place to examine some of the more controversial aspects of Badiou's post-*Being and Event* doctrines, it is perhaps worth noting that it must be the case "in the last instance" for Badiou that, though political action *must always emerge from and treat of its specific situation in terms necessarily drawn from that situation itself*—exactly as we have been arguing that he does in his own writings—strictly speaking this "situation" can no longer be restricted to the terms and teleology of inherited forms of revolutionary class struggle. Rather, à la Badiou's abstract accounts of the operations of truths, *every* procedure emerges from an event that *exposes the foreclosed void* (ontologically considered) or the *minimum-becoming-maximal* (phenomenologically considered) of the existing situation. Briefly, if class-struggle is indeed bound to certain kinds of economic structure, radical politics in Badiou's sense is not only not always reducible to class-struggle (although such may constitute the central *material* or *theme* of a sequence of political action), but politics necessarily transforms both matter and structure (and thus for example the "meaning of class-struggle") in the course of its activity.⁴⁴ (This is partially also what Badiou's notorious term "subtraction" means.) Finally, this approach enables Badiou to return to historical situations in a new way, rereading them according to the directives of logic. This entails that "historical materialism" is itself compromised insofar as it insists on the priority of either history or substance, and therefore that to pursue their primacy is, whatever the motivation, to uphold the oppression of unfair shares.

In other words, and despite the apparent exception to Badiou's own usual stylistic practice in *Logics*, the pragmatic upshot of his self-situation in terms of the materialist dialectic comes to precisely the same point: *to create a rational metaphysics in a new style that affirms the egalitarian character of all true thought, at once simultaneously situated, singular and universal*. In fact, on the basis of our rule and our exception, we can now formalize the logic of polemic *chez* Badiou in an acceptably grounded fashion.

As we have been suggesting, we see this formal demonstrative procedure—of what we might call the "Five Cs" of context@commonplace@critique@condition@construction—recur throughout Badiou's work. Aside from any other considerations, this procedure is surely one model of argumentative writing, indeed one kind of generic paradigm for contemporary philosophical practice. To begin each time with another effort of self-localisation immediately emphasizes not only the necessity

of foregrounding situation as such, but the singularity of each presentation. To *not* do so—as we find so often in philosophy today—is to risk assuming a pre-existing institutional framework that is thereby itself occluded as its routines quietly organise and authorise inherited, invisible distinctions between what is permissible and unacceptable. This is what “Philosophy and Desire”—as indeed Badiou’s other work—sets out to expose and, in doing so, lays out a possibility for a philosophy that can exist beyond any particular form of institutional closure. It is certainly not the only, nor necessarily the best, possible model for philosophical practice. But it certainly has a number of clear and present benefits.

Such attempts to attend to the situation of (one’s own) thinking as such, forces the presentation itself to present the conditions of its own presentation, and in such a way as to stage the problem of the grounds of its auto-differentiation in its relation to the extension of its conceptual consistency and referential claims. Badiou thereby forces himself to return again and again to establishing and exposing, clearly and openly, the situation, site and means by which his own arguments will take place. One consequence of this is that every principle, argument and conclusion is openly staged for the reader; it is incumbent upon the latter to assent or contest, that is, *participate*, and, by the same token, to participate with the same commitment to public reason shown by Badiou. Each point of articulation offers the possibility for contesting Badiou’s decisions—if one can indeed *demonstrate* that his articulations are false.

Badiou’s forms therefore invariably propose *a challenge of rational participation*. The challenge is triple: first, regarding the plausibility of the context presented; second, if one can show that Badiou’s articulations on that basis demonstratively fail, then Badiou himself must assent to such a demonstration; third, one might also show that, if Badiou is not “wrong,” there were other routes to be taken at those decisive points which bear *undecidable* rational claims. In other words, Badiou’s forms in themselves *polemically* provoke a challenge of rationality, even if one ultimately decides for another route than Badiou himself on the basis of extra-rational — but not irrational—grounds.

This is the logic—yes, the *logic*—of polemic in the work of Alain Badiou.

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NOTES

1. See P. Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
2. B. Bosteels, "Introduction," to Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*. Trans. B. Bosteels. London and New York: Continuum, 2009, xxvii.
3. Bosteels, "Introduction", xxvii.
4. See O. Feltham, *Alain Badiou: Live Theory*. New York and London: Continuum, 2008, *passim*.
5. J. Clemens, "Had we but worlds enough, and time, this absolute, philosopher..." *The Praxis of Alain Badiou*. Eds A. Bartlett et al. Melbourne: re.press, 2006, 102-143.
6. A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*. Eds J. Clemens and O. Feltham. London: Continuum, 2003, 39.
7. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 42.
8. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th edition. Trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, n. 309, 110.
9. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 46.
10. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 46.
11. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 47.
12. See A. Badiou, A and B. Cassin, *Heidegger: les femmes, le nazisme et la philosophie*. Paris: Fayard, 2010.
13. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 48.
14. A. Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*. Eds R. Brassier and A. Toscano. London and New York: Continuum, 2004, xiii-xiv.
15. See J. Lyon, *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern*. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1999; M. Puchner, *Poetry of the revolution: Marx, manifestos, and the avant-gardes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
16. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Trans. J. Stambaugh. Albany: SUNY, 1996, 70.
17. For an influential recent reinterpretation of the status of the broken tool in Heidegger, see Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects*. Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 2002.
18. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume 1: The Will to Power as Art*. Trans. D.F. Krell. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, 130.
19. M. Heidegger, *Poetry, language, thought*. Trans. A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971, 12.
20. See J. Clemens and J. Roffe, "Philosophy as Anti-Religion in the Work of Alain Badiou." *Sophia* 47 (2008, 345-358); G. Harman, "Badiou's Relation to Heidegger in Theory of the Subject," *Badiou and Philosophy*. Eds S. Bowden and S. Duffy. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 225-243; M. Hewson, "Heidegger," *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*. Eds A.J. Bartlett and J. Clemens. Aldershot: Acumen, 2010, 146-154.
21. A. Badiou, *Being and Event*. Trans. O. Feltham. London and New York: Continuum, 2006, 3.
22. A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*. Trans. A. Toscano. London and New York: Continuum, 2009, 527.
23. Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 50.
24. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*. Trans. B. Fink with H. Fink and R. Grigg. New York: Norton, 2006, 5. Note, of course, that Lacan invokes this classicism in order to distinguish it from the psychoanalytic thinking of the object a which is both cause of the subject and its occlusion.
25. This is a key point, and implicates a very wide range of seventeenth-century authors who contributed to what is often broadly (and perhaps misleadingly) called "the scientific revolution,"

including, beyond Descartes himself, Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, Thomas Hobbes, and others. The point is *not* that Descartes or his contemporaries were *simply* indifferent to the language in which their thought was presented, but that, by the very *act of writing* in vernacular languages as well as in the Latin in which all *educated men* had to be fluent was a crucial aspect of the radical transformations in the possibility of address that they were forging. This is undoubtedly why most accounts of Descartes' work are constrained to at least mention this aspect of method, e.g., "After the Galileo affair, Descartes did not give up his project of reforming the sciences. In 1637, he tested the response to his new ideas by offering a sampler, the *Discourse on the Method* together with essays on *Dioptrics*, *Meteorology*, and *Geometry*. These works were also written in French, making them accessible to literate people outside the universities, including artisans, people at court, and 'even' women. (Descartes held that all human beings, irrespective of gender, possess the same intellectual power.)" Gary Hatfield, *Descartes and the Meditations*. London: Routledge, 2003, 20-21. Precisely along these lines, Stephen Gaukroger opens his "Introduction" to a collection on the *Meditations* by underlining "The *Meditations* aim to make one responsible for one's cognitive life in a way that the devotional texts of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation—where a range of exacting moral standards, accompanied by demands for self-vigilance which had been the preserve of monastic culture throughout the Middle Ages, were transferred wholesale to the general populace." *The Blackwell Guide to Descartes' Meditations*. Ed. Stephen Gaukroger. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, 1. Whatever an individual's reservations and hesitations, ambiguities and complications, to write philosophy in the vernacular was at this time in itself an assault against the dominant institutions of knowledge. We might also note the impact of Montaigne's *Essais* upon so many of the major philosophical writers: Bacon himself almost immediately started writing his own *Essays* in English; Descartes frankly refers to some of his own works as "*essais*."

26. A. Badiou, "Français: de la langue Française comme evident." *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies*. Ed. B. Cassin. Paris: Editions du Seuil/Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2004, 468.

27. Badiou, "Français," 470.

28. Badiou, "Français," 471.

29. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 1.

30. J. Voelker, "Reversing and Affirming the Avant-gardes: A New Paradigm for Politics." *Badiou and the Political Condition*. Ed. M. Constantinou. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 147.

31. Cited Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 50.

32. See Clemens, "Had we but worlds enough," *passim*.

33. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 1.

34. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 2.

35. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 2.

36. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 3.

37. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 3.

38. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 515-516.

39. For a different account of Badiou's putative "materialism," see Frank Ruda's book-length study, *For Badiou: Idealism without Idealism*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015.

40. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 46.

41. See A. Badiou, *Ethics*. Trans. P. Hallward. London: Verso, 2003.

42. A. Badiou, "'We need a popular discipline': Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative." *Critical Inquiry* 34 (2008, 652).

43. Ibid. See also the essays collected in *Badiou and Hegel: Infinity, Dialectics, Subjectivity*. Eds J. Vernon and A. Calcagno. Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015.

44. The resolute “abstraction” (in the common acceptation of this word) of Badiou’s theory often makes it difficult to see how, in the real sequences of politics (but this also necessarily holds for the other truth procedures), such action might be understood. By far the most ambitious and extended account to date that seeks to take up Badiou’s theories and apply them in detail to “real,” “historical” “sequences,” see Colin Wright’s extraordinary (and gigantic) *Badiou in Jamaica: The Politics of Conflict*. Melbourne: re.press, 2013. We have also learned a lot from another very detailed (if currently unpublished) paper by Robert Boncardo and Bryan Cooke, “Long Live the International Proletariat of France,” which takes up the relation between the SONACOTRA rent strike and Badiou’s *Theory of the Subject*.