

What is 'the subject' the name for? The conceptual structure of Alain Badiou's theory of the subject

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Abstract. The present paper outlines some basic concepts of Alain Badiou's philosophy of the subject, tracking down its inherent and complex philosophical implications. These implications are made explicit in the criticism directed against the philosophical sophistry which denies the pertinence of the concept of truth. Badiou's philosophical innovation is based on three nodal concepts, namely truth, event and subject, and it must be revealed how the afore-mentioned concepts are organized and interrelated, eventually leading to reformulating the concept of the subject. In its exercise, philosophy is intimately affiliated to the four adjacent procedures of mathematics, art, love and politics that could be understood as overall conditions on the margins of which philosophical thinking takes place. Separating philosophy from ontology and charging philosophy with what exceeds being, Badiou transforms it to the general theory of the event. Consequently the concept of the subject is disconnected from that of the object, the subject being not an instance of knowledge, but always a part of generic procedures and thus definable simply as a finite fragment or an operative configuration of the traces of the event. Therefore, it could be stated that Badiou's theory of the subject is formal and refuses all essentialist connotations.

The state of philosophy

Philosophy as a theoretical discourse in a methodically organized form appears to be condemned to extinction: the majority of contemporary

philosophical theories have pointed out that philosophy, more than ever, is involved in a legitimation crisis. The place philosophy is called to occupy in our chaotic world is a widely debated issue amongst philosophers of different backgrounds. What is the function of philosophy? How should philosophy be practiced? And there is much discussion on the relevance or irrelevance of the concepts philosophy has employed and continues to employ. The need for new philosophical concepts seems to be widely admitted, but what still troubles philosophical minds is the fate we should reserve for the so-called traditional concepts of philosophy: should one try to avoid them altogether, should one declare a war on them, or should one revise them in the hope of making them convenient for our present purposes? The question of balance between past concepts and renewed or invented concepts has proved to be a fundamental question of nowadays' philosophical thought. Philosophy's own continuity is at stake and we have to make up our minds in order to take sides with what could guarantee the favourable conditions of this continuity.

We will examine Badiou's philosophy mostly from the following point of view: if one approves Badiou's enthusiastic suggestion that philosophy could be a serious activity with highly practical consequences even to our everyday life and its commitments, one is nevertheless eager to find out the exact circumstances of this approval and furnish a persuasive explanation of the real use of philosophy in our time. This means that we have to identify as precisely as possible the central concerns of Badiou's sophisticated philosophical machinery, constructed on the basis of the following idea: after all it makes no sense to speak of the end of philosophy because philosophy is precisely a never-ending activity with no arrival point to be attained, one should rather explore the real conditions that render it possible in reality and provide an effective support for its survival.

As far as the state of today's philosophy is concerned, Badiou certainly agrees with the wide-spread idea that philosophy has reached a crisis, but the main reason, he points out, lies in the fact that philosophy is "paralyzed by its relationship to its own history", as stated

in the emblematic essay *The return of philosophy itself* (Badiou 1999b: 113). One may have the feeling that there is something wrong with philosophy — philosophy has lost its autonomous spirit and has been turned into a kind of exegesis of other disciplines, be it arts, science, politics or others. Or, interpreted in more pessimistic terms, philosophy has been disposed of its own nature, its active and combating mood, and has become an independent form of study, not only an object in a museum, but the museum itself, containing by-gone concepts and theories. Badiou recognises the actual state of philosophy as deep-seated ‘malaise’: everything tends to indicate the uselessness and purposelessness of philosophy, torn between different fields of study called the humanities which are supported by their adequate objects of study and convenient methods. So should we think, in the vein of some contemporary philosophers, that philosophy has been completely done away with while deficient in method and purpose? This narrative about the end of philosophy has in the meantime taken the form of religious prophecy, so philosophy itself has been considered in this context as a predictive discipline with the purpose of foreseeing its own end. What would be the consequence of this? Does everyone who wants to practice philosophy and desires to be taken seriously submit to this prophetic idea of the end of philosophy? Since philosophy is no longer to be identified with metaphysics, one has to start with reassessing the place and the meaning of philosophy. Of course it may imply turning explicitly to the ways of thinking outside the forms of traditional philosophical discourse.

Badiou’s project of re-evaluating philosophy is somewhat at odds with the means he employs: he overtly promotes the idea that philosophy should cease to be a historically determined discipline, even if this historical determination has paradoxically been its own implicit demand, formulated by outstanding philosophers themselves. Badiou declares his position to be critical of the recent critical philosophical discourse: he attempts to evaluate the consistency of the philosophical discourse in terms of its political and ethical implications. And Badiou discovers the true conflict underlying the philosophico-historicist

disdain for a purely philosophical discourse — that of the hidden conflict between pre-Socratic thinking and Plato's truth-establishing thinking. He proposes to overlook the implicit historicist demand and to reconsider the meaning and the place of philosophy in the light of a radically new imperative consisting of putting the history of philosophy into brackets. In order to redefine philosophy, the scope of philosophy should be modified — a task far from being accomplished.

Held hostage within the vicious circle drawn by historicist thinking, philosophy has to seek to define itself otherwise than by its history, identified by common consent with the phenomenon called the western metaphysics. According to Badiou we are authorized (by the crisis philosophy encounters these days) to think, contrary to the wide-spread opinion emphasizing the fatal variety of philosophic forms of expression, that it is possible to define what philosophy does or should do and that this definition should overlook, as much as possible, the historical nature of philosophy. Of course, as a convinced Platonist, Badiou proposes to part from Plato's philosophy, considering it as the first true unveiling of western philosophical thought and opposed to philosophico-rhetorical forms. The problem of sophistry still seems to be a central question of philosophy: we are moving towards (or probably we have already reached) the conception that considers philosophy inseparable from sophistry: in Badiou's terms, sophistry has taken over, especially in the 20th century, the place philosophy was meant to occupy. In other terms, philosophy has been subordinated to the idea that philosophy, not being a matter of truth or truths, is only a matter of discussing, of uttering. From this viewpoint, if philosophy is regarded as unable to tell the truth, the role of philosophy is reduced to tell what it cannot tell, while all contact with the nature of the reality, be it material, spiritual or other, seems to be completely irrelevant because unquestionably out of reach. This is why Badiou sees Friedrich Nietzsche as well as Ludwig Wittgenstein as the symbolic figures of modern sophistry: while Nietzsche, in the most general sense, reduced philosophy to unconscious forces and desires underlying the philosophical discourse, Wittgenstein definitely refused philosophy's pursuit of truths in favour

of innocuous language games, freed from any commitment to reconstruct so-called reality. So it is not false to interpret Badiou's position as follows: sophistry is anything and any thought that refuses the category of truth, truth being not a matter of consensus, of discussion, of rules, of norms or of establishment, but of continuous effort and combating fidelity. This also means that philosophy is not as much a discipline concerned with the meaning and the structure of some kind of a reality, otherwise called a 'text' or 'narrative', as it is mostly concerned with what he calls an Event. The latter is not to be understood as an element resulting from some kind of a language-based structure, even if its character retains some features proper to signifying structures in general. So Badiou's effort to emancipate philosophy from the rule of sophistry takes the form of attempting to give a positive definition to the concept of philosophy. This, however, does not mean that sophistry should be done away with altogether. Sophistry is an integral part of philosophy and remains the companion of philosophy, introducing polemic nature where philosopher has lost the sense of criticism and yields to dogmatism (Badiou 1999b: 134).

Such a philosophical break-through could only be realised by making a clear distinction between the sophistic and the philosophical way of thinking, the latter consisting of defining philosophy in accordance with the concept or category of truth. This, as we have seen, should be a basic choice to be made in philosophy: either we maintain that there could be no truth to align oneself with because the consistency (of meaning) is only a matter of language games, rules, signifying units; or we try to reason that truth is not to be looked for in some kind of an eternal realm (as this has been the case with Plato, at the same time an ally and a father figure to be eliminated by Badiou). Truth has to be created, followed and maintained by philosophy as its main concern. Of course, Badiou's position, seen in the light of Nietzschean critical tradition, seems quite uncomfortable; nevertheless, we have to try to reconstruct the meaning it contains in order to evaluate the position Badiou is defending. How could the category of truth be redefined, without doing harm to philosophy's contemporary developments, mostly concerned with the lack or the loss of this very category?

First of all, philosophy is linked to politics, not by external association, but by its inherent engagement that can already be seen in Plato's thought. This link is not lost nowadays, rather we should argue, as Badiou suggests, that philosophy is meaningless without politics, as politics has no meaning without philosophy. We need not go back to Plato in order to study the mutual attachment between philosophy and politics, it is enough to consider some contemporary forms of engagement as those of Marx, Heidegger or even philosophy of language in its the Anglo-Saxon form, and eventually why not Badiou's own involvement in some clearly left-wing oriented political movements. Badiou wants to convince us that philosophy fails to meet its *telos* fixed by Plato, when one does not understand this inherent link binding philosophy and politics together. The question is how this relationship between philosophy and politics should be explained using the declaredly central category of truth?

Philosophy and the category of truth

Is truth still thinkable? Could this category still have meaning from a philosophical point of view, regardless of its innumerable misuses manifested in the history of philosophy? Badiou's response is thoroughly affirmative, although with certain nuances: truth is a matter of its conditions as well as of its definition. There is no doubt that for Badiou, truth is a central category of philosophy, at least as long as we deal with the so-called classical philosophy starting with Plato (but as we know, both Heraclites and Parmenides were already dealing with this category, Heraclites in the form of logos, Parmenides in that of the thought about being). The idea of philosophy that Badiou explores in a systematic manner throughout all his recent works (at least beginning with *Being and Event*) could be resumed as follows: there are four basic procedures through which truth unveils itself and these procedures are mathematics, art, politics and love (for instance, Badiou 1999b: 61). One must be surprised and perplexed: what is the common trait between

these extremely heterogeneous activities, mental as well as emotional? Are these conditions historical or rather purely philosophical? Apparently both, because these conditions open a field proper to the study of truth in its pre-reflexive form: there are truths in mathematics (sometimes called science), art, politics and love before philosophy begins in its own, conceptual truth. These conditions could be defined as the concrete *locus* where philosophical thinking is rooted and *takes place*, although philosophy never becomes the total of these conditions. This means that truth is not the prerogative of philosophy; rather it is the turning-point giving birth to philosophical reflection, to conceptual framing wherein these conditions may get elucidated but not resumed altogether. In addition, truth in Badiou's conception is not a matter of knowledge (*savoir*, see 1988: 9). Knowledge simply gives us access to what is — being, it is unable to explain what happens — the unknown, the unexpected, the Event. That is what philosophy is really about — if truth ceases to be a part or a criterion of knowledge, philosophy is not about what exists, but deals with the coming to existence, with the singularisation.

But still the question persists: why is the category of truth indispensable to philosophical way of thinking, why is philosophy inconceivable without the implicit presence of the category of truth in the thinker's mind? And how could one characterize the consequences this concept has in relation to the thinking subject? Badiou, as we will see, maintains the category of truth as central to philosophical thinking, but he insists on the heterogeneous nature of truths, which in its turn reflects the heterogeneous nature of thinking itself: the essential plurality and heterogeneity of truths does not exclude their compossibility (which means precisely heterogeneous unity) for thinking. Understood as that, truth is never significant in itself, but should be seen as a kind of a sign, void of any implicit meaning for philosophical discourse but still more or less apt to assume a function in the system of thinking. That is why truth is not an artefact produced by philosophy, rather one should say that philosophy is kept in motion and operated on the basis of some truth or truths. So a philosopher, to be defined as such, declares (as

Plato or Descartes do) that there are truths, and even if they are eternal, they are condemned to appear in order to be (Badiou 2006: 534–535). So some truths could exist together and complete one another within the framework of some temporal and at the same time operational whole. In this whole the truths of science, art, politics and love meet philosophy, the result of this fruitful encounter being a philosophical understanding of truths inherent to procedures determined as generic by their nature.

This understanding of specific truths (that is to say, of four generic procedures) through the looking-glass of philosophy, does it not take the form of reduction, devaluation, evanescence of meaning? One should rather be assured when seeing that philosophy is not going astray in the labyrinth of sense. It is Badiou's original contribution to the renewal of philosophical discourse: philosophy has to withdraw from positions won by the philosophies of sense, as well as from those regarding the objective order, both being too indeterminate for philosophical thinking. What is left to focus on is the category of truth as the only one worthy of philosopher's consideration. It would be too simple to see in this turn a come-back of the eminently Platonist category of truth, one has to consider further consequences of the process called subtraction. If subtraction consists in evacuating truth from the labyrinth of sense, philosophy has to reconsider the meaning of experience for the procedures it uses in order to bring out its truths. That is why Badiou undertakes a radical shift that one could be tempted to interpret as a return to the classical way of thinking philosophically: philosophy is not an interpretation of experience and its sense-creating procedures (as semiotics would argue alongside with some other disciplines), philosophy is to be understood as an operational category subtracted from all presence (Badiou 1999b: 69). So, it seems when submitting Badiou's texts to close reading, that philosophy operates precisely in this void where sense is neither given nor interpreted (one perceives a sharp opposition here to Gilles Deleuze's position as well as to Jean-François Lyotard's definition of philosophy as "a discourse in search of his own rules" (Badiou 1999b: 66). Philosophy is constructivist but

only in the sense of constructing bridges between truth-procedures based on the singular conditions of art, science, love and politics. And through these conditions, philosophy moves away from historicist tendencies and comes closer to truths operating within the limits of time being. But Badiou claims that a distinction should nevertheless be made between grasping and producing truths, the first one being the properly philosophical way of thinking, the last one leading to disaster where philosophy ceases to refer to four generic procedures (who operate always in the midst of the multiplicity of truths) and gets trapped in the illusion of its own supremacy, realized through a double substantialisation of truth and of presence and their consequent objectivation. But how is the category of truth connected to the Event and why does Badiou maintain so vigorously that truth is always post-eventful?

Preparing the Event

Is there an instance *par excellence* of being able to grasp truths? What or who could be the instance capable of grasping truths? Could truth be a place or a site upon which something totally other is founded or at least potentially could be founded? There are truths, and every truth itself is always and already a multiplicity, but there is ultimately no Truth (Badiou 2004: 102), according to Badiou's conception: if philosophy is the meeting place for truth procedures and the point where they become compossible, is there a form of truth specific to philosophy and also to the philosopher? If, as we have said, philosophy does not consist in interpreting empirical data of some subject, philosophy is not a matter of productivity, there is no interpretation produced, as there is no universal truth created (Badiou 1997: 116). And there is a circulation of truths through subjects. And there are, Badiou convinces us, subjects, always singular, who, being able to accept these truths, affirm them through a relentless fidelity, leading back to what Badiou calls Events. Before we are able to present the exact meaning of the concept of subject, we have to ask: what is the nature of an event? What distinguishes

an event from what simply happens? To answer this question, we have to be clear about the fact that for Badiou, truth is not something known and recognized as such, resulting from so-called common sense. Truth, as far as it is taken as such, is a matter of exception, it is a deviation in relation to the order of things, a deviation in relation to what is or exists (see Badiou 2006: 12 and 1988: 196), that is to say, in relation to being *qua* being, as Badiou calls it. Truth, being thus immanently related to (the course of) history, is by its very nature eminently revolutionary: it enables an advent of something more or less new, it concerns a radical change in the course of being *qua* being.

In order to reveal the exact meaning of the notion 'event' in Badiou's philosophical configuration, one has to begin with significant events specific to each domain of the procedures of truth or generic conditions; as Badiou points out, philosophy, being historically sutured to these four generic conditions, discovers in them its own prescription of return, that is to say, the condition of its own eventfulness.

But let us first determine the exact configuration in which enter philosophy and mathematics: Badiou undertakes the unburdening of philosophy in favour of mathematics, the latter being precisely the domain of being *qua* being. We should ask for the reasons for such a characterization: why should philosophy free itself from the concept which has been considered as central to philosophical reflection for centuries? The main reason, one has the impression, should be searched in the concept of the One or of the Totalisation: if mathematics "thinks being" (Badiou 2004: 97), the One is lurking in the field of mathematics and still is left without elucidation because mathematics will never embrace being *qua* being in its constitution as One. That is why Badiou's philosophy, together with mathematics understood as ontology, is seeking to think being without any totalizing determination. This is, by the way, the main theme of discussion Badiou brings forth in his book on Gilles Deleuze's philosophy: when Deleuze's ontology of difference (Deleuze 1968) still reflects back to some common ground or field of immanence unified in the principle of Univocity, Badiou refuses to share this point of view, arguing that the pure multiple is in fact void of any transcendental unity (see Badiou 1999a). So it is philosophy itself

that declares mathematics apt to be charged with the task of ontology, that is to say with the question about being qua being, whereas philosophy deals with what exceeds the ontological task as such. This excess of ontology, for Badiou, is discovered and embodied in the concept called the event. The question what philosophy is about receives an accurate and constituent answer: philosophy is, “first and foremost, the general theory of the event” (Badiou 2004: 98). Philosophy is above all involved with what exceeds both being qua being and the One. Moreover, there is no need for the postponement of the event, the latter must be considered as a turning-point from which the generic procedures can come into play and truths can be affirmed. What counts is the ‘after’ of the event.

Even when the concept of being is assigned to mathematics, philosophy is not yet separated once and for all from being. Philosophy still addresses being, but it does so in its fragmentary form: philosophy is concerned with what escapes being as totality (counted as one) and turns to a concrete situation, or as Badiou puts it, to a singular multiplicity, in order to track down the real circumstances of an event. Understood as such, an event is not just a happening out of nowhere (which would mean simply to Christianise the event), neither is it an organic part of a situation, but rather an “inorganic” or, as Badiou puts it, generic, in the sense that event occurs on the margins of a situation, arranging an evental site. There is no event without a corresponding evental site, the latter being an organic part of a situation, although strangely loose *vis-à-vis* the situation it stems from. One is tempted to think that the evental site out of which an event occurs must enclose some preliminary established opportunity for it. Is it really as simple as that? Badiou gives the example of a cat (although any other animal as well as human being could serve as an example) whose cells (of whatever organ) as living entities belong to the evental site of the cat. It is otherwise with the molecules of those cells: these molecules are not alive in the sense that cells are alive, so Badiou deduces from this example that elements constituting an evental site do not belong to the same site, even if these elements are roughly taken as constituent parts

of the site. As such, a material constitution of a cat may indeed be divided in two: there is a singular multiplicity of living entities, and there is a void (or even voids), a vague being identified simply as brute matter, previously called being as being. That is how Badiou defines the concept of the evental site: “it is a part of a situation all of whose elements are on the edge of the void” (Badiou 2004: 99). Philosophy, being “the general theory of the event”, installs itself precisely on this edge, without exonerating itself from the task of knowing what mathematics discovers about (or as) being qua being.

There is a major difficulty inherent to Badiou's conception of the event: how could an event supplement the situation or the evental site from which it stems? If, as Badiou argues, a multiple cannot be a multiple of itself, an event must constitute a surplus in addition to the originary multiple. The examples that Badiou furnishes are not completely persuasive: to say that “a reflection upon the French Revolution is an element of the revolution itself” (Badiou 2004: 100) resembles the idea that “spectator is a part of the painting” — there is something indeterminate in this kind of conviction because we could never know what a painting is (if it exists altogether) without any spectator looking at it. It seems to be a matter concerning the extent (mental and other) of an event: a reflection can be part of the French Revolution in so far as the meaning of an event called the French Revolution requires a reflection on its meaning (for the somewhat similar case of Saint Paul, see Badiou 1997). It does not suffice to have perfect knowledge of dates, participants and concrete circumstances of the event; an event supplements the evental site it is a product of. This supplementing should not be interpreted as a product of some strangely fortuitous and even external element, because an event, in Badiou's conception, emerges from the immanence of a situation, resulting nevertheless in a radical transcending of the constituent site.

Processes of composing the subject

Does this vision of the adventitious character of the event still presume a subject capable of carefully assisting and accompanying this advent or will the event, as in the case of Louis Althusser's thought (2003, 1: 239) where the subject is tied up with ideological connotations (Badiou 2006: 548), surpass the subjective configuration and go beyond the realm of the subject, the latter remaining captive of a factual multiple situation? Badiou's conception of the "subject without object" provides a key to understanding the radical modification he introduces into the concept of the subject. Thus the subject is not the product of some objectivity, neither in the Marxist sense where the subject is an instance emerging from objective material conditions nor in the positivist sense where the subject is brought about in conformity with the amount of knowledge and the definition of objects. Badiou's conception of truth leads to discarding any theory that, in order to give a definition of truth, posits some kind of a correspondence theory between the subject and object, regardless of the nuances of meaning we would confer to these terms. Considering "the problem of the subject without object as central as regards a possible renaissance of philosophy" (Badiou 1999b: 93), Badiou makes apparently no concession to either Marxist or positivist conception of the subject, although he sets himself the task of determining, both in his writings as well as in his lectures, the context of meaning in which the concept of the subject could still be maintained as an effective and vital concept within the framework of the philosophical discourse. If the concept of the subject survives, there must be a concrete need for this survival!

Let us return momentarily to the problem of philosophy and its re-foundation on four generic procedures in order to acknowledge the full consequences of Badiou's remaking of the concept of the subject because only the concept of the generic procedure, as we have previously laid it out in conformity with Badiou's general vision of re-evaluating philosophy, "subsumes the disobjectivation of truth and of the subject, making the subject appear as a simple finite fragment of a

post-eventful truth without object” (Badiou 1999b: 93). Or as Badiou says elsewhere, the subject must be determined as “a *finite moment* of the generic procedure”, being thus always part of one of the four generic procedures and thus either “artistic, scientific, political or amorous” (Badiou 1999b: 108). It is the generic that is common to those four procedures and to philosophy itself, because the generic is concerned with what is yet to be determined and what is there only as the most general and anonymous element, to be experienced through the generic procedures (Badiou 2006: 45) and to be crystallised in truths resulting from those processes. It is thus the generic that makes philosophy what it is, namely the re-thinking of the Platonic gesture split up between the procedures that support it. But how is this splitting-up to be understood and in what circumstances could the subject be correlated to such a “post-eventful truth without object”?

Starting with the general ‘signifying structure’ of the subjective instance (which could equally be called ‘subjectivation’), one attains the crux of Badiou’s theory of the subject. This theory, and Badiou considers it as one of the central and permanent themes of his philosophical thinking at least since his book *Théorie du sujet*, has nothing to do with neither the transcendental nor the substantial subject. Quite the contrary, its consistency is organised in time, it is entirely submitted to the temporal modifications. As such, Badiou’s approach to the subject retains some obvious affinities with Michel Foucault’s conception of subjectivation. However, as Foucault points out (see 2000: 331), a clear distinction should still be maintained between subjectivation (in French ‘*subjectivation*’) and subjection (‘*assujettissement*’), in order to understand Badiou’s conception which is clearly oriented towards the first meaning, the latter being incorporated to the former rather symbolically. One of the most significant statements about the place or function of the subject can be found in one of his most recent major books, *Logiques des mondes*, in which he states that the way truths appear is singular and consists of subjective operations (Badiou 2006: 16). That is to say there is no objective way for truths to be approached in their so-called eternity, truth is strictly a matter of appearing and

especially of revealing — subjective affirmation alone enables to confirm that there are truths. That is why there could be no truths without the subject: it is only through subjective operations that truths may be discerned, although these subjective operations do not presume, as one would imagine, any founded or substantialised subject. As Badiou maintains, truths have no existence of their own, they are at all times ‘established’ by some subject (2006: 535) whose task consists of providing assistance to enable their emergence. This is what the subjectivation in its broadest sense is about: organising an exception which fails to follow the rule.

The unfounded character of the subject lies in the very heart of Badiou’s thought, it permits avoiding any tendency of uniformisation on the basis of the origin: every subject is by definition singular. So the question of the existence of some common nature shared by all subjects turns out to be rather meaningless. It could hardly be imagined that there exists any common nature beyond the concrete multiplicity the subject originates from. Furthermore, the subject thus apprehended has undoubtedly no underlying subjectivity of its own, his ‘subjectivity’ relies to a greater or lesser extent on its relationship with the generic instance it is related to within its multiple situation. Granted that there is no subjectivity independent from generic procedures through which the subject constitutes itself, the subject has no essence, no substance, no foundation, no transcendental structure, no knowledge of his own, which means that it is completely unsubstantiated and has no ontological meaning whatsoever before coming into contact with the event. This subject, determined first and foremost as completely formal, is unfounded and finds itself only on the fragments of a consistency that Badiou, using his peculiar terminology, defines as that of fidelity.

But how could this fidelity figure into the system of thought where the multiple is clearly privileged to the detriment of the unity and the One? Does fidelity not presume some kind of unity in or of the subject? In the case of Badiou’s thought, the unity of the subject has to be understood as barely formal, which implies that this unity is produced

and the subject subsists only as a productive and determining form that results in the very category of truth. The singularisation of a truth is thoroughly dependent on the singularisation of a subject who by its action bears witness to this truth through the category of fidelity. 'Singularity' should be identified as the key notion of this production: the subject, in order to be able to correlate itself to the event, must be able to complete and exceed the situation on the edge of which the event arises. Badiou continues to underline the primarily post-eventful character of the subject thus obtained: it is necessarily subordinated to the fortuitous element of a situation, to the multiple of the multiple. Only the event as a premise could lead to the formation of the subject because the latter is to be meticulously determined as an operative configuration of the traces of the event (Badiou 2006: 42), meaning that there could be no subject without a previous event tracing a new configuration on which the subject lays his claim and to which it is exposed in its very composition. So this type of subject could be established as belonging to the so-called eventful subjectivity: there is a subject so far as this subject belongs to some event. This subject, it must be insisted, carries in Badiou's conception no meaning of his own (in the form of conscience and its correspondent constituting experience, as phenomenology would argue, in the form of some morally predisposed element, as neo-Kantians would argue or in the form of ideologically constructed representation, as disciples of Althusser might argue). It has meaning only insofar as it belongs to the faithful continuity of the event.

Furthermore, it could be asked whether subjectivation can thus be identified with constitution? And is the subject both condemned to subjectivate and forced to constitute itself? If so, what is the element that activates these processes and bestows signification upon them? Certainly, this element is part of an event, but as neither physical entity nor biological being because, as we have underlined, the subject is far from being a substantial entity, rather it is a matter of composition and in all probability also that of decomposition. But this should not be taken literally: as the subject could not be substantial nor biological.

Badiou, inspired to some extent by Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the subject, undertakes to transform the subject from substantial to formal: the subject signifies precisely "a system of forms and operations" (Badiou 2006: 55), and there is no ultimate operation to be accomplished, no ultimate norm to be fixed. Even ethics, in quite a specific philosophical discourse as it was proposed by Emmanuel Lévinas (1994), manifests its insufficiency to assure the production of such ultimate operations and norms, for the simple reason that the subject could possibly fail to apply the law in question, that is to say, the law of the Other (see Badiou 2003: 36). Ethical systems, being by their nature very complex and potentially efficient normative organisations, are still but abstractions of particular situations, in need of agents likely to intervene in these situations.

Badiou's goal in his work *Logiques des mondes* is to initiate a theory of the subject which takes account of the formal character of the subject since this subject, being both formal and composed and with no substantiated nature of its own, could not constitute an empirically determinable object. Nevertheless, for Badiou it turns out to be a highly significant and even singular instance. The singularity here consists in the affirmation of the incalculable, which in the absence of objectively verifiable criteria enables one to make statements about truth and to be situated in view of its value. There is something that can be thought as an event, so one considers the event having taken place. One thus accepts the implications (at least some of them) of this event and re-composes oneself (one's thought, one's actions, one's being) as the subject related or even allied to the event concerned, entering, as Badiou puts it, into the composition of the subject (Badiou 2003: 60).

Is the subject thus constructed always as a positive entity in Badiou's eyes? Not necessarily, in addition to the faithful subject Badiou *discovers*, there are two other forms of subject that he calls respectively 'the reactive subject' and 'the obscure subject' which are to be discerned as essentially unproductive forms (they are merely passive bodies rather than subjects) because they deny the power of the event for the present and either fail to recognize it or project it into some idealized

transcendence. The so-called positively conceived subject thus exercises and in the end realizes his fidelity in the aftermath of an event, by the pure fact of being faithful to the event whose existence, as Badiou underlines, can by no means be calculated or demonstrated and whose character is still to be determined. This is to say as well that this character cannot be established once and for all, its determination is in fact an endless (that is to say, properly infinite) process of re-examining and re-thinking the truth enclosed in the traces of the event.

The task of affirming the event and thinking truth is assigned to the subject who, testing them in a multiple situation, is confronted with two indiscernible or incalculable terms: he must make a choice, which means, in Badiou's terms, that the subject is nothing but a throw of the dice, fixing the chance through a concrete throw and establishing for a while a radically finite and tangible combination of an infinite series. This is why Badiou may be justified to declare himself as both post-Cartesian and post-Lacanian thinker: he introduces a radical dividing-line between the fundamental categories of being and truth which permits him to identify the subject not as a support or an origin, but as a fragment of the processes of truth (Badiou 1988: 22). Subjectivation as a process implies that the subject in question is both local (by its status) and in surplus (*vis-à-vis* the situation, see Badiou 1988: 430). The subject is the product of a compound subjectivation which means that there are in fact four types of subjectivation to be identified, in conformity with four conditions of philosophy as displayed at the outset. For instance, there are militant activists who enter the composition of militant or political organization, there are artists who enter the composition of artistic production and of a work of art, etc. Indeed, the subject is to be understood as a militant, subjectivating and organizational form of artistic, scientific, political and affectionate activity and of the determination of the indiscernible character of an event that confers meaning to this activity. The subject, Badiou maintains (2006: 80), is primarily of political, artistic, scientific or affectionate composition, due to which there remains no such entity as the purely philosophical subject. The implications that could be logically deduced from his

formal theory of the subject seem to be highly relevant to Badiou's own social and political commitments.

Conclusion

In this article, we have studied the intricate tripartite relationship between the notions of truth, the subject and the event as depicted in Badiou's thought: there is an indiscernible and incalculable event, completed by a finite subject aiming at understanding the infinite truth of the event and determined to be faithful to its implications. These notions acquire their full signification only through their mutual counteraction without which each element taken separately remains in the realm of ambiguity that may only be overcome by interrelating each constituent meaning into signifying whole. And we would like to know how is it that from something quite indiscernible and incalculable, one would arrive at a cleavage between the finite instance of the subject and the infinite process of truth? In keeping with Badiou's general vision, we would deduce that the subject is composed as a finite moment on the path leading to truth, the latter being infinite in the sense that it is not attainable by superposing those determinate moments. And paradoxically it seems to lead to the upshot that the infinite is somehow made up of absolutely finite sequences. One of the major difficulties to which Badiou's thought is deliberately exposed concerns precisely the conceptual fissure bringing together the finite and the infinite and the way the finite is effectively submitted to the infinite. But this fissure, as Badiou in all probability will maintain, is precisely the fissure through which the subject comes forth.

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Что означает 'субъект'? Концептуальная структура теории субъекта Алена Бадью

Статья рассматривает основные понятия философии субъекта Алена Бадью, следуя за ее сложными импликациями, выражающимися в критике, направленной против философской софистики, которая отрицает применимость понятия истины. Философская инновация Бадью опирается на три ключевые понятия — истина, событие и субъект. В статье прослеживается, как эти понятия организованы и как они соотносятся, что приводит к переосмыслению понятия субъекта. Философия соприкасается в своем бытии с математикой, искусством, любовью и политикой, которые можно трактовать как общие причины, на границе которых действует философская мысль. Отделив философию от онтологии и сделав задачей философии преодоление бытия, Бадью превращает философию в общую теорию события. Этим понятие субъекта отделяется от понятия объекта, субъект не является основой знания, он всегда — часть генерических процедур и этим дефинируется как окончательный фрагмент или действующая конфигурация следов события. Таким образом, процесс субъективации можно связать с процессом семиозиса.

Mida tähistab 'subjekt'? Filosoofilis-semiootiline sissevaade Alain Badiou' sündmuseteooria tähendusse

Artikkel esitab ja uurib mõningaid Alain Badiou' filosoofia põhimõisteid, jälgides selle keerulisi implikatsioone, mis leiavad väljenduse filosoofilise sofistika vastu suunatud kriitikas. See sofistika eitab tõe mõiste asjakohasust. Badiou filosoofiline innovatsioon toetub kolmele võtmemõistele, milleks on tõde, sündmus ja subjekt. Artikkel püüab vaadelda, kuidas eelmainitud mõisted on tähenduslikult organiseeritud ja omavahel seostatud teatavas filosoofilist laadi semioosis, mis viib välja subjekti mõiste ümbermõtestamiseni. Oma toimimises on filosoofia lähedalt seotud nelja külgneva toiminguga, milleks on matemaatika, kunst, armastus ja poliitika, mida võib mõista kui üleüldisi tingimusi, mille piiril filosoofiline mõtlemine aset leiab. Eraldades filosoofia ontoloogiast ja tehes filosoofia ülesandeks selle, mis ületab olemise, muudab Badiou filosoofia sündmuse üldiseks teoriaks. Seega seotakse subjekti mõiste lahti objekti mõistest, subjekt ei ole teadmise alus, vaid alati osa geneerilistest toimingutest ja sellega defineeritav lihtsalt kui sündmuse jälgede lõplik fragment või toimiv konfiguratsioon. Nii võiks subjektivatsiooniprotsessi seostada semioosiprotsessiga, mida peetakse semiootika üheks keskseks mõisteks.