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FILOZOFSKI VESTNIK je glasilo Filozofskega inštituta Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti. Filozofski vestnik je znanstveni časopis za filozofijo z interdisciplinarno in mednarodno usmeritvijo in je forum za diskusijo o širokem spektru vprašanj s področja sodobne filozofije, etike, estetike, politične, pravne filozofije, filozofije jezika, filozofije zgodovine in zgodovine politične misli, epistemologije in filozofije znanosti, zgodovine filozofije in teoretske psihoanalize. Odprt je za različne filozofske usmeritve, stile in šole ter spodbuja teoretski dialog med njimi.
Letno izidejo tri številke. V prvi in tretji so objavljeni prispevki domačih in tujih avtorjev v slovenskem jeziku s povzetki v slovenskem in angleškem jeziku. Druga številka je mednarodna in posvečena temi, ki jo določi uredniški odbor. Prispevki so objavljeni v angleškem, francoskem in nemškem jeziku, z izvlečki v angleškem in slovenskem jeziku.

Filozofski vestnik je ustanovila Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti.

Aims and Scope

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The journal is published three times annually. Two issues are published in Slovenian, with abstracts in Slovenian and English. One issue a year is a special international issue that brings together articles in English, French or German by experts on a topic chosen by the editorial board.

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Edited by Peter Klepec

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VSEBINA

RADICAL PHILOSOPHY?

Our point of departure in this issue of *Filozofski vestnik* is the thesis that the repetition of a certain gesture of Lenin's is needed today in philosophy – as Lenin withdrew in the midst of the most ferocious battles during World War I to study and to rethink theoretical questions in order to *act* differently. What we need today is a new and radical rethinking of the theoretical and practical presuppositions of contemporaineity. As to philosophy, such a point of departure poses many questions. For instance:

- Do we need to rethink the Enlightenment anew or just to be faithful to its most radical representatives? What is radical Enlightenment, who are its representatives, what does their radicality consists of?
- What does it mean to be radical in philosophy regarding the senses and affects?
- Is there still a place for radicality in philosophy at all? What are the antinomies of radical philosophy and what is radical antiphilosophy?
- Do we need to differentiate between radical and "radical"? How is a demand for radicality in philosophy related to capitalism as a system which ceaselessly (radically) revolutionizes its own presuppositions and which is supported by the production of commodities which have to be something new, different, in a very specific sense even shocking, i.e. radical? How should we think of radicality in theological terms or in terms of non-reconciliation?

There are many other questions on these topics that will be posed and answered in the future, of course. The articles published here are, hopefully, just the beginning of a journey. If any readers are willing to make this journey, I am quite certain, though, that will not be a boring one.

The editor

RADICALIZING THE RADICALS

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DESCARTES AND THE POST-TRAUMATIC SUBJECT

Slavoj Žižek*

If the radical moment of the inauguration of modern philosophy is the rise of the Cartesian *cogito*, where are we today with regard to *cogito*? Are we really entering a post-Cartesian era, or is it that only now our unique historical constellation enables us to discern all the consequences of the *cogito*? Walter Benjamin claimed that works of art often function like shots taken on a film for which the developer has not yet been discovered, so that one has to wait for a future to understand them properly. Is not something similar happening with *cogito*: today, we have at our disposal the developer to understand it properly.

In what, then, does this developer consist? What makes our historical moment unique? Let us begin with an unexpected case: George Soros is an undoubtedly honest humanitarian whose Open Society foundation, among other things, more or less single-handedly saved critical social thinking in post-Communist countries. Yet a decade or so ago, the same Soros engaged in speculations with the different rates between currencies and earned hundreds of millions, thereby causing the untold suffering, especially in the South-East Asia: hundreds of thousands losing jobs, with all the consequences. This is today's "abstract" violence at its purest: on the one extreme, the financial speculation going on in its own sphere, with no transparent links to the reality of human lives; on the other extreme, a pseudo-natural catastrophy (suddenly and unexpectedly losing jobs) which hits thousands like a tsunami, with no apparent reason at all. Today's violence is like a Hegelian speculative "infinite judgment" which posits the identity of these two extremes.

The philosophical background for this gap is provided by Malebranche

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who radicalized Descartes' dualism: if our soul and our body belong to two totally different substances with no direct contact, how are we to explain their coordination? The only solution is that a third, true Substance (God) continuously coordinates and mediates between the two, sustaining the semblance of continuity. When I think about raising my hand and my hand effectively raises, my thought causes the raising of my hand not directly but only "occasionally" – upon noticing my thought directed at raising my hand, God sets in motion the other, material, causal chain which leads to my hand effectively being raised. One can see, again, how the prospect of radical virtualization bestows on the computer the position which is strictly homologous to that of God in the Malebrancheian occasionalism: since the computer coordinates the relationship between my mind and (what I experience as) the movement of my limbs (in the virtual reality), one can easily imagine a computer which runs amok and starts to act like Descartes' *malin génie*, disturbing the coordination between my mind and my bodily self-experience – when the signal of my mind to raise my hand is suspended or even counteracted in (the virtual) reality, the most fundamental experience of the body as "mine" is undermined... And is it not similar with Soros sitting in his New York office, pressing the buttons on his computer and unaware of the social consequences of his speculations? – The psychological consequences of this rise of the new forms of "abstract" violence are the topic of Catherine Malabou's *Les nouveaux blessés (The New Wounded)*.[1]

If the Freudian name for the "unknown knowns" is the Unconscious[2], the Freudian name for the "unknown unknowns" is *trauma*, the violent intrusion of something radically unexpected, something the subject was absolutely not ready for, something the subject cannot integrate in any way. Malabou proposed a critical reformulation of psychoanalysis along these lines; her starting point is the delicate echoing between internal and external Real in psychoanalysis: for Freud and Lacan, external shocks, brutal unexpected encounters or intrusions, due their properly traumatic impact to the way they touch a pre-existing traumatic "psychic reality". Malabou rereads along these lines Lacan's reading of the Freudian dream of "Father, can't you see I'm burning?" The contingent external encounter of the real (the candle collapses and inflames the cloth covering the dead child, and the smell of the smoke disturbs the father on a night-watch) triggers the true Real, the un-

[1] Catherine Malabou, *Les nouveaux blesses*, Paris: Bayard 2007. Numbers in brackets refer to pages of this book.

[2] "Analysis came to announce to us that there is knowledge that is not known, knowledge that is based on the signifier as such". (Jacques Lacan, *Encore*, New York: Norton 1998, p. 96)

bearable fantasy-apparition of the dead child reproaching his father. In this way, for Freud (and Lacan), every external trauma is "sublated," internalized, owing its impact to the way a pre-existing Real of the "psychic reality" is aroused through it. Even the most violent intrusions of the external real – say, the shocking effect on the victims of bomb-explosions in war – owe their traumatic effect to the resonance they find in perverse masochism, in death-drive, in unconscious guilt-feeling, etc. Today, however, our socio-political reality itself imposes multiple versions of external intrusions, traumas, which are just that, meaningless brutal interruptions that destroy the symbolic texture of subject's identity. First, there is the brutal external physical violence: terror attacks like 98/11, the US "shock and awe" bombing of Iraq, street violence, rapes, etc., but also natural catastrophies, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.; then, there is the "irrational" (meaningless) destruction of the material base of our inner reality (brain-tumors, Alzheimer's disease, organic cerebral lesions, etc., which can utterly change, destroy even, the victim's personality; finally, there are the destructive effects of socio-symbolic violence (social exclusion, etc.). (Note how this triad echoes the triad of commons: the commons of external nature, of inner nature, of symbolic substance.) Most of these forms of violence are, of course, known for centuries, some even from the very prehistory of humanity. What is new today is that, since we live in a "disenchanted" post-religious era, they are much more directly experienced as meaningless intrusions of the real, and, for this very reason, although utterly different in nature, they appear as belonging to the same series and produce the same effect. (Recall the historical fact that rape was categorized as trauma only in XXth century...)

There is yet another distinction one should bear in mind here. While for us, in the developed West, trauma is as a rule experienced as a momentary intrusion which violently disturbs our normal daily life (a terrorist attack, being mugged or raped, suffering an earthquake or tornado...), what about those for whom trauma is a permanent state of things, a way of life, say, those in a war torn country like Sudan or Kongo? Those who have nowhere to retreat from their traumatic experience, so that they cannot even claim that, long after the trauma hit, they were haunted by its specter: what remains is not the trauma's specter, but the trauma itself?

Malabou's basic reproach to Freud is that, when confronted with such cases, he succumbs to the temptation of meaning: he is not ready to accept the direct destructive efficiency of external shocks – they destroy the psyche of the victim (or, at least, wound it in an unredeemable way) without resonating in any inner traumatic truth. It would be obviously obscene to link, say, the psychic devastation of a "Muslim" in a Nazi camp to his maso-

chism, death-drive, or guilt feeling: a Muslim (or a victim of multiple rape, of brutal torture...) is not devastated by unconscious anxieties, but directly by a "meaningless" external shock which can in no way be hermeneutically appropriated/integrated: for the wounded brain,

> there is no possibility to be present at its own fragmentation or at its own wound. In contrast to castration, there is no representation, no phenomenon, no example of separation, which would allow the subject to anticipate, to wait for, to fantasize what can be a break in cerebral connections. One cannot even dream about it. There is no scene for this Thing which is not one. The brain in no way anticipates the possibility of its own damages. When these damages occur, it is another self which is affected, a "new" self founded in misrecognition. (235)

For Freud, if external violence gets too strong, we simply exit the psychic domain proper: the choice is "either the shock is re-integrated into a pre-existing libidinal frame, or it destroys psyche and nothing is left". What he cannot envisage is that the victim as if were survives its own death: all different forms of traumatic encounters, independently of their specific nature (social, natural, biological, symbolic...), lead to the same result – a new subject emerges which survives its own death, the death (erasure) of its symbolic identity. There is no continuity between this new "post-traumatic" subject (the victim of Alzheimer's or other cerebral lesions, etc.) and its old identity: after the shock, literally a new subject emerges. Its features are well-known from numerous descriptions: lack of emotional engagement, profound indifference and detachment – it is a subject who is no longer "in-the-world" in the Heideggerian sense of engaged embodied existence. This subject lives death as a form of life – his life is death-drive embodied, a life deprived of erotic engagement; and this holds for henchmen no less than for his victims. If the XXth century was the Freudian century, the century of libido, so that even the worst nightmares were read as (sado-masochist) vicissitudes of the libido, will the XXIst century be the century of such post-traumatic disengaged subjects whose first emblematic figure, that of the Muslim in concentration camps, is not multiplying in the guise of refugees, terror victims, survivors of natural catastrophies, of family violence ...? The feature that runs through all these figures is that the cause of the catastrophy remains libidinally meaningless, resisting any interpretation:

> The victims of socio-political traumas present today the same profile as the victims of natural catastrophies (tsunamis, earthquakes, floods)

> or grave accidents (serious domestic accidents, explosions, fires). We entered a new era of political violence where politics draws its resources from the renunciation to the political sense of violence. [...] All traumatising events tend to neutralize their intention and to assume the lack of motivation proper to chance incidents, the feature of that which cannot be interpreted. Today, the enemy is hermeneutics. [...] This erasure of sense is not only discernible in countries at war, it is present everywhere, as the new face of the social which bears witness to un unheard-of psychic pathology, identical in all cases and in all contexts, globalized. (258-9)

Insofar as the violence of the traumatising events consists in the way they cut the subject from its reserves of memory, "the speech of these patients does not have any revelatory meaning, their illness does not constitute a kind of truth with regard to the subject's ancient history". (345) In this lack of sense, social conflicts are deprived of the dialectics of political struggle proper and become as anonymous as natural catastrophies"(267). We are thus dealing with a heterogeneous mixture of nature and politics, in which "politics cancels itself as such and takes the appearance of nature, and nature disappears in order to assume the mask of politics. This *global heterogeneous mixture of nature and politics is characterized by the global uniformization of neuropsychological reactions*". (260) Global capitalism thus generates a new form of illness which is itself global, indifferent to the most elementary distinctions like the one between nature and culture.

In the case of such an intrusion of the raw real, "*all hermeneutics is impossible*"(29): the trauma remains external to the field of sense, it cannot be integrated into it as a mere deterrent which triggers the resuscitation of a latent psychic trauma. This is what Freud cannot (or, rather, refuses to) think: for him, external traumas like brain lesions are "psychically mute"(33), they can only have a psychic impact when a sexual trauma resonates in them. In other words, the enemy that psyche is fighting in encountering a trauma is ultimately always an "internal enemy": Freud refuses to think the psychic impact of a violent intrusion which remains external to sense, which precludes "the possibility to be fantasized"(35), i.e., he refuses to envisage the psychic consequences of traumatic intrusions which cannot be integrated into a psychic staging – indifference, loss of affects. It is crucial that, in such cases, the limits that separate history from nature, "sociopathy" from "neurobiology," are blurred: the concentration camp terror and an organic brain lesion can produce the same form of autism.

Such detached psyches are "beyond love and hate: one shall call them

neither sadist nor masochist". (323) However, against Malabou, the difference between pleasure and *jouissance* should be fully asserted here: while it is clear that the dialectical reversals of pleasure fail to capture the traumatic cases evoked by Malabou, the intrusion of a numbing *jouissance* is definitely relevant here. In many of the cases reported by Oliver Sacks in his *Musicophilia*, the patient haunted by compulsive music feels a great release when he learns that his hallucinations are caused by an organic brain lesion or other malfunctioning, not by psychological madness – in this way, the patient no longer has to feel subjectively responsible for hallucinations, they are just a meaningless objective fact. Is there, however, not also a possible escape from some traumatic truth at work in this release? Sacks reports on the case of David Mamlok, and old Jewish immigrant from Germany who was haunted by musical hallucinations:

> When I asked Mr. Mamlok what his internal music was like, he exclaimed, angrily, that it was "tonal" and "corny." I found this choice of adjectives intriguing and asked him why he used them. His wife, he explained, was a composer of atonal music, and his own tastes were for Schoenberg and other atonal masters, though he was fond of classical and, especially, chamber music, too. But the music he hallucinated was nothing like this. It started, he said, with a German Christmas song (he immediately hummed this) and then other Christmas songs and lullabies; these were followed by marches, especially the Nazi marching songs he had heard growing up in Hamburg in the 1930s. These songs were particularly distressing to him, for he was Jewish and had lived in terror of the Hitlerjugend, the belligerent gangs who had roamed the streets looking for Jews.[3]

Did the organic stimulus here not re-awaken old traumas of obscene religious-political *kitsch*? Although Sacks is aware of how organically-caused disturbances like musical hallucinations get invested with meaning (why *these* songs and not others?), it is nonetheless all too often that the direct reference to organic causes tends to obliterate the repressed traumatic dimension.

Furthermore, even with actual terrorist attacks, one should not too quickly discount their fantasmatic reverberations as the cause of their traumatic impact. When we hear how the 9/11 bombings were a totally unexpected shock, how the unimaginable Impossible happened, one should recall the other defining catastrophe from the beginning of the XXth century,

[3] Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2007, p. 56-57.

that of Titanic: it was also a shock, but the space for it was already prepared in ideological fantasizing, since Titanic was the symbol of the might of the XIXth century industrial civilization. Does the same not hold also for these bombings? Not only were the media bombarding us all the time with the talk about the terrorist threat; this threat was also obviously libidinally invested – just recall the series of movies from *Escape From New York* to *Independence Day*. Therein resides the rationale of the often-mentioned association of the attacks with the Hollywood disaster movies: the unthinkable which happened was the object of fantasy, so that, in a way, America got what it fantasized about, and this was the greatest surprise.

One should therefore turn around the standard reading according to which, the WTC explosions were the intrusion of the Real which shattered our illusory Sphere: quite on the contrary, it is prior to the WTC collapse than we lived in our reality, perceiving the Third World horrors as something which is not effectively part of our social reality, as something which exists (for us) as a spectral apparition on the (TV) screen – and what happened on September 11 is that this screen fantasmatic apparition entered our reality. It is not that reality entered our image: the image entered and shattered our reality (i.e., the symbolic coordinates which determine what we experience as reality).

This fact that the September 11 attacks were the stuff of popular fantasies long before they effectively took place provides yet another case of the twisted logic of dreams: it is easy to account for the fact that poor people around the world dream about becoming Americans – so what do the well-to-do Americans, immobilized in their welfare, dream about? About a global catastrophy that would shatter their lives – why? This is what psychoanalysis is about: to explain why, in the midst of welfare, we are haunted by the nightmarish visions of catastrophies.

In the new form of subjectivity (autistic, indifferent, without affective engagement), the old personality is not "sublated" or replaced by a compensatory formation, but thoroughly destroyed – destruction itself acquires a form, becomes a (relatively stable) "form of life" – what we get is not simply the absence of form, but the form of (the) absence (of the erasure of the previous personality, which is not replaced by a new one). More precisely, the new form is not a form of life, but, rather, a form of death – not an expression of the Freudian death drive, but, more directly, the *death of drive*.

As Deleuze pointed out in his *Difference and Repetition*, death is always double: the Freudian death drive means that the subject wants to die, but to die in its own way, according to its own inner path, not as the result of an external accident. There is always a gap between the two, between death

drive as "transcendental" tendency and the contingent accident which mills me. Suicide is a desperate (and ultimately failed) attempt to brings the two dimensions together. There is a nice scene in a Hollywood horror movie of a desperate young woman who, alone in her bedroom, tries to kill herself; at that very point, the horrible creature attacking the city breaks into the room and attacks her – and the woman starts to protect herself desperately, since although she wanted her death, this was not the death she wanted …

Insofar as the "newly wounded" are radically cut from their past, i.e., insofar as their wound suspends all hermeneutics, insofar as there is ultimately nothing to interpret here, such a "deserted, emotionally disaffected, indifferent psyche also is not (any longer) able to transfer. We live in the epoch of the end of transference. The love for the psychoanalyst or the therapist means nothing to a psyche which can neither love nor hate". (346) In other words, these patients seek neither to know nor not to know – when in treatment, they do not establish their psychiatrist into the role of the subject supposed to know. What, then, should the therapist do in such conditions? Malabou endorses Daniel Wildloecher's position s/he should "become the subject of the other's suffering and of its expression, especially when this other is unable to feel nothing whatsoever" – or, as Malabou herself puts it, the therapist should "assemble [*recueillir*] for the other his/her pain".(346) These formulas are full of ambiguities: if there is no transference whatsoever, the question is then not only how does this collecting/assembling affect the patient him/herself (does it do any good whatsoever to him?), but, even more radically, how can we be sure at all that is really the patient's suffering we are assembling? What if it is the therapist who imagines how the patient must suffer, because he as it were automatically has to imagine how the patient's deprivations must affect someone who still has, say, full memory and thus imagines what it would be to be deprived of it? What if the therapist thus misreads blessed ignorance as unbearable suffering?

One can add another gruesome traumatic experience to the series enumerated by Malabou. In "Le prix du progres", one of the fragments that conclude The Dialectic of Enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer quote the argumentation of the 19th century French physiologist Pierre Flourens against medical anaesthesia with chloroform: Flourens claims that it can be proven that the anaesthetic works only on our memory's neuronal network. In short, while we are butchered alive on the operating table, we fully feel the terrible pain, but later, after awakening, we do not remember it. Is it not possible to read this scene as the perfect staging of the inaccessible Other Site of the fundamental fantasy that can never be fully subjectivized, assumed by the subject? These premonitions are now confirmed: "anesthesia aware-

ness" – patients being mentally alert (and terrified) while supposedly under full general anesthesia – continues to be reported between 100–200 times daily in the United States alone. The patient is paralyzed, unable to speak, and totally helpless to communicate his/her awareness; actual cutting pain may or may not be present, but the patient is fully aware of what is going on, hearing, feeling as if he cannot breathe – and unable to communicate any distress because he has been given a paralytic/muscle relaxant. The most traumatic case occurs when patients who experienced full awareness explicitly recall it afterwards: the result is an enormous trauma generating posttraumatic stress disorder, leading to long-lasting after-effects such as nightmares, night terrors, flashbacks, insomnia, and in some cases even suicide.

Is the trauma of which Malabou is talking not a trauma which is experienced as such because and insofar as it is so unsettling from within the horizon of meaning – the absence of a meaningful Self is traumatic from the horizon of its presence. In other words, what if we surmise that the cold indifferent disengaged subjects are NOT suffering at all, that, once their old persona is erased, they enter a blessed state of indifference, that they only appear to us caught in unbearable suffering? What if *les nouveaux blessés* are literally the new blessed ones? What if the logic of the already-quoted medical joke about Alzheimer's ("The bad news is that we've discovered you have severe Alzheimer's disease. The good news is the same one: you have Alzheimer's, so you will already forget the bad news when you will be back home".) applies here, so that, when the patient's old personality is destroyed, the very measure of suffering also disappears? Is then Malabou not guilty of the same mistake she reproaches psychoanalysis with: the mistake of not being able to think the straight absence of meaningful engagement, of reading disengaged indifference from within the horizon of meaningful engagement? Or, to put it in another way, does she not forget to include herself, her own desire, into the observed phenomenon (of autistic subjects)? In an ironic reversal of her claim that the autistic subject is unable to enact transference, it is her own transference she does not take into account when she portrays the autistic subject's immense suffering. This subject is primordially an enigmatic impenetrable Thing, totally ambiguous, where one cannot but oscillate between attributing to it immense suffering and blessed ignorance. What characterizes it is the lack of recognition in the double sense of the term: we do not recognize ourselves in it, there is no empathy possible, AND the autistic subject, on account of its withdrawal, does not enact recognition (it doesn't recognize US, its partner in communication).

Malabou rejects the very autonomy of psychic life, in the Freudian sense of an autonomous "psychic reality," of libido as psychic energy different from

neuronal (brain) energy: for her, the Freudian libido is based on the suspension (exclusion) of neuronal energy, more precisely, on Freud's refusal to admit the brain's ability to enact self-affection, to engage in self-regulatory self-modelling. "The psychic energy is in a way a rhetorical detour of the neuronal energy"(73): when the endogenous brain excitation cannot be released within the nerve system itself, it changes into psychic energy which can find release in rhetorical displacements – in short, "rhetorics supplants the silence of the neuronal system": "The unconscious is structured like a language only insofar as brain doesn't talk". (74) Today's brain sciences invalidated this Freudian hypothesis with their demonstration of the "emotional brain," a brain which can generate self-representations and regulate its life through affects: "Emotion is a reflexive structure by means of which the vital regulation affects itself".

One should thus oppose to the Freudian sexual unconscious the "cerebral unconscious," the self-representative activity of the brain which incessantly construct the cartography of its own states and thereby affects itself. Malabou strictly opposes this cerebral self-affection to the self-affection which is the self-awareness of the (conscious) subject, and which was "deconstructed" by Derrida in his detailed analysis of the paradoxes and deadlocks of "hearing-oneself-talking". Nobody can be aware of or talk about the working of his/her own brain, there is no subjectivization possible of the neuronal process of self-affection: "The cerebral self-affection is the unconscious of subjectivity". (85) there is only one way in which the subjective experience of the auto-affection of one's own brain can occur: in the guise of the suffering caused by the damage of the brain.

When the libidinal unconscious undergoes a traumatic encounter, it reacts by "regression," withdrawing from the higher-level engagement and interaction to a more primitive mode of functioning. When the cerebral process of self-affection is disturbed, there is no space or more fundamental level the subject can return to: its substance is erased, the Self which survives this destruction is literally a new Self, its identity is an "identity by default," a disengaged impassive subject deprived even of the capacity to dream.

Malabou's thesis is here very precise and radical: her point is not only to add to the Freudian libidinal unconscious another, cerebral, unconscious. The problem is that the Freudian unconscious only makes sense when (if) we refuse to admit – we erase the possibility of – the cerebral unconscious. What this means is that the "cerebral unconscious" is not just the mechanism which explains the processes which cannot be accounted for in the terms of the libidinal unconscious: once we admit the cerebral unconscious, the libidinal unconscious loses its ground. It is only this cerebral unconscious, ir-

reducible to the Lacanian triad of the Imaginary-Symbolic-Real, which is the truly *material* unconscious (235): the cerebral unconscious is not imaginary, its self-modelling is not the narcissistic self-mirroring; it is not symbolic, its traces do not re-present subject within a structure of meaning; and it is not real in the Lacanian sense of the Thing as the ultimate-incestuous libidinal object of the "psychic reality," since it is radically external to libido, to sexuality.

Nothing distinguishes the Freudian unconscious and the cerebral unconscious more clearly than the way they relate to death: as Freud emphasized repeatedly, the libidinal unconscious is "undead," it doesn't know (cannot represent) its own death, it acts as if it is immortal, indestructible, our brain never acts as if it is immortal: the cerebral unconscious is destructible and "knows" itself (models itself) as such.

The second distinction concerns sexuality, Eros as the counter-pole to Thanatos. If the cerebral unconscious is mortal, the Freudian unconscious is sexual, where, as Malabou put it in very precise terms, the Freudian "sexuality" does not designate merely a constrained content (sexual practices), but this very formal structure of the relationship between Outside and Inside, between the external incident/accident and its *Aufhebung*/integration into an internal libidinal process it triggers – "sexuality" is the name for this passage from contingency to necessity, from *Ereignis* to *Erlebnis*: it is through the integration into a pre-existing frame of "psychic reality" that the external accident is "sexualized". The mediator between the two is *fantasy*: in order to "arouse" me, the external accident, the pure shock, has to touch my fantasy, my pre-existing fantasmatic frame had to resonate in it. Fantasy enacts the "stitch (*soudure/Verloetung*)" between the outside and the inside. The activity of unconscious fantasizing is "primordially repressed," the radical (non-subjectivizable) unconscious, yet as such strictly psychic, irreducible and autonomous with regard to the brain activity: it is the outside of the psychic inside itself, its level of ex-timacy.

Malabou formulates the problem in the terms of the difficulty to truly reach beyond the pleasure principle: what Freud calls "beyond the pleasure principle," the death drive, is really a round-about assertion of the pleasure principle, not its true beyond. What it, however, we turn the problem around: the difficulty lies not in the beyond, but in the (pleasure) principle itself. In human subjectivity, there is no "pure" pleasure principle, its functioning is knotted, self-sabotaged. A recent cognitivist textbook tells us: "If someone were to claim that, *on behalf of his desire* for an object, he moved away from this object, then we would surmise that he is either a madman or he does not

know the meaning of the term 'desire'".[4] Is, however, such an avoiding of the object on behalf of our very desire for it not the very paradox of courtly love? Is it not a feature of desire as such, at its most fundamental? So, perhaps, we, psychoanalysts, are a species of madmen. That is to say, is such an avoiding of the object on behalf of our very desire for it – such a persisting FORT in the very heart of DA – not the very paradox of desire as such, at its most fundamental? Recall the eternal deferral of finally meeting "the distant beloved [*die ferne Geliebte*]"? In the same cognitivist vein, Douglas Lenat tries to construct a computer which would possess the human common sense, filling its memory with millions of "obvious" rules like: *Nothing can be in two places at the same time. When humans die, they are not born again. Dying is undesirable. Animals do not like pain. Time advances at the same rate for everyone. When it rains, people get wet. Sweet things taste good.*[5] Are, however, these rules really so obvious? What about the same thought shared by two people? What about people who believe in reincarnation? What about desperate people who long to die? What about masochists who like pain? What about our thrilling experiences when time seems to ran faster than usual? What about people with umbrellas who do not get wet? What about those among us who prefer dark "bitter" to sweet chocolates.

Einstein's theory of relativity offers here unexpected parallels with the Lacanian theory. The starting point of the theory of relativity is the strange fact that, for every observer, no matter in what direction and how fast he moves, light moves at the same speed; in an analogous way, for Lacan, no matter if the desiring subject approaches or runs from his object of desire, this object seems to remain at the same distance from him. Who doesn't remember the nightmarish situation from dreams: the more I run away, the more I remain at the same place? This paradox can be neatly solved by the difference between the object and the cause of desire: no matter how close I get to the object of desire, its cause remains at a distance, elusive. Furthermore, the general theory of relativity solves the antinomy between the relativity of every movement with regard to observer and the absolute velocity of light, which moves at a constant speed independently of the point of observation, with the notion of curved space. In a homologous way, the Freudian solution to the antinomy between the subject's approaching or running away from his objects of desire and the "constant speed" (and distance from him) of the object-cause of desire resides in the *curved space of desire*:

[4] Michael Pauen, *Grundprobleme der Philosophie des Geistes*, Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag 2001, p. 203.

[5] Quoted from Michio Kaku, *Visions*, New York: Anchor Books 1997, p. 64.

sometimes the shortest way to realize a desire is to by-pass its object-goal, to circulate around it, to postpone its encounter. What Lacan calls *objet petit a* is the agent of this curving: the unfathomable X on account of which, when we confront the object of our desire, more satisfaction is provided by dancing around it than by directly going at it.

And is what happens in the case of a post-traumatic subject not the *destruction* of the *objet a*? This is why such a subject is deprived of engaged existence and reduced to indifferent vegetating. What we should nonetheless bear in mind is that this destruction of *objet a* results also in the loss of reality itself which is sustained by *objet a* – when the subject is deprived of the excess, it loses in the same move that with regard to which the excess is an excess. This is why the Muslims, the "living dead" of the concentration camps, were simultaneously reduced to "bare life" AND stood for the pure excess (empty form) which remains when all the content of human life is taken away from the subject.

No wonder, then, that, in her confrontation with Lacan – when she argues that, contrary to all appearances, both Freud and Lacan cannot really think the dimension "beyond the pleasure principle," since every destructive trauma is re-eroticized –, Malabou totally ignores Lacan's key distinction between pleasure (*Lust, plaisir*) and enjoyment (*Geniessen, jouissance*): what is "beyond the pleasure principle" is enjoyment itself, it is drive as such. The basic paradox of *jouissance* is that it is both impossible AND unavoidable: it is never fully achieved, always missed, but, simultaneously, we never can get rid of it – every renunciation of enjoyment generates an enjoyment in renunciation, every obstacle to desire generates a desire for obstacle, etc. This reversal provides the minimal definition of the surplus-enjoyment: it involves the paradoxical "pleasure in pain". That is to say, when Lacan uses the term *plus-de-jouir*, one has to ask a naive, but crucial question: in what does this surplus consist? Is it merely a qualitative increase of ordinary pleasure? The ambiguity of the French expression is decisive here: it can mean "surplus of enjoyment" as well as "no enjoyment" – the surplus of enjoyment over mere pleasure is generated by the presence of the very opposite of pleasure, i.e. pain. Surplus-enjoyment is thus precisely that part of *jouissance* which resists being contained by the homeostasis, by the pleasure principle. (And since Malabou refers – among others – to "Muslims" from the Nazi camps as a pure figure of death drive beyond the pleasure principle, one is almost tempted to claim that it is precisely "Muslims" who, due to their libidinal disengagement, effectively act upon the pleasure principle: their minimal gestures are fully instrumentalized, they strive to eat when hungry, etc.)

Here Malabou seems to pay the price for here all too naïve reading of

Freud, taking Freud too (not literally, but) "hermeneutically," not distinguishing between the true core of Freud's discovery and the different ways he himself misunderstood the scope of his own discovery. Malabou accepts his dualism of drives as it is formulated, ignoring those precise readings (from Lacan to Laplanche) which convincingly demonstrated that this dualism a false way out, a theoretical regression. So, ironically, when Malabou opposes Freud and Jung, emphasizing Freud's dualism of drives against Jung's monism of (desexualized) libido, she missed the crucial paradox: it is at this very point, when he resorts to the dualism of drives, that Freud is *at his most Jungian*, regressing to a pre-modern mythic agonism of opposite primordial cosmic forces. How, then, are we to grasp properly what eluded Freud and pushed him to take recourse in this dualism? When Malabou varies the motif that, for Freud, Eros always relates to and encompasses its opposite Other, the destructive death drive, she – following Freud's misleading formulations – conceives this opposition as the conflict of two opposed forces, not, in a more proper sense, as the inherent self-blockade of the drive: "death drive" is not an opposite force with regard to libido, but a constitutive gap which makes drive distinct from instinct (significantly, Malabou prefers translating *Trieb* as "instinct"), always derailed, caught in a loop of repetition, marked by an impossible excess. Deleuze, on whom Malabou otherwise constantly relies, made this point clear in his *Difference and repetition*: Eros and Thanatos are not two opposite drives that compete and combine their forces (as in eroticized masochism); there is only one drive, libido, striving for enjoyment, and "death drive" is the curved space of its formal structure – it

> plays the role of a transcendental principle, while the pleasure principle is only psychological. This is why it is above all silent (not given in experience), while the pleasure principle is flourishing. The first question is thus: how can the motif of death which appears to assemble the most negative aspects of the psychic life be in itself what is most positive, transcendentally positive, to the point to affirm repetition? [...] Eros and Thanatos differ in that Eros has to be repeated, can be experienced only in repetition, while Thanatos (as the transcendental principle) is that what gives repetition to Eros, what submits Eros to repetition.

How, then, do we pass from animal sexuality (instinctual coupling) to properly human sexuality? By submitting animal sexuality (its "life instinct") to death drive. Death drive is the transcendental form which makes sexuality proper out of animal instincts. In this sense, the disengaged indif-

ferent de-libidinalized subject effectively is the pure subject of death drive: in it, only the empty frame of death drive as the formal-transcendental condition of libidinal investments survives, deprived of all its content. It is weird that Malabou, who otherwise quotes Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* in her book, ignores these passages which directly bear on her topic, providing an elegant solution to her question of why Freud was unable to find positive representations of death drive.

Overdoing it a bit, perhaps, one is tempted to say that this subject deprived of its libidinal substance is the "libidinal proletariat". When Malabou develops her key notion of "destructive plasticity," of the subject who continues to live after its psychic death (the erasure of the narrative texture of its symbolic identity that sustain its libidinal investments and engagements), she touches the key point: the reflexive reversal of the destruction of form into the form acquired by destruction itself. In other words, when we are dealing with a victim of Alzheimer's, it is not merely that his awareness is severely constrained, that the scope of his Self is diminished – we are literally no longer dealing with the same Self. After the trauma, ANOTHER subject emerges, we are talking to a stranger.

This may appear to be the very opposite of what goes on in a Hegelian dialectical process, in which we are dealing with a continuous metamorphosis of the *same* substance-subject which develops in complexity, mediates and "sublates" its content into a higher level: is the whole point of the dialectical process not that, precisely, we never go through a zero-point, that the past content is never radically erased, that there is no radically new beginning? However, in a properly Hegelian-Freudian-Lacanian way, one should draw a radical conclusion: *subject is AS SUCH the survivor of its own death*, a shell which remains after it is deprived of its substance – this is why Lacan's matheme for subject is $ – the barred subject. It is not that Lacan CAN think the rise of a new subject surviving its death/disintegration – for Lacan, subject as such is a "second subject," formal survivor (the surviving form) of the loss of its substance, of the noumenal X called by Kant the "I or he or it (the thing) that thinks".

When Malabou insists that the subject who emerges after a traumatic wound is not a transformation of the old one, but literally a new one, she is well aware that the identity of this new subject does not arise out of a *tabula rasa*: many traces of the old subject's life-narrative survive, but they are totally restructured, torn out of their previous horizon of meaning and inscribed into a new context. The new subject "profoundly modifies the vision and the content of the past itself. On account of its pathological force of deformation and of its destructive plasticity, such a [traumatic] event effectively

introduces into psychic life *inauthenticity*, *facticity*. It creates *another history*, a *past which doesn't exist*". (252) But does this not hold already for radical historical breaks? Are we not dealing all the time with what Eric Hobsbawn called "invented traditions"? Does not every truly new epoch rewrite its past, rearticulating it into a new context?

Malabou is at her theoretical best when she formulates a fine critical point about those brain scientists, from Luria to Sacks, who insist on the necessity to supplement the naturalist description of the brain lesions, etc., with the subjective description of how this biological wound not only affects the subject's particular features (loss of memory, the inability to recognize faces...), but changes their entire psychic structure, the very fundamental way they perceive themselves and their world. (The first great classic is here Alexander Luria's unsurpassable *The Mind of a Mnemonist*, the description of the inner universe of a man who was condemned to absolute memory, unable to forget things.) These authors remain all too "humanist": they focus on the victim's attempts to cope with his/her wound, to build a supplementary life-form that somehow enables him to reintegrate himself/herself into social interaction (in Sacks's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat*, the cure is the man's undisturbed musical sense: although he cannot recognize the face of his wife or his other companions and friends, he can identify them through their sounds.) Luria, Sacks, etc., thereby avoid fully confronting the true traumatic heart of the matter: not the subject's desperate effort to recompense his loss, but the subject of this loss itself, the subject which is the positive FORM this loss assumes (the disengaged impassive subject). They directly make their job easy by directly passing from the brain devastation to the subject's efforts to cope with this loss, by-passing the truly uneasy point: the subjective form of this devastation itself.

For Malabou, even Lacan succumbs to this temptation of "stitching" in his notion of the Thing (*das Ding*) as the ultimate libidinal object, the all-erasing abyss of incestuous *jouissance* which equals death. At this ultimate, asymptotic, point of the coincidence of opposites, *Ereignis* and *Erlebnis*, the Outside and the Inside, fully overlap. As Malabou puts it in very precise terms, the Thing is Lacan's name for the horizon of ultimate destruction which is impossible-real, an always deferred anticipation, a threat of an unimaginable X always to-come and never here. The destruction of every horizon remains a horizon of this destruction, the lack of encounter remains the encounter of lack. The Thing is real, but real transposed into "psychic reality," it is the way the subject experiences/represents the very impossibility to experience/represent.

Lacan's name for the transcendental Inside which finds resonance in

external traumatic intrusion is "separation": prior to any empirical traumatic loss is the "transcendental" separation constitutive of the very dimension of subjectivity, in its multiple guises, from birth-trauma to symbolic castration. Its general form is that of the separation from the partial object which survives as the spectre of the undead *lamella*.

Here, perhaps, Lacan introduces a logic which is not taken into account by Malabou: castration is not only a threat-horizon, a not-yet/always-to-come, but, simultaneously, something which always-already happens: the subject is not only under a threat of separation, it IS the effect of separation (from substance). Furthermore, insofar as a traumatic encounter generates anxiety, we should bear in mind that, for Lacan, in anxiety, what the subject is exposed to is precisely the loss of the loss itself – Lacan here turns around Freud: anxiety is not the anxiety of separation from the object, but the anxiety of the objet(-cause of desire) getting too close to the subject. This is why trauma belongs to the domain of the uncanny in the fundamental ambiguity of this term: what makes uncanny uncanny is its homeliness itself, that fact that it is the rise-into-visibility of something too close to us.

So when Malabou – with a critical edge towards Lacan – defines the intrusion of the traumatic real as separation from separation itself, does she not thereby repeat Lacan's notion of psychotic breakdown as the loss of the loss itself: what is lacking in psychosis is ultimately lack itself, the gap of "symbolic castration" that separates me from my symbolic identity, from the virtual dimension of the big Other. Consequently, when Malabou insists that, in the true trauma of the real, it is not just that the subject lacks its objective supplement, but it is the subject itself which lacks (is missing, disintegrates), does she not echo Lacan's notion of the subject's disintegration caused by the psychotic over-proximity of the object?

What Freud cannot think is the "destructive plasticity," i.e., the subjective form assumed by the very destruction of the self, the direct form of death drive: "It is as if there is no intermediary between the plasticity of the good form and elasticity as the mortifying erasure of all form. *In Freud, there is no form of the negation of form*". (273) In other words, Freud fails to consider

> the existence of a specific form of psyche produced by the presence of death, of pain, of the repetition of a painful experience. He should have rendered justice to existential power of improvisation proper to an accident, to the psyches deserted by pleasure, in which indifference and detachment win over links, and which nonetheless remain psyches. What Freud is looking for when he talks about the death drive is precisely the form of this drive, the form he doesn't find insofar as he denies to

> destruction its own specific plasticity. [...] The beyond of the pleasure principle is thus the work of the death drive as the giving-form to death in life, as the production of those individual figures which exist only in the detachment of existence. These forms of death in life, fixations of the image of drive, would be the "satisfying" representatives of the death drive Freud was for such a long time looking for far way from neurology. (322, 324)

These figures are "not so much figures of those who want to die as figures of those who *are already dead*, or, rather, to put it in a strange and terrible grammatical twist, who *have already been dead*, who 'experienced' death". (326) – The strange fact is that, although it is impossible to miss the Hegelian resonances of this notion of "negative plasticity," of the form in which destructivity/negativity itself acquires positive existence, Malabou – the author of a path-breaking book on Hegel – not only totally ignores Hegel in *Les nouveaux blessés*, but even gives here and there hints that this negative plasticity is "non-dialectizable" and as such beyond the scope of the Hegelian dialectics. Malabou sees here not only a task for psychoanalysis, but also a properly *philosophical* task to reconceptualize the notion of subject so that it will include this zero-level of the subject of death drive:

> the only philosophical issue is today the elaboration of a new materialism which precisely refuses to envisage any, even the smallest, separation not only between brain and thought, but also between brain and the unconscious. (342)

Malabou is right to emphasize the philosophical dimension of the new autistic subject: in it, we are dealing with the zero-level of subjectivity, with the formal conversion of the pure externality of meaningless real (its brutal destructive intrusion) into the pure internality of the "autistic" subject detached from external reality, disengaged, reduced to the persisting core deprived of its substance. The logic is here again that of the Hegelian infinite judgment: the speculative identity of meaningless external intrusion and of the pure detached internality – it is as if only a brutal external shock can give rise to pure interiority of subject, of the void that cannot be identified with any determinate positive content.

The properly philosophical dimension of the study of post-traumatic subject resides in this recognition that what appears as the brutal destruction of the subject's very (narrative) substantial identity is the moment of its birth. The post-traumatic autistic subject is the "living proof" that subject cannot

be identified (does not fully overlap) with "stories it is telling itself about itself," with the narrative symbolic texture of its life: when we take all this away, something (or, rather, NOTHING, but a FORM of nothing) remains, and this something is the pure subject of death drive. If one wants to get an idea of the elementary, zero-level, form of subjectivity, one has to take a look at autistic monsters. The Lacanian subject as $ is thus a response TO/OF the real: a response *to* the real of the brutal meaningless intrusion – a response *of* the real, i.e., a response which emerges when the symbolic integration of the traumatic intrusion fails, reaches its point of impossibility. As such, the subject at its most elementary effectively is "beyond unconscious": the empty form deprived even of unconscious formations encapsulating a variety of libidinal investments.

We should thus nonetheless apply even to the post-traumatic subject the Freudian notion that a violent intrusion of the real counts as trauma only insofar as a previous trauma resonates in it – in this case, the previous trauma is that of the birth of subjectivity itself: a subject is "barred," as Lacan put it, it emerges when a living individual is deprived of its substantial content, and this constitutive trauma is repeated in the present traumatic experience. This is what Lacan aims at with his claim that the Freudian subject is none other than the Cartesian *cogito*: the *cogito* is not an "abstraction" from the reality of living actual individuals with the wealth of their properties, emotions, abilities, relations; it is, on the contrary, this "wealth of personality" which functions as the imaginary "stuff of the I," as Lacan put it.

So when Malabou claims that the post-traumatic subject cannot be accounted for in the Freudian terms of the repetition of a past trauma (since the traumatic shock erases all the traces of the past), she remains all too fixed on the traumatic content and forgets to include into the series of past traumatic memories the very erasure of the substantial content, the very subtraction of the empty form from its content. In other words, precisely insofar as it erases the entire substantial content, the traumatic shock REPEATS the past, i.e., the past traumatic loss of substance which is constitutive of the very dimension of subjectivity. What is repeated here is not some ancient content, but the very gesture of erasing all substantial content. This is why, when one submits a human subject to a traumatic intrusion, the outcome is the empty form of the "living-dead" subject, but when one does the same to an animal, the result is simply total devastation: what remains after the violent traumatic intrusion onto a human subject which erases all its substantial content is the pure form of subjectivity, the form which already must have been there.

To put it in yet another way, the subject is the ultimate case of what Freud described as the experience of "feminine castration" which grounds

fetishism: the experience of encountering nothing where we expected to see something (penis). If the fundamental philosophical question is "why is there something rather than nothing?", the question raised by the subject is "why is there nothing where there should be something?". The latest form of this surprise occurs in brain sciences: when one looks for the "material substance" of consciousness, one finds that "there is nobody home" there – just the inert presence of a piece of meat called "brain"... So where is the subject here? Nowhere: it is neither the self-acquaintance of awareness, nor, of course, the raw presence of brain matter. When one looks an autistic subject (or a "Muslim") into the eye, one also has the feeling that "there is nobody home" – but, in contrast to the raw presence of a dead object like brain, one expects someone/something there because the open space for this someone is there. This is subject at its zero-level: like an empty house where "nobody is home":

> to kill in cold blood, to 'explode oneself,' as one is used to say, to organize terror, to give to terror the face of a chance event emptied of sense: is it really still possible to explain these phenomena by way of evoking the couple of sadism and masochism? Do we not see that their source is elsewhere, not in the transformations of love in hate, or of hate into indifference to hate, namely in a beyond of the pleasure principle endowed with its own plasticity which it is time to conceptualize?(315)

How does the rise of such a detached subject, a survivor of its own death, relate to the only *true* socio-political alternative today: do we endorse the ongoing naturalization of capitalism, or does today's global capitalism contain strong enough antagonisms which prevent its indefinite reproduction? There are four such antagonisms: the looming threat of *ecological* catastrophy, the inappropriateness of *private property* for the so-called "intellectual property," the socio-ethical implications of *new techno-scientific developments* (especially in bio-genetics, and, last but not least, *new forms of apartheid*, new Walls and slums. There is a qualitative difference between the last feature, the gap that separates the Excluded from the Included, and the other three, which designate the domains of what Hardt and Negri call "commons," the shared substance of our social being whose privatization is a violent act which should also be resisted with violent means, if necessary: *the commons of culture*, the immediately socialized forms of "cognitive" capital, primarily language, our means of communication and education, but also the shared infrastructure of public transport, electricity, post, etc. (if Bill Gates were to be allowed monopoly, we would have reached the absurd situation in which

a private individual would have literally owned the software texture of our basic network of communication); *the commons of external nature* threatened by pollution and exploitation (from oil to forests and natural habitat itself); *the commons of internal nature* (the biogenetic inheritance of humanity). What all these struggles share is the awareness of the destructive potentials, up to the self-annihilation of humanity itself, if the capitalist logic of enclosing these commons is allowed a free run.

It is this reference to "commons" which justifies the resuscitation of the notion of Communism: it enables us to see the progressing "enclosure" of the commons as a process of proletarization of those who are thereby excluded from their own substance, a proletarization also points towards exploitation. The task today is to renew the political economy of exploitation – say, of the anonymous "cognitive workers" by their companies. And do these three versions of proletarization not fit perfectly the three contemporary figures of the Cartesian subject? The first figure, which fits the enclosure of external nature, is, unexpectedly perhaps, Marx's notion of the *proletarian*, the exploited worker whose product is taken away from him, so that he is reduced to subjectivity without substance, to the void of pure subjective potentiality whose actualization in work process equals its de-realization.

The second figure, which fits the enclosure of the symbolic "second nature," is that of a *totally "mediatized" subject*, fully immersed into virtual reality: while he "spontaneously" thinks that he is in direct contact with reality, his relation to reality is sustained by a complex digital machinery. Recall Neo, the hero of *The Matrix*, who all of a sudden discovers that what he perceives as everyday reality is constructed and manipulated by a mega-computer – is his position not precisely that of the victim of the Cartesian *malin génie*? No wonder that the philosophy which uncannily announced the nightmare of Virtual Reality is Malebranche's occasionalism.

The third figure, which fits the enclosure of our "inner" nature, is the post-traumatic subject – a "living proof" that subject cannot be identified (does not fully overlap) with "stories it is telling itself about itself," with the narrative symbolic texture of its life: when we take all this away, something (or, rather, NOTHING, but a FORM of nothing) remains, and this something is the pure subject of death drive.

If one wants to get an idea of *cogito* at its purest, its "degree zero," one has to take a look at autistic monsters – a regard which is very painful and disturbing. This is why we resist so adamantly to the spectre of *cogito*.

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SPINOZA: DEMOCRACY AND REVELATION

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Is Spinoza's political philosophy radical? A glance at recent publications on the subject would suggest that it certainly is. In an earlier period, Spinoza was seen as a liberal, which was either praise or condemnation.[1] In the Cold War, he became an inspiration for those who called for resisting the "totalitarian onslaught" against democracy.[2] Recently, however, starting perhaps with Antonio Negri's *L'anomalia selvaggia* almost thirty years ago,[3] Spinoza has attracted the interest of radical thinkers[4] and, in the process, emerged as an unmistakably radical thinker himself. Democracy, which he now inspires, has become radical too.

I am leaving this literature and its preoccupations largely aside here. My very opening sentence indicated that.[5] I want to explore instead, by fo-

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[1] See. e.g., Lewis Samuel Feuer, *Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism* (Boston: Beacon, 1958; and Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes: Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1938), 86-87.

[2] E.g., Joseph Dunner, *Baruch Spinoza and Western Democracy: An Interpretation of His Philosophical, Religious and Political Thought* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 139-40.

[3] A broader (French) background is given in *The New Spinoza*, ed. W. Montag and T. Stolze (Minneapolis: University of Minessota Press, 1997); see Montag's "Preface."

[4] English translation of Balibar's *Spinoza et la politique* (Paris: PUF, 1985) appeared in the series "Radical Thinkers." See Etienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. P. Snowdon (London: Verso, 1998). I want to gratefully acknowledge that this text would not have been written had I not had the privilege of attending Balibar's seminar on *Political-Theological Treatise* at the University of California at Irvine in Winter term 2008.

[5] Warren Montag, "Preface," in Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, vii (I am quoting from 2008 edition), pointed out that "Balibar's title, *Spinoza and Politics* (as opposed to 'Spinoza and Political Philosophy'), refuses at the outset the separation of philosophy

cusing on the logic of his argument, how successfully Spinoza in *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (TTP)[6] solved the troubling relation between religion and public authority. In the greater part of its experienced or imaginable variations, the relation between religion and public authority or, broader, between religion and politics, causes misery, oppression and, worse still, death and destruction. This is a burning political issue today. This was a pressing political concern in Spinoza's age, and for Spinoza himself. This is, today, a theoretical issue as well, haunting public debates within and without the academia, in the form of political theology among others. This was a philosophical problem in Spinoza's time, too. I believe this was the core problem behind, or within, the stated goal of TTP. Looking into Spinoza's solution to this problem may tell us in what respects, if any, can we look to him for inspiration, support, or guidance in dealing with, bluntly speaking, religious fundamentalism today.

Spinoza's Descriptions of the Problem

Spinoza's stated goal in TTP was to show that in a free republic everyone is allowed to think what they wish and to say what they think.[7] That goal was spelled out clearly already on the title page – in Spinoza's asser-

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into the speculative and the practical, a separation that is itself a perfect expression of the dualisms of mind and body and of the universal and the particular that Spinoza so vehemently rejected: all philosophy is political, inescapably embodied, no matter how it may strain to deny this fact, in the practical forms of its historical existence."

[6] I am using Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. J. Israel, trans. M. Silverthorne and J. Israel, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and *Tractatus theologico-politicus/ Traité théologico-politique*, ed. F. Akkerman, trans. J. Lagrée and P.-F. Moreau, vol. 3 of Spinoza, *Oeuvres*, general ed. P.-F. Moreau (Paris: PUF, 1999). Akkerman's edition of the Latin text amends the reference edition by Gebhardt: *Tractatus theologico-politicus/Adnotationes ad Tractatum theologico-politicum/Tractatus politicus*, vol. 3 of Spinoza, *Opera*, ed. C. Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1925). Both Akkerman and Israel reproduce Gebhardt's pagination. I cite chap. and Akkerman/Israel's numbering of sections within chapters, followed by a colon and page in Gebhardt's ed., e.g., TTP XX,1: 239. I have occasionally consulted Shirley's translation: Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Gebhardt edition, 1925), trans. S. Shirley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989); a second ed. was published by Hackett, 2001. With some modifications, I cite English translation in Israel's ed. I consistently translate *respublica* as *republic* or *commonwealth*; I never translate *imperium* as *state* but, rather, as *government* or *rule*. *Civitas*, a rare term in TTP, is rendered as *state*.

[7] TTP XX, chap. heading: "Ostenditur in libera republica uniquique et sentire, quae velit, et quae sentiat, dicere licere."

tion that his discourses "demonstrate that freedom to philosophize may not only be allowed without danger to piety and the stability of the republic but cannot be refused without destroying the peace of the republic and piety itself" – and repeated almost verbatim in the Preface a few pages later. That repetition was introduced with a tacit reference to Tacitus's sentence about the happy times when "we can think as we please, and speak as we think,"[8] which is often cited in the *Treatise*, and followed by the explanation that "this is the core thesis" to be demonstrated in TTP. (TTP Praef.,8: 7.)

In order to demonstrate that thesis, Spinoza had to take issue with "our most powerful prejudices about religion" and with "our prejudices about the right of the sovereign [*summarum potestatum jus*]" (TTP Praef.,8: 7). Division of the treatise into two parts followed naturally. But *praejudicia* about religion on the one hand and about the supreme civil authority on the other hand were not the real problem Spinoza had to tackle. That problem emerged where those prejudices materialized, and that happened where the two spheres, religion and public authority (and false notions about either or both of them), intersected, interfered with, or intervened into, each other. We have the first intimation of this difficulty right where Spinoza announced his plan to tackle prejudices about religion and about the right of the sovereign. "For there are many men who take the outrageous liberty of trying to appropriate the greater part of this right and, under the guise of religion, to turn away from the sovereign the soul of the multitude, which is still in thrall to pagan superstition, with the aim of bringing us all back into servitude again." (TTP Praef.,8: 7.)

This is not a doctrinal statement. Rather, it is a description of a political phenomenon or a political observation. Indeed, at this very point in text, Spinoza was prompted to explain why he was "impelled to write." (TTP Praef.,8: 7.) He had observed, he told, how men who professed Christian religion were "opposing each other with extraordinary animosity." They most bitterly hated each other and fiercely persecuted those who disagreed with them. (TTP Praef.,9: 8.)

Spinoza's immediate explanation of the "reason for this deplorable situation" was quasi historical: corruption of the primitive church. When the *vulgus* – not a flattering term for the common people – began to regard serving the church as a worldly career, the worst kind of people came for-

[8] "[R]ara temporum felicitate ubi sentire quae uelis et quae sentias dicere licet." Tacitus *Historiarvm* I,i,4. Tacite, *Histoires, Livre I*, ed. and trans. P. Wuilleumier and H. le Bonniec, Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1987); English translation: Tacitus, *The Histories: A New Translation*, trans. K. Wellsley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 21.

ward to fill the sacred offices, abuse crept in, and spreading God's religion degenerated into sordid greed and ambition. (TTP Praef.,9: 8). The category Spinoza singled out for opprobrium were orators. "Churches became theaters where people went to hear ecclesiastical orators rather than to learn from teachers," he wrote. In order to win a reputation they denigrated those who disagreed with them, and to seize attention of the *vulgus* they taught controversial doctrines. They reduced piety and religion to ridiculous mysteries, believed to be accessible only to those who possess the "divine light." In fact they disseminated "speculations of the Aristotelians and Platonists," adapting Scriptures to them. (TTP Praef.,9: 8-9).

More descriptions of such deplorable phenomena followed later in the treatise. The sway of religious prejudice, which bred violence, was owed to the *vulgus* and to theologians. Spinoza saw "common people," refusing to live by the teaching of Scripture, as "advancing false notions of their own as the word of God and seeking to use the influence of religion to compel other people to agree with them." Heading into "bitter controversies," such "sacrilegious persons" were not "afraid to corrupt Scripture." Instead of "consisting of love," religion was overwhelmed by "human delusions," and "vice and ambition," and "turned, under the false labels of holy devotion and ardent zeal, into the promotion of conflict and dissemination of senseless hatred." (TTP VII,1: 97; cf. XII,2: 159.)

We have to deal with a double abuse here. First, there was the vulgarization of Scripture, which equaled adoring "the books of Scripture," "images and pictures," "paper and ink" as "the word of God" (TTP Praef.10: 10; XII,3: 159). Such "superstitious veneration of the letter" (which today is a basic trait of what we call religious fundamentalism) was based on an incapability to discern the historical form of prophetic revelation, accommodated to the notions of the common people at the time of the prophets, from the revealed truth.[9] That incapability led either to an uncritical reproduction of ancient vulgar notions and prejudices or to mystification of Scripture: to making claims that "the most profound mysteries" and "fabulous secrets" were hidden in Scripture, which for Spinoza was "stupidity beyond belief."[10] (TTP IX,13, 135-36; cf. VII,1: 98; XII,2: 159; XIII,2: 167-68).

Such "abuse of the authority of the Bible" (TTP XIV,1: 173), such veneration of "the relics of time" as "eternity itself" and mistaking "human beliefs

[9] The hermeneutic principle of accommodation was far from unique to Spinoza. Cf. Adam Sutcliffe, "Judaism and the Anti-Religious Thought of the Clandestine French Early Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003), no. 1, 98 f.

[10] "Insania" referred to Cabbalism in particular. TTP IX,13, 136.

and fabrications" for "God's teaching" (TTP Praef. 10: 10; XIV,1: 173), either disseminated by theologians or practiced by the *vulgus*, led to the second kind of abuses. Sectarians, with "so many mutually contradictory beliefs," denied to others the liberty of "adapting the words of the Bible to their own beliefs" and "opinions," which they themselves used liberally. Instead, they "persecute all who do not think as they do as if they were enemies of God, even though they may be the most honourable of men and dedicated to true virtue while they esteem those who agree with them as the elect of God, even if they are the most violent of men. Surely nothing could be devised which is more pernicious and dangerous to the republic." (TTP XIV,1: 173; cf. VII,1: 97.) In Spinoza's reading of the Gospel, they were "the true anti-christs": those who "persecute honest men and lovers of justice because they differ from them in doctrine and do not adhere to the same tenets of belief as themselves." (TTP XIV,7: 176.)

Against the background of the "recrudescence of clerical intolerance"[11] in the mid-1660s, which had cost Spinoza's friend Adriaan Koerbagh his life,[12] the larger part of Spinoza's depictions of the problem fell into this category, which we may describe as sectarianism and religious persecution. Falling into the other category was Spinoza's denunciation of monarchical government. Throwing light on the "highest secret of monarchical government [*regiminis monarchici summum arcanum*]," Spinoza said that that secret, "utterly essential to it," was "to keep men deceived, and to disguise the fear that sways them with the specious name of religion." Such deceit, he added, would not work in a "free republic," for "it is completely contrary to the common liberty to shackle the free judgment of the individual with prejudices or constraints of any kind." Persecution and condemnation of beliefs only occurs where "laws are enacted about doctrinal matters." (TTP Praef.,7: 7.)

This quick review, supported by what we know of the historical context as well as of the circumstances of, or defining events in, Spinoza's life,[13] may

[11] Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza* (London: Duckworth, 1935), 91.

[12] For a brief presentation of Koerbagh critique of the Bible, see Jacqueline Lagrée and Pierre-François Moreau, "La lecture de Bible dans le cercle de Spinoza," in *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible*, ed. J.-R. Armogathe (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989), 105 ff.; Roberto Bordoli, *Ragione e scrittura tra Descartes e Spinoza: Saggio sulla "Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres" di Lodewijk Meyer e sulla sua recezione* (Milano: Franvo Angeli, 1997), 87 ff.; Michiel Wielema, "Adriaan Koerbagh: Biblical Criticism and Enlightenment," in *The Early Enlightenment in the Dutch Republic, 1650-1750: Selected Papers of a Conference held at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, 22-23 March 2001*, ed. W. van Bunge (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[13] For the historical background, in addition to historical works cited in the following notes, see André Tosel, *Spinoza ou le crepuscule de la servitude: Essai sur le* Traité

confirm that the real – or, more precisely, experiential[14] – problem, which impelled Spinoza to write and a solution to which the attainment of his stated goal, the freedom of thought, required, was a non-salutary combination of religion and politics.[15] The problem was, so to speak, Janus-faced. On the one hand, there were religious men who either persecuted, apparently unhindered by the public authority, their neighbors who held different beliefs or strove for, and appropriated to themselves, political power to suppress and persecute the *Andersdenkende*. On the other hand, there was abuse of religion by oppressive political authority.

Spinoza's Solutions to the Problem: The Freedom to Philosophize and Democracy

Spinoza's description of the problem dictated the terms of solution. Since at the heart of sectarian persecution was the abuse of Scriptural authority, Spinoza "resolved in all seriousness to make a fresh examination of Scripture with a free and unprejudiced mind." He devised nothing less than a new "method for interpreting the sacred volumes." (TTP Praef.,10: 9.) Spinoza's biblical criticism has deservedly earned him notoriety and fame: from the early denunciations of him as an atheist (the obverse of which may have been the view of Spinoza as "the chief challenger of the fundamentals of revealed religion" and the "intellectual backbone of the European Radical Enlightenment"[16]) to a later cooler and much more positive and appreciative

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Théologico-Politique (Paris: Aubier, 1984), chap. 3. For biographical aspect, see especially Steven Nadler, *Spinoza: A Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chap. 10. Cf. W. N. A. Klewer, "Spinoza's life and works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. D. Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36 ff. For older views of personal circumstances under which Spinoza turned to writing TTP, see J. Freudenthall, *Spinoza: Leben und Lehre*, ed. C. Gebhardt (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1927), 148 ff.

[14] Cf. Spinoza's reference to *experientia* at TTP XVI,21: 199.

[15] Wiep van Bunge, *From Stevin to Spinoza: An Essay on Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 123, spoke of "profound fear of religious discord, and its political ramifications," in Spinoza and among Dutch scholars of that age.

[16] Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), vi, 159. But see Wiep van Bunge, "Spinoza and the Idea of Religious Imposture," in *On the Edge of truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period*, ed. T. van Houdt, J. L. de Jong, Z. Kwak, M. Spies and M. van Vaeck (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 123, on "the fundamental differences between Spinoza on the one hand and the libertinage and

judgment of his achievement.[17] For my present purpose, it suffices to say that, for Spinoza, his concern in biblical interpretation was "to separate philosophy from theology."[18] Philosophy stood for reason, which reigned "over the domain of truth and wisdom," whereas by theology he meant "precisely revelation," proclaiming the intended purpose of the Scripture, which was "piety and obedience." (TTP XV,6: 184.)

Through the separation of reason from revelation, or of philosophy from theology, Spinoza established "the freedom to philosophize which this separation allows to everyone." (TTP XVI,1: 189.) Although this conclusion comes almost three quarters through the *Treatise*, it represents the solution to only half of the task Spinoza had set to himself. Thus at this point, referring to the introductory citation of Tacitus (and anticipating the same citation in the conclusion), Spinoza turned to the inquiry of "how far this freedom to think and to say what one thinks extends in the best kind of republic [*in optima republica*]" (TTP XVI,1: 189).

Given the equation between republic and democracy, both implicit and explicit, this appearance of the "*optima respublica*" in the introductory question to the political part reduces the generic question of the right of the sovereign (*summarum potestatum jus*) to a specific form of government. It gives the answer right away about which public authority ensures the greatest extent of the freedom of thought. Spinoza actually made it clear very soon in this political part of the *Treatise* that he had decided to "discuss explicitly" only democratic government (*imperium*). (TTP XVI,11: 195.) And even this government he did not discuss at great length.

On the basis of his understanding of natural right, Spinoza gave his ver-

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the clandestine radical Enlightenment on the other, in particular regarding the assessment of revealed religion."

[17] For the historical context, see Lagrée and Moreau, "La lecture de Bible dans le cercle de Spinoza"; Bordoli, *Ragione e scrittura tra Descartes e Spinoza*, 94 ff.; Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes, Ezra, and the Bible: The History of a Subversive Idea," in *idem*, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002); reprinted with changes as "Leviathan, the Pentateuch, and the Origins of Modern Biblical Criticism," in *Leviathan: After 350 Years*, ed. T. Sorell and L. Foisneau (Oxford, Clarendon, 2004); Richard H. Popkin, *Spinoza* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), chap. 4, 6. For the appreciation, see Edwin Curley, "Notes on a Neglected Masterpiece: Spinoza and the Science of Hermeneutics," in *Spinoza: The Enduring Questions*, ed. G. Hunter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); J. Samuel Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture: Baruch Spinoza to Brevard Childs*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), chap. 2.

[18] TTP XVI,1: 189. Political implications of this move are forcefully pointed out by Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority*.

sion of social contract theory. He defined "natural right" as the "sovereign right" (*jus summum*) each individual has in the state of nature to do everything that it can do. The logic of the state of nature, where right equaled power, was the driving force toward social agreement (*pactum*). Since under the government of nature (*sub imperio solius naturae*) each individual lived according to his appetites, following his desire as far as his power allowed, being permitted to take everything he wished by any means he could, nothing being prohibited or wrong, he was bound to clash with any one of his equals desiring the same thing. In such a clash of free and equal individuals, one was, Spinoza said, "permitted" to regard his competitor as "an enemy." Natural freedom generated strife and hatred, anger and fraud and deceit, insecurity and fear.[19] Thus, in order to live "in security and prosperity," it was "necessary for the people to combine together." Combined, they collectively had the right to all things that each individual had had from nature, and that right was no longer "determined by the force and appetite of each individual but by the power and will of all of them together." (TTP XVI,2-5: 189-91.)

That was the birth of democracy: "Society [*societas*] can thus be formed without contradiction to natural right and the contract can be preserved in its entirety with complete fidelity, only if every person transfers all the power they possess to society, and society alone retains the supreme natural right over all things, that is, the supreme rule [*summum imperium*], which all must obey, either of their own free choice or through fear of the ultimate punishment. The right of such a society is called democracy. Democracy therefore is properly defined as a general assembly of men which collectively has the sovereign right over everything within its power. It follows that the sovereign power is bound by no law and everyone is obliged to obey it in all things." (TTP XVI,8: 193.)

In Spinoza's view, *imperium democraticum* has a number of good qualities. It is most reasonable of governments, because in a general assembly "it is almost impossible" that the majority would agree on one and the same folly. But the freest republic is that "whose laws are founded on sound reason." Because the safety of the whole people (not that of the ruler) is the supreme law, obedience does not mean slavery. (TTP XVI,9-10: 194-95.) Democratic government "seems to be the most natural and to be that which approaches most closely to the freedom nature bestows on every person" and which preserves men as equal as they had been in the state of nature.

[19] At TTP XVI,3: 190, Spinoza used the term *hostis*, which is the public enemy and as such not endemic to the state of nature. Equally inconsistent is Spinoza's talking of deceit in the state of nature (TTP XVI,3-5: 190-91), even though he stated in Annotation 32 that in the state of nature "it is not possible to conceive that anyone deliberately acts deceitfully."

Because of its proximity to the state of nature, Spinoza decided to discuss democratic *imperium* first. And because his purpose was to "discuss the advantage [*utilitas*] of liberty in a republic," democratic government was the only one he chose to discuss. The foundation of the democratic government appeared as the generic foundation of government and, consequently, democracy as something of an *Inbegriff* of the state.[20] With regard to the foundation of sovereign power, what Spinoza said about democracy applied as well to aristocracy and monarchy. (TTP XVI,11: 195.)

The Return of Theology

What calls for attention here is not that Spinoza opted for democracy. That is not what makes TTP most interesting. The view that democracy was the best form of government was neither new or innovative nor exceptional or extreme in the United Provinces in Spinoza's time. Republican and democratic arguments surfaced during the Dutch Revolt and the founding of the Dutch Republic.[21] A new debate, touching upon the characteristics of republic and monarchical state, followed the death of *stadholder* William II in 1650,[22] whereas the 1660s witnessed "the most extensive and important debate of the Golden Age about the nature of the Dutch state, hereditary power, and republics."[23]

What calls for attention is, rather, *how* Spinoza argued his case for de-

[20] See Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, 31 ff.; cf. Sylvain Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," in *Speculum Spinozanum, 1677-1977*, ed. S. Hessing (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 554, speaking of democracy, in Spinoza, as "the essence of the state." This article is reprinted in Sylvain Zac, *Philosophie, théologie, politique dans l'oeuvre de Spinoza* (Paris: Vrin, 1979).

[21] Cf. Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), especially chap. 5; James. D. Tracy, *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572-1588* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially Epilogue. A note of caution: Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 157. Further references: *The Dutch Revolt*, ed. M. van Geldern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xlii ff.

[22] Cf. Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193 ff. See Herbert H. Rowen, *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625-1672* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), chap. 2. Rowen remarked that, in the period that followed, "the experience of 1650 [...] was never out of the minds of the political leaders." *Ibid*., 381.

[23] Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 758.

mocracy. I do not think that he argued this case as stringently as the points he made in his criticism of the Bible. There are also formal differences between the two parts. For example, in the last quarter of the *Treatise* Spinoza ceased to use Hebrew, so prominent in the first part, even though two out of five "political" chapters were dedicated to the "republic of the Hebrews."[24] Democracy comes across more as a political choice than as a logical conclusion. Just like Tacitus's praise of the happy times when "we can think as we please, and speak as we think," Spinoza's descriptions of democracy can plausibly be seen as exhortation.[25] The political part of TTP is much more overtly a *Tendenzschrift* than the theological part.[26]

So how did Spinoza make his case for democracy? The question in the opening of chapter XVI, which marks transition from the theological to political part of TTP, is: How far the freedom to think and to say what one thinks "extends in the best kind of republic"? (TTP XVI,1: 189). Most interesting in the formulation of this question is the expressed anticipation that the public authority or, in Spinoza's words, the right of the sovereign, will be discussed in relation to philosophy. That makes sense in so far as one accepts that the question of religion has been solved by refuting religious prejudices and separating philosophy from theology. But Spinoza himself indicated already in the preface that religion was involved as well in the *arcana imperii*, that is, that the question of religion was broader than the production of prejudices by sectarians. What impeded the freedom of thought was not simply that philosophy was restrained by theological shackles or theology enlivened by philosophical doctrines, but the power they could muster. That is, what was detrimental to the freedom of thought was not an unnatural symbiosis of philosophy and theology *per se*, but the role of the government in that mixture.

The untangling of philosophy from theology requires that the question of freedom of thought is discussed in government's relation to both, philosophy *and* theology. The question is not only how far the freedom to philosophize extends into the best republic, but also how the "best republic" relates

[24] In this part, Spinoza was not always true to the principles of the interpretation of Scriptures, which he himself had established. Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," 564.

[25] Cf. Heinz Heubner, *P. Cornelius Tacitus, Die Historien: Kommentar* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1963-76), 1.1: 14-15; G. E. F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus'* Histories *I and II* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 38.

[26] "Tendenzschrift" is a characterization used by Rabbi M. Joël, *Spinoza's Theologisch-Politischer Traktat auf seine Quellen geprüft* (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870), 5; Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," 543, spoke of "livre de combat."

to theology. As we have seen with regard to the experiential problem with which Spinoza engaged in TTP, public authority is of central importance: either through its failure to keep religion in check, or as the prize of the sectarians, or as the agent of religious abuse. The separation of philosophy from theology alone does not unmake the problem. That is proved by Spinoza's proceeding. The question of religion returns before the close of chapter XVI and dominates the following three chapters, that is, the greater portion of TTP's political part. In this part, theology (as Spinoza understands it) in fact turns out to be a much bigger issue than philosophy.

The quick return of religion in chapter XVI was not dictated by the logic of the exposition of the theme of this chapter: "*de reipublicae fundamentis*." Religion was, so to speak, brought back into discussion from the side. Spinoza imagined two possible objections to his main argument, both phrased as questions, and refuted them. The first question was whether the "sovereign natural right" contradicted with "revealed divine law." Spinoza responded, that the state of nature "is prior to religion by nature, and in time." The obedience to God is not known by nature but is received only from a "revelation confirmed by miracles." Thus, "the state of nature is not to be confused with a state of religion [*status religionis*], but must be conceived apart from religion and law, and consequently apart from all sin and wrongdoing." Divine law "began from the time when men promised to obey God in all things by an explicit agreement." (TTP XVI,19: 198.) Thus Spinoza, in the context of the discussion of the social contract, dropped the weighty idea of a *pactum* with God.

The second question was, which commandment should we obey, the divine or the human, "if the sovereign commands something which is against religion and the obedience which we have promised to God by an explicit agreement"? (TTP XVI,21: 199.) A more specific question, derived from this general one and discussed in legal treatises throughout the Middle Ages and early modernity, related to the case of a pagan sovereign.[27] Spinoza's answer was as brief (he anticipated a lengthier discussion in later chapters) as interesting. What he said was that "we must above all obey God when we have a certain and undoubted revelation." But he added that "people are very prone to go stray in religion and make many dubious claims that result from the diversity of their understanding, and generate serious conflict, as experience clearly testifies." The conclusion was that "if no one were obliged by law to

[27] TTP XVI,22: 200. In Zac's exposition, however, the question relates to the Jewish history. Sylvain Zac, "Le chapitre XVI du Traité Théologico-Politique," in *idem*, *Philosophie, théologie, politique dans l'oeuvre de Spinoza*, 213.

obey the sovereign power in matters that he thinks belong to religion, than the law of the state [*jus civitatis*] would depend upon the different judgments and passions of each individual person. For no one would be obligated by the law if he considered it to be directed against his faith and superstition, and on this pretext everyone would be able to claim licence to do anything. Since by this means the law of the state [*civitas*] is wholly violated, it follows that the supreme right of deciding about religion, belongs to the sovereign power." (TTP XVI,21: 199.)

In his response to the first objection, Spinoza introduced a theme that, in his contemporary discussions of sovereignty, was quite anomalous, whereas in response to the second objection he took a conventional position in a common debate. But in his argument, Spinoza linked this second position, discussed more substantially in chapter XIX, that the right over matters of religion (*jus circa sacra*) belongs wholly to the sovereign power (*summa potestas*), with the anomalous theme of a *pactum* with God, elaborated more closely in chapters XVII and XVIII, dealing with the republic of the Hebrews. This, I believe, made his discussion unusual, but weakened the case for the subjection of religious matters under the sovereign public authority.

Democracy and Religion: Duality of Powers and Forms of Government

The view that the sovereign power had jurisdiction over both civil and religious matters was the most cogently argued political solution to the problem of religious, or religiously inspired, violence, known to Spinoza from "experience," that was available in his time – much as the Catholics may have contested it. The formula of the supremacy of sovereign power – which Spinoza presumed, or accepted, was secular power (cf. TTP XIX,1: 228) – over religious power was also suitable to Spinoza's goal of proving the case for the freedom of thought in a free republic. But Spinoza came very close to rejecting the discursive tradition upon which the argument for the supremacy of secular power was based, which begs the question of how could, then, his argument be upheld.

"I will not waste time on the arguments of my opponents where they strive to separate sacred law from civil law and to maintain that only the latter belongs to the sovereign authorities while the former adheres to the universal church," wrote Spinoza. "Their arguments are so flimsy that these do not deserve to be refuted." He even called their views "seditious."[28] But

[28] TTP XIX,14: 234. As such, they were exempt from the freedom of expression.

Spinoza nevertheless refuted some of those arguments. He cited Jewish history through the second commonwealth in order to assert that "the right of the priesthood always rested upon the edict of sovereign power." (TTP XIX,14: 234.) That was meant to dent that Christian argument for *sacerdotium*, which looked for support in the Hebrew high priest.[29] With this historical evidence on his side, Spinoza had no doubt that "in our day sacred matters remain under the sole jurisdiction of sovereigns." (TTP XIX,15: 234.) That was not only "true," but also "absolutely essential both to religion itself and to conservation of the republic." (TTP XIX,16: 235.)

Argument about "*reipublicae conservationi*" is an argument from a different register than arguments about the rights of the sovereign. I will return to this issue in a little while. Important here is that Spinoza uses this argument to support the sovereign's jurisdiction over religious matters. For were the sovereign's right and authority over religious matters denied, his power would be divided, which would upset peace and tranquility. In Spinoza's words, "any body which attempts to remove this authority from the sovereign power, is attempting to divide the government [*imperium*]. Conflict and discord, like that which occurred between the kings and priests of the Hebrews in the past, will inevitably ensue and will never be resolved. Indeed [...] anyone who strives to appropriate this authority from the sovereign powers is, in effect, preparing a road to power for himself." (TTP XIX,16: 235.)

Spinoza first introduced the argument about the attempted division of the government in the opening section of chapter XIX. He accused "very many" unnamed people of "vigorously denying" the sovereign's jurisdiction over religious matters and of trying to "arrogate to themselves licence to accuse and condemn sovereigns and even to excommunicate them from the church (as Ambrose long ago excommunicated the emperor Theodosius)."

On the limits of free expression in TTP, see Daniel Garber, "Should Spinoza have published his philosophy?" in *Interpreting Spinoza: Critical Essays*, ed. Ch. Huenemann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 170 ff.

[29] TTP XIX,14: 234; cf. VII,22: 117. Spinoza cited no example, but a likely figure is Melchisedech, to whom especially Pope Innocent III frequently referred in such a way, that the Biblical "king and priest," linked with the notion of the pope's vicariate of Christ, came to symbolize the royal powers of the pope. See Innocent III to the Bishop of Fermo, 1205, cited in Kenneth Pennington, "Pope Innocent III's Views on Church and State: A Gloss to *Per Venerabilem*", in *idem*, *Popes, Canonists and Texts, 1150-1550* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 16-17; cf. letter to King John of England, 1214, and the encyclical *Per venerabilem*, both trans. in Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 1988), 135-37.

Those people were in effect "dividing the sovereign power and attempting to devise a path to power for themselves." (TTP XIX,1: 228.)

Ambrose's excommunication of Theodosius I for ordering a massacre in Thessalonica in retaliation for the murder of an imperial officer had been celebrated by a number of ecclesiastical dignitaries from Pope Gelasius I onward, who strove to defend, or assert the preeminence of, spiritual authority. But was Ambrose dividing *imperium*? He certainly was one of the first to take a relatively clear position over the question of what was the proper sphere of action of the political authority and of the Church. The conflict over basilicas (when Ambrose refused to transfer the church to "heretic" Milanese Arians) is more important for understanding Ambrose's achievement than his censoring an act of imperial cruelty.

In the conflict over basilicas, Bishop Ambrose disobeyed the imperial order because he did not want to "desert the Church" and because he feared God more than the emperor of this world, who only had authority over his flesh, not spirit,[30] and thus drew a limit to the emperor's power. Not "everything" lay "within his power," argued Ambrose with regard to the emperor.[31] In bishop's view, "divine things" were "not subject to the imperial power." By right, "palaces belong to the emperor, churches to the priest".[32] Ambrose believed in a fundamental difference between the Church, founded by God, and civil/political community, founded in nature according to God's will but subject to the snares of the Devil.[33] The ecclesiastical authority, dealing with all that referred to God, was separated from and independent of the political authority, which was entrusted with temporal affairs. Ambrose advised the emperor not to burden himself with the thought that he had any authority over things pertaining to God.[34] In matters of faith, the emperor could not judge but was himself subject to the judgment of bishops.[35]

So was Ambrose dividing *imperium*? He was spelling the end to that

[30] Ambrose of Milan *Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis* 1, in vol. 16 of *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: apud J.-P. Migne, 1841-64). On the conflict, see Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930-33), 1: 271ff.; Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

[31] *Epistola* XX,8, 19 (PL 16).

[32] *Ibid*. (referring to Mt 22.21).

[33] Cf. *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* IV,29, 31 (PL 15).

[34] *Epistola* XX,19.

[35] *Epistola* XXI,4 (PL 16; trans. in Claudio Morino, *Church and State in the Teaching of St. Ambrose* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1969), 72).

form of Roman government, where religion was an integral part of the public administration and matters concerning religion and priesthood were regulated by the public law: where the *jus sacrum* was a part of the *jus publicum*, controlled by the emperor. That had not changed with the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire. Constantine, for example, maintained the title of *pontifex maximus*, was heavily involved with the affairs of the Church, and invested bishops with magistrates' powers.[36] Under the early Christian emperors, "the whole machinery of the Church was under the Emperor's control."[37]

From the mid-fourth century onward, religious leaders, both heretical and orthodox, began to voice their opposition to such a state of affairs. Probably the first, who in defense of the independence of the church asserted the duality of powers, was Bishop Hosius of Córdoba. "Do not meddle with the things of the Church," he wrote to emperor Constantius in the late 350s, "do not give us directions in these things but receive in them the teaching from us. Into your hands God has given the empire, to us He has entrusted the things of the Church, and just as he who deprives you of your rule militates against God and His order, so you have to fear from burdening yourself with a great guilt by laying hold of the affairs of the Church. There is written: 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.' Just as little it befits us to rule on this earth, so little have you, O Emperor, the right to burning incense."[38] Ambrose, fighting along these lines, divided the government in the sense that he denied to the emperor the authority to judge over things that "pertain to God." But he did not aim at appropriating for the Church any of the emperor's power in secular affairs. He stands at the beginnings of the process of secularization of political power, which was a result of ecclesiastical refusal to be subjected to political power. That refusal created the condition for the possibility of arguing for the jurisdiction of secular power properly speaking over *sacra*.

One would look in vain for appreciation of that achievement in Spinoza. Ambrose, however, is not his only reference to the history of the struggles between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. Spinoza spoke, for example, about the "right to judge and decree what is pious and what is impious, what is holy and what

[36] See A. H. M. Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 1993); Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[37] Charles Howard McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West: From the Greeks to the End of the Middle Ages* (New York: Macmillan 1932), 145.

[38] Cited in Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 1: 180.

is sacrilegious," and said that "this right was conceded to the Pope of Rome without restriction." As a result of that, the pope "gradually began to bring all the kings under his control until finally he ascended to the very pinnacle of supreme power. Henceforward, any ruler who sought to lessen his authority even a little, and especially the German emperors, entirely failed to achieve this; in fact, on the contrary, by attempting it, they enormously further enhanced his authority." (TTP XIX,16-17: 235.)

Spinoza's account of the struggle between the spiritual and secular power is biased. It is also wrong, turned upside down, as it were. No one had "conceded" to the pope the fullness of jurisdiction over the "pious" and "holy." Appropriation of that jurisdiction for the popes was a long drawn contest, first and foremost within the Church itself, and only then between the Latin and Greek Churches, and between the ecclesiastical authority and royal power.[39] Rather than being "conceded" that *jus*, Roman popes were often seen as usurpers. The "pinnacle of supreme power" yielded by the pope – the papal monarchy – was the outcome of the investiture contest. German emperors did not seek to lessen that power, as Spinoza mentioned. To the contrary, papal monarchy resulted from a successful lessening of *imperial* power by the popes, who led the eleventh-century church reform. At the core of that reform, which generated the investiture contest, was the claim of the reformers that no lay person had the right to administer the *sacra* and *sacramenta* – precisely that right, that is, which Spinoza conceded was the exception to the Hebrew kings' authority over sacred matters.[40] Prior to the investiture contest, especially under the Carolingian and Ottonian rulers, the Church was subjugated to the imperial government, and not he other way around.

[39] This terminology was authoritatively established in Pope Gelaisus I's letter to Emperor Athanasius in 494: "Two there are, august emperor, by which this world is principally ruled: the consecrated *auctoritas* of bishops and the royal *potestas*." *Epistola* XII,2, in *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt A. S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II: Tomus I, A. S. Hillario ad S. Hormisdam, ann. 456-523*, ed. A. Thiel (Braunsberg: Eduard Peter, 1868). On terminological problems, see Walter Ullmann, *Gelasius I. (492-496): Das Papsttum an der Wende der Spätantike zum Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1981), 200; Alan Cottrell, "*Auctoritas* and *potestas*: A Reevaluation of the Correspondence of Gelasius I on Papal-Imperial Relations", *Medieval Studies* 55 (1993), 98-99, 104, 106; Alain Dubreucq, "Introduction" to Jonas of Orleans, *Le métier de roi/De institutione regia*, ed. A. Dubreucq, Sources chrétiens 407 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995), 74.

[40] The Hebrew kings "were not allowed to turn their hand to performing the sacred rites in the temple." TTP XIX,: 234. For an energetic formulation of the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reformers' position, see Humbert of Silva Candida, *Adversus simoniacos*, especially III, vi-ix (in PL 143).

I believe that the clericalization of the Church and secularization of the royal power – both produced by that big clash between the *regnum* and *sacerdotioum*, which Spinoza deplored – was actually more conducive to the "enhancement of [true] religion and piety"[41] than what came before. But my main point here is not that the historical struggles for the jurisdiction over *sacra* – characteristic for Christian countries, as Spinoza pointed out[42] – and especially the investiture contest, allowed for a very different interpretation than Spinoza's. My point here is that an effective argument for the authority of the sovereign over religious matters, at least through Spinoza's time, could not be made by disregarding, or dismissing, the discursive tradition of duality of powers (or of the two swords). The construction of the sovereign as holding the supreme, undivided, and thus absolute power can only be fully understood against the background (if not always in the context) of the duality of powers arguments. The concept of the early modern sovereign (and of the state as the modern form of public authority) was to a degree that should not be underestimated a specific solution, and thus a "definitive" response, to the duality of powers.

I take Hobbes to be a paradigmatic case for the construction of the "Lawfull Soveraign" against the duality of powers.[43] For the duality of powers generated "Faction, and Civil war in the Common-wealth, between the *Church* and *State*; between *Spiritualists*, and *Temporalists*; between the *Sword of Iustice*, and the *Shield of Faith*; and (which is more) in every Christian mans own brest, between the *Christian*, and the *Man*." In order to prevent that from

[41] "True" inserted by Israel. In the original: "religionis & pietatis incremento." TTP XIX,18: 236.

[42] In TTP XIX,20: 236-37, Spinoza set himself the task "to explain why there has always been controversy about this right *in Christiano imperio*, whereas, so far as I know, the Hebrews never had any doubts about it." In his explanation, Spinoza again referred to the primitive Church: Christian religion was first taught by private men, not by kings. Those *viri privati* acted against the will of those who held *imperium*, and were not concerned about the government ("nulla imperii ratione habita"). When Christianity was "first introduced into the government," these churchmen instructed emperors in the new religion, they were its professors and interpreters, and among the measures they took to prevent the kings from arrogating religious authority for themselves, were the prohibition of ecclesiastical dignitaries from marrying, and increasing the number of religious dogmas and intertwining them with philosophy, so that no one who was not both a consummate philosopher and theologian was able to interpret them. I would lay this account aside as a rhetorical, rather than historical, argument.

[43] "*Temporall* and *Spirituall* Government, are but two words brought into the world, to make men see double, and mistake their *Lawfull Soveraign*." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. XXXIX. I cite Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: A Critical Edition*, ed. G. A. J. Rogers and K. Schuhmann (London: Continuum, 2005), 2: 369.

happening, the power must be one: "There is therefore no other Government in this life, neither of State, nor Religion, but Temporall; nor teaching of any doctrine, lawfull to any Subject, which the Governour both of the State, and of the Religion, forbiddeth to be taught: And that Governor must be one."[44] Rousseau, one of the more acute readers of Hobbes, clearly understood his achievement. He praised Hobbes as the sole among the "Christian authors" who had "dared to propose to reunite the two heads of the eagle."[45]

Spinoza's argument, on the other hand, was rather atypical. Central to Spinoza's argument about the supreme power were the forms of government. Whereas Spinoza, in TTP, hardly used the term form(s) of government itself,[46] he made good use of specific forms of government. Indeed, democracy was a vehicle of his argument. But while sovereignty is indifferent to the forms of government – any form of government may be sovereign, but from the form of government one cannot deduce sovereignty[47] – focusing on the forms of government may lead to losing sovereignty out of sight. (Hobbes in his late work even regarded the marshalling of forms of government arguments as aiming at loosening sovereignty.[48]) In TTP, Spinoza's strong case for democratic republic seems to be complemented by a weak concept of sovereignty. That is, Spinoza argued for a strong sovereign, but his conceptual construction of the sovereign was weak.[49] He may have indeed construed democracy

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[44] *Ibid*., 369-70.

[45] Rousseau pointed out that wherever the clergy had had a corporate existence, it had claimed a share in ruling and legislating, so that there had been two powers and two sovereigns. The result of such duality of powers had been a perpetual conflict rendering any kind of "good polity impossible in Christian states." Hobbes had clearly recognized and wanted to remedy that evil, since without political unity neither state nor government can ever be well constituted. Rousseau *Du contrat social* IV,viii, in vol. 3 of *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1959-69).

[46] This language was much more prominent in the *Political Treatise* than in TTP. In TTP, the term itself only appears only in chap. XVIII. Cf. Emilia Giancotti Boscherini, *Lexicon Spinozanum* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), s.v. Forma.

[47] Empirically, this has become incontestable in the 21st century.

[48] Cf. Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth, or the Long Parliament*, ed. F. Tönnies, with an Introduction by S. Holmes (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 116; see my "*Behemoth*: Democraticals and Religious Fanatics," *Filozofski vestnik* 24 (2003), no. 2, 148 ff.

[49] In Spinoza's exposition of the "social contract," it appears that no right is transferred. By Hobbes's standards, for whom contract was the "mutuall transferring of Right" (cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 14), Spinoza's social contract is no contract. In Spinoza, free and equal individuals, each endowed with a "sovereign" natural right, combine together for reasons of *utilitas* and form a "society." The result of the *pactum* is not the sovereign, or political organization, but *societas*. That *societas* then comes to learn that

as the generic state, so that the institution of a democratic republic would explain the institution of any state, but what the concept of democracy – and of other forms of government – addresses is, strictly speaking, not how the sovereign is instituted but how the instituted sovereignty is organized.[50]

Democracy and Religion: Arte dello Stato

Spinoza first extracted from his discussion of the "foundations of the republic" the democratic government as the one, which is "most natural" and most relevant for the discussion of the "advantages of liberty in a republic." He then made clear that he was disregarding "foundations of the remaining powers [*reliquarum potestatum fundamentis*]" (TTP XVI,11: 195). Having, thus, said little about the institution of sovereignty or, rather, having left the institution of sovereignty quite vague, Spinoza turned to the question of the limits of sovereignty, of how far "*imperii jus et potestas* extend." (TTP XVII,2: 201.) Chapter XVII, which follows the chapter on the "foundations of the republic," opens with a demonstration that "no one can transfer all things to the sovereign power, and that it is not necessary to do so." (TTP XVII: 201.)

Spinoza envisaged "a quite extensive right and power of government," but then quickly pointed out that those who hold it will never be able "to do whatever they want." (TTP XVII,3: 203.) This is a description of arbitrary government rather than of sovereignty. A sovereign government may act arbitrarily, but arbitrariness is not what defines sovereignty. Neither is sovereign government by definition total (not to say totalitarian) in its reach. This is what would follow from Spinoza's proof, that "there will never be a sovereign power that can dispose of everything just as it pleases." As Spinoza explained, "[i]n vain would a sovereign command a subject to hate someone who had made himself agreeable by an act of kindness or to love someone who had injured him." (TTP XVII,1: 201.)

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it cannot subsist "without government and compulsion, and hence laws, which moderate and restrain desires." The "agreement" to "curb their appetites" is posterior to the formation of society. See TTP V,8: 73-74; XVI,5–8: 191-93. For the argument that Spinoza subverted the social contract theory, cf. Warren Montag, "Preface" to *The New Spinoza*, xix; Vittorio Morfino, *Il tempo e l'occasione: L'incontro Spinoza Machiavelli* (Milano: LED, 2002), 84 ff.

[50] Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," 554, mentioned *en passant* that Spinoza did not distinguish the problem of the foundation of the state from the problem of the form of government.

This might in fact be true, but does not have much to do with sovereignty. Sovereignty is not about commanding someone to love or hate. Love and hate are not at all alien to power, but they do not pertain to a conceptual discussion of *sovereign* power. They may belong to a discussion of what in Machiavellian language we call the *arte dello stato*, or statecraft.[51] They may be a concern of *ars imperandi*, or perhaps of *arcana imperii*.[52] Spinoza on a few occasions spoke of "administration of government," *administratione imperii*. (E.g., TTP XVII,10: 208.) These are, of course, completely legitimate, and unquestionably relevant, issues to discuss, but this should not be mistaken for a discussion of sovereignty.

Indeed, what Spinoza discusses here, in chapter XVII, is not sovereignty but the effectiveness of government. And the effectiveness of government is judged by its ability to induce the ruled into submission. The way Spinoza phrased the issue, this may appear as a question of the limits of sovereignty, as the question of how far sovereignty extends. For as Spinoza wrote, "sovereignty must necessarily extend to everything that might be effective in inducing men to submit to it." (TTP XVII,2: 202.) Fear and compulsion alone do not suffice to ensure obedience. Obedience, in Spinoza's understanding, "is less a question of an external than internal action of the mind." Ideally, obedience should be wholehearted: "those exert the greatest power who reign in the hearts and minds of their subjects." While the mind cannot be controlled to the same extent as the tongue, "still minds too are to some degree subject to the sovereign power, which has various ways to ensure that a very large part of the people believes, loves, hates, etc., what the sovereign wants them to. (TTP XVII,2: 201-2.) A privileged means of exercising that sublime art of governing was religion.

Thus, in his discussion of the exercise of sovereignty (which he represented as a discussion of sovereignty), and the object of which was the maintenance, or preservation, of government,[53] Spinoza turned to Moses and divine revelation: "I will point out what divine revelation formerly taught Moses

[51] On the prominent presence of Machiavelli in this part of TTP, see Morfino, *Il tempo e l'occasione*, 84 ff.; cf. Carla Gallicet Calvetti, *Spinoza lettore del Machiavelli* (Milano: Vita e pansiero, 1972), 82 ff.

[52] Spinoza used this term at TTP Praef. 7: 7, speaking of "*regiminis monarchici* [...] *arcanum*."

[53] The ironical result of this argument was that democracy's distinguishing trait became the effectiveness and durability of the government rather than the fairness of procedures. As Tom Sorell, "Spinoza's unstable politics of freedom," in Huenemann, *Interpreting Spinoza*, 162, put it: "Spinoza's preference for democracy is likely to contribute as much to the theory of making the state last, as to the theory of making the state procedurally fair."

in this connection." (TTP XVII,3: 203.) But before he examined Moses's "stratagems" and "the history and vicissitudes of the Hebrews," Spinoza mentioned the kings of bygone times who, in order to enhance their own security, "tried to persuade their people they were descended from the immortal gods." The examples were Augustus, Alexander, and Persian kings. The goal of like monarchs was to persuade people that "majesty is sacred and fulfils the role of God on earth [*vicem Dei in terra gerere*] and has been instituted by God rather than by the consent and agreement of men, and is preserved and defended by a special providence and divine assistance." (TTP XVII,6: 204-5.)

The Hebrews, as we will see in a moment, were a special case. But the role of religion in the art of ruling was not their uniqueness. "Everyone knows how much influence right and authority [*jus et authoritas*] in sacred matters have with the common people [*populus*] and how much everyone listens to someone who possesses such authority. I may say that whoever has this power has the greatest control over the people's minds… For what decisions can sovereigns make if they do not possess this authority?" (TTP XIX,16: 235.) What in the Preface was a denunciation of the monarchical government – that it kept men "deceived" and disguised "the fear that sways them with the specious name of religion" (TTP Praef.,7: 7) – became in the political part of TTP, with the discussion focused on democracy, a necessary ingredient in maintaining the government.[54] Without notice, Spinoza shifted his discussion from the need to ensure sovereign's jurisdiction over religious matters to the virtue of using religion for the maintenance of the government.

Here, we have a recourse to a distinctively republican, and (the Hellenistic background notwithstanding) ultimately Roman, discursive tradition of civil religion. In that tradition, religion is considered as a civil institution, or as a human institution used for civil purposes – for "civilizing" a rude people, for establishing a law-abiding society, for bringing multitude to living piously and keeping faith, for fostering justice and prosperity, for strengthening the prince, and for ensuring peace, stability, and longevity of the republic. As such, civil religion is religion of the state, and under state control. In performing its civil functions, what matters is not the truth but utility of religion.[55]

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[54] Spinoza spoke of *imperii conservatio* (e.g., TTP XVII,4: 203). Maintenance of the state was the language used by Machiavelli and in the *ragion di stato* literature. Cf. Machiavelli's statement of purpose in *The Prince*: "disputerò come questi principati si possino governare e mantenere." *Il Principe* II, in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere*, ed. C. Vivanti (Torino: Einaudi/Gallimard, 1997), 1: 119.

[55] See Mark Silk, "Numa Pompilius and the Development of the Idea of Civil

The tradition of civil religion stretches back to the late Roman Republic. From the first century B. C., when some among Roman intellectuals began to "think in earnest about religion,"[56] is Varro's tripartite division of theology, in which the third species was civil or political theology, which he called the theology of the people.[57] The concern of civil theology was public worship.[58] "There is," Varro wrote, "a third kind, which the citizens and particularly the priests in cities ought to know and practice. It belongs to this theology to explain what gods should be worshipped in public and by what rites and sacrifices each one should do this."[59] Cicero, who knew Varro and his *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, explained the importance of the devotion to the gods and religious obligation for men's relation to one another and their loyalty to the republic as follows: "Once these disappear, our lives become fraught with disturbance and great chaos. It is conceivable that, if reverence for gods is removed, trust and the social bond between men and the uniquely pre-eminent virtue of justice will disappear."[60]

Religion in Western Thought," in *Teologie politiche: Modelli a confronto*, ed. G. Filoramo (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005).

[56] Arnalldo Momigliano, "The Theological Efforts of the Roman Upper Classes in the First Century B. C.," in *idem*, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, Connercticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 59.

[57] "Tria genera theologiae [...] esse, id est rationis, quae de diis explicatur, eorumque unum mythicon appellari, alterum physicon, tertium ciuile [...] Mythicon apellant, quo maxime utuntur poetae; physicon, quo philosophi; ciuile, qou populi." Varro *Rerum divinarum* frag. 7. I cite Burkhart Cardauns, *M. Terentius Varro, Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum. Teil I: Die Fragmente; Teil II: Kommentar* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Lietartur, and Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), 1: 18. Cf. Varro *Rerum divinarum* frag. 6, where the third genus is called *politice*; see Cardauns, *op. cit.*, 2: 140. See also Hubert Cancik, "Augustine als constantinischer Theologe," in Der Fürst dieser Welt: Carl Schmitt und die Folgen, 2nd ed., vol. 1 of *Religionstheorie und Politische Theologie*, ed. J. Taubes (München/Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink/Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), 136-39; C. M. C. Green, "Varro's Three Theologies and their Influence on the *Fasti*," in *Ovid's* Fasti*: Historical Readings at its Bimillenium*, ed. G. Herbert-Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 71-78.

[58] "*[T]heologia civilis* is a representation of the Roman religion, in so far as it is governed by the state, elaborated with the help of philosophical concepts and antiquarian-philological erudition." Cancik, "Augustine als constantinischer Theologe," 136. "From the first century BCE on, Rome's state religious practices were identified as *theologia civilis*." Silk, "Numa pompilius," 338.

[59] Varro *Rerum Divinarum* frag. 9. I follow translation in Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. D. B. Zema and G. G. Walsh, The Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962), 1: 316.

[60] Cicero *De natura deorum* I,3-4. I cite Cicero, *The Nature of Gods*, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 4. Cf. Arthur Stanley Pease, *M. Tvlli Ciceronis De natvra deorum: Bimillenial Edition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955-58), 1: 6.

Civil religion was a potent idea, the importance of which could not escape Spinoza, a reader of Machiavelli, who has been credited with the first attempt at a "comprehensive rehabilitation of this-worldly religion."[61] But republicanism was not a prominent source, or inspiration, for the elaboration of the idea of sovereignty. It also did not sit comfortably with the Judeo-Christian traditions, which had such an important place in Spinoza's argument. In particular, civil theology failed to take root in Christian thought.[62] The problem regarding Spinoza's argument is, thus, twofold: first, a weak notion of sovereignty undermines the case for the freedom of thought, since that liberty necessarily requires a strong sovereign to assert his jurisdiction over religious matters; second, if discussion of sovereignty is allowed to slip into a discussion on statecraft, the question of sovereign jurisdiction over religious matters turns into a question of the uses of religion for the maintenance of government or prince. The weightier part of Spinoza's discussion of the relation between the government and religion is on the usefulness of religion as an instrument of *imperium*. This does not strengthen Spinoza's case for the freedom of thought.

Democracy and Religion: Theocracy

This problem is compounded with Spinoza's introduction of theocracy. The notion is introduced in the context of his *arte dello stato* discussion, but Spinoza linked it with the question of the foundations of government, thus linking religion with the "foundations of the republic." The concept of theocracy appears to be an invention of Josephus, a first century A. D. Jewish

[61] Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society, Civil Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 96; cf. Silk, "Numa pompilius," 345-47.

[62] Cf. Guy G. Stroumsa, "Moses the Lawgiver and the Idea of Civil religion in Patristic Thought," in Filoramo, *Teologie politiche*. In the closing sentence, *ibid*., 148, Stroumsa paid homage to Peterson, saying that his own conclusion that the attempt to build a Christian civil religion failed, "corroborates Peterson's original intuition." Peterson, in his polemics with Carl Schmitt's "political theology," set himself the goal of demonstrating "the theological impossibility of 'political theology.'" See Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig: Jakob Hegner, 1935), 158 n. 168. Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Disadvantages of Monotheism for a Universal State," in idem, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, 153, called Peterson's work "the most remarkable book ever produced" on the subject.

historian who wrote in Greek, or of a source of his,[63] and seems to have lay dormant since then until the early seventeenth century.[64]

For Josephus, theocracy meant "placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God."[65] In Spinoza's exposition, the Hebrews, returning to their "natural state" upon their departure from Egypt, decided on the advice of Moses to transfer all their right, with an agreement and an oath, to God. (TTP XII,7: 205-6.) Consequently, God alone held the government (*imperium*) of the Hebrews, which was thus a kingdom of God, where civil law and religion were one and the same thing. "For that reason this *imperium* could be called theocracy, since its citizens were bound by no law but the Law revealed by God." (TTP XVII,8: 206.)

Why did Spinoza introduce the concept of theocracy? The prevailing explanation nowadays seems to be that he used the *exemplum* of the ancient Hebrew republic, which was a theocracy, to warn his Dutch contemporaries of the dangers of the establishment of an independent clergy within the state. In Spinoza's analysis, it was precisely the instauration of the tribe of Levi as a separate priestly order and the usurpation of the authority of the civil government by the priests during the later period of the second commonwealth, which led to the degeneration and ruin of the Hebrew state. The "political lesson" which Spinoza derived from the biblical narrative was thus that the form of the Dutch government should not be changed, that political

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[63] The possibility of a "source" is mentioned in an editorial note in Flavius Josèphe, *Contre Apion*, ed. and annotated Th. Reinach, trans. L. Blum, Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930), 86.

[64] See Bernhard Lang, "Theokratie: Geschichte und Bedeutung eines Begriffs in Soziologie und Ethnologie," in *Theokratie*, vol. 3 of *Religionstheorie und Politische Theologie*, ed. J. Taubes (München/Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink/Ferdinand Schöningh, 1987); Wolfgang Hübener, "Die verlorene Unschuld der Theokratie," *ibid*.

[65] "There is endless variety in the details of the customs and laws which prevail in the world at large. To give but a summary enumeration: some peoples have entrusted the supreme political power to monarchies, others to oligarchies, yet other to the masses. Our lawgiver [Moses], however, was attracted by none of these forms of polity, but gave to his constitution the form of what – if a forced expression be permitted – may be termed theocracy, placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God." *Against Apion* II,164-165, in vol. 1 of *Josephus*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 359. A nineteenth-century American editor remarked that this language was "harsh in the ears of Jews and Christians," because Josephus, writing this work "for the use of the Greeks and Romans," accommodated himself to "their notions and language [...] as far as ever truth would give him leave." *The works of Josephus, with a life written by himself*, trans. W. Whiston (Boston: C. T. Brainard, s.a.), 4: 433.

power should be denied to religious functionaries, and that religious beliefs should not be legislated.[66]

It seems, however, counter-intuitive to employ the concept of theocracy to argue for the subordination of religious matters to the civil government. Theocracy is a religious government, which begs the question of whether Spinoza, by bringing theocracy so prominently into his discussion, did not actually open the conceptual space for religion in the government and in politics – and thus undercut his stated goal of ensuring the freedom of thought and speech in a free republic, where prejudices about religion are removed and religious matters are placed under the sovereign's jurisdiction?

His antiquarian and non-antiquarian anti-clericalism notwithstanding, Spinoza indeed brought religion into the political constitution (or left it there). Let me cite some examples: Moses made laws and prescribed them to the people "on the basis" of his "divine virtue." (TTP V,10: 75.) With his divine connections, he strove to construct a *bona respublica*. (TTPVII,7: 104.) "Human laws" can be "sanctioned by divine revelation" (TTP IV,5: 61), "true morality and politics," *vera politica*, are contained in the knowledge of God (TTP IV,12: 67), the "foundations of the best state [*optima respublica*] and the rules for living among men" are to be derived from the "commands of God" (TTP IV,4: 60), and civil affairs, or more precisely: affairs affecting the "security of life," can be conducted "through God's external assistance" (TTP III,6: 47). By divine command, Moses "introduced religion into the commonwealth [*respublica*], so that the people would do its duty more from devotion than from fear." (TTP V,11: 75.) And generally speaking, theology and Scripture are of great value to the republic. (TTP XV,7: 187.)

As we can see from these scattered remarks, revealed religion is imaginable as present both in the foundations of the state and in statecraft. In his discussion of theocracy, Spinoza explained that the transfer of the natural right to God, exemplified by the Jews on the *exodus*, "was made in the same way that [...] it is made in an ordinary society, whenever men make up their minds to surrender their natural right."[67] But the idea of a

[66] See Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," 562 ff.; Steven B. Smith, *Spinoza, Liberalism, and the Question of Jewish Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 150 ff.; Preus, *Spinoza and the Irrelevance of Biblical Authority*, 30, 192; Michael A. Rosenthal, "Why Spinoza Chose Hebrews: The Exemplary Function of Prophecy in the *Theological-Political Treatise*," in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy*, ed. H. M. Ravven and L. E. Goodman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 242 ff.

[67] TTP XVII,7: 205. Aldo Trucchio, "Democrazia, insurrezione, esodo: Una riflessione *sul limite* della teoria politica di Baruch Spinoza," in *Spinoza: individuo e moltitudine. Atti del convegno internazionale di Bologna, 17-19 novemnbre 2005*, ed. R.

direct contract with God was not a common idea. It that might be found among more militant Protestants, by whose action Spinoza was alarmed and whose ambitions he wanted to see thwarted. But this was not an idea accepted by another resolute critic of Christian fundamentalists, Hobbes, whom Spinoza knew quite well. For Hobbes, it was impossible to make covenants with either "bruit Beasts" or God: Covenant with God was possible only "by Mediation."[68]

Why did Spinoza, speaking of the first *pactum* of the Jews with God, bracket out such mediation? There have been attempts to explain away Spinoza's move as something Spinoza himself did not mean literally. Such explanations followed, as it were, Spinoza's lead, when he wrote that "all these things were more opinion than reality." (TTP XVII,8: 206.) Since "in reality the Hebrews retained absolutely the right of government" (*ibid*.), this may be taken to mean that God, upon the first covenant with the Jews, in fact ruled through their collective mediation and, following the second covenant, through Moses.[69] But this explanation applies to any theory of social contract – "people" or "government of the people" is a fiction of the

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Caporali, V. Morfino and S. Visentin (Cesena:Il Ponte Vecchio, 2007), 367, focusing his discussion on *Tractatus politicus*, suggested that the democratic government, because of its natural primacy, needs to arise in an absolutely new political space: "The search for a new territory to cultivate, or indeed the exodus, appears to me in fact as a first, effective image, suitable for the radical character of Spinozan concept of the passage to democracy." This strikes me as a radical image of colonization/American democracy. But what I want to highlight here, and what Trucchio highlighted well, is the *nexus* between exodus and democracy in Spinoza.

[68] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 111.

[69] Zac, "Spinoza et l'état des Hébreux," 557. Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 28, wittily wrote of the Scottish nobility that they entered, "by their own authority, into a Covenant amongst themselves, which impudently they called a *Covenant with God*." The idea that the government of God was a fiction is radicalized in its interpretation as Moses's manipulation. See Rosenthal, "Why Spinoza Chose Hebrews," 223 and passim. It may not be unfair to regard this latter view as a warming up of the Moses image from the *Traité des trois imposteurs*. On this text, cf. Françoise Charles-Daubert, "Les principal sources de *L'Esprit de Spinosa*: Tratité libertin et pamphlet politique," in *Lire at traduire Spinoza*, Groupe de Recherches Spinozistes, Travaux et Documents, 1 (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1989); Schröder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus*, 452 ff. Popkin, whose view is that the "Hebrew commonwealth was, in Spinoza's account, established by Moses in a completely human state of affairs," adds that "Spinoza seemed to be following some aspects of the *Three Imosters* thesis in ascribing to Moses the creation of the Hebrew commonwealth." Popkin, *Spinoza*, 60; cf. *idem*, "Spinoza and the Conversion of the Jews," in *Spinoza's political and theological thought: International Symposium under the Auspices of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Commemorating the 350th Anniversary of the Birth of Spinoza, Amsterdam, 24-27 November 1982*, ed. C. De Deugd (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1984), 177.

same nature or degree as "God" or "government of God" – and can be discarded as a possible objection against taking Spinoza's *pactum* with God seriously.

Theocracy is a form of government in the same right as democracy. Moreover, theocracy is a form of government that seems to have a special affinity with democracy. In Spinoza's account, the Hebrews "all gave up their right, equally, as in a democracy, crying with one voice: 'We will do whatever God shall say' [...] they all remained perfectly equal as a result of this agreement. The right to consult God, receive laws, and interpret them remained equal for all, and all equally without exception retained the whole administration of the government."[70] This conceptual assimilation between democracy and theocracy seems to go beyond a mere homology. Given the identification of the republic, as the opposite of monarchy, with democracy (TTP Praef.,7: 7), theocracy may indeed appear – as it actually did appear in early Latin and English translations of Josephus – as the divine republic: *diuina respublica*[71] or *Divine Common-wealth*.[72] Theocracy might be seen as a

[70] TTP XVII,9: 206. The foundation of theocratic democracy strongly reminds me of the constitution of the Crusading army. In one report of the Council of Clermont, when Pope Urban II had finished his speech, "all present were so moved that they united as one and shouted 'God wills it! God wills it!'" The pope responded that, "had the Lord God not been in your minds, you would not have spoken with one voice [...] Let me tell you that God elicited this response from you after placing it in your hearts. So let that cry be a warcry for you in battle because it came from God. When you mass together to attack the enemy, this cry sent by God will be the cry of all – 'God wills it! God wills it!'" *Historia Iherosolimitana* I,ii. I cite *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*, trans. C. Sweetenham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 81. The Crusade was the march of the Christian people led by God Himself: *Sine domino, sine principe, solo videlicet Deo impulsore*. Guibert of Nogent *Gesta Dei per Francos* I,i. English translation: *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, trans. R. Levine (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 28. That was a God's army, its enemies were the enemies of God. That was a war fought for God and with God's aid. Crusaders' law was divine law, their military labors were the deeds of God or *opus Dei*. I admit this is an extreme example, which cannot be elaborated here, but which can indicate why so many militant religious ventures into politics are – with good reasons – called crusades. In Spinoza's own account of theocracy, I can see civil life, or politics, in the last instance descend to holy war. I discuss this in greater detail in a yet unpublished paper "Holy War and the Question of Humanity: The Crusades as Political Theology," presented to Center for International History, Columbia University, in November 2007. For crusading democracy, cf. my *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Westen Political Order* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 145-47.

[71] *Flavii Iosephi Opera, Ex versione latina antiqva*, pt. VI, ed. C. Boysen, Corpvs scriptorvm ecclesiasticorvm latinorvm, 37 (Vindobonae: F. Temsky, 1898), 109.

[72] *The Works of Josephus, With great diligence Revised and Amended, according to*

perfect democracy. And since democracy functions in TTP as generic state, it would follow that a theocratic moment is inherent to the state.

In republican political thought, religion is inherent to the state as civil religion. But with theocracy, religion is inherent not only to the maintenance of the state but also to the foundation of the state. The Hebrews founded their republic with a covenant with God, and Moses then, on divine command, "introduced religion into the commonwealth [*respublica*], so that the people would do its duty more from devotion than from fear." (TTP V,11: 75.) In so far as theocracy refers to the foundation of the republic, theocracy is a founding moment of civil religion.[73] In his descriptions of the institutions of the Hebrew theocracy, Spinoza gave place of pride to the quintessential republican institutions – such as the citizen's army and the liberty of the soldier-citizen, pious devotion to one's country, the resting of government on virtue (TTP XVII,18-23: 212-15) – so that the Hebrew republic appeared as an idealized vision of he Roman republic in a divine cloak.[74] What we end up having in TTP, seems to be a synthesis of Judeo-Christian revealed religion with Roman, and civic-humanist, civil religion. And since, when it comes to civil religion and *arte dello stato*, what counts is what is useful and efficient – not he philosophical truth but the *verità effetuale* – and since what is useful and efficient is anthropomorphic religion,[75] the price for establishing the freedom of thought in a democratic republic appears to be the suspension of Spinoza's critique of theology and, thus, of his Biblical criticism.

Conclusion

I do not think that in TTP, Spinoza provides a coherent and compelling argument against a role of revealed religion in the founding of the state and

the Excellent French Translation of Monsieur Arnauld d'Andilly, etc. (London: Printed for Nath. Ranew, 1676), 807. D'Andilly's translation, however, has "Theocratie." See Wolfgang Hübener, "Dossier: Texte zur Theokratie," in Taubes, ed., *Theokratie*, 79, citing the Amsterdam ed. of *Histoire des Juifs, ecrite par Flavius Joseph*, 1681.

[73] From John of Salisbury onward, Numa and Moses have been analogized. See Silk, "Numa Pompilius," 342.

[74] A similarity between Roman republican civil theology and Hebrew theocracy seems not to have been lost to Seneca. As Augustine reported, in his lost *De superstitione*, Seneca "included among other reprehensible superstitions of civil theology the sacred institutions of the Hebrews, especially their Sabbaths." Augustine *De Civitate Dei* VI,11; I cite Augustine, *The City of God*, 1: 335.

[75] See Garber, "Should Spinoza have published his philosophy," 172-73, 179-81.

in statecraft. A minimalist conclusion would be that Spinoza allows for a role of revealed religion in democracy. A more daring conclusion would point at the affinity between republican democracy and theocracy. In either case, with the TTP's help, we cannot get away from either theological politics or political theology.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF DU MARSAIS'S *LE PHILOSOPHE*

Miran Božovič

1.

César Chesneau Du Marsais's *Le Philosophe* is one of the most important texts of the so-called French clandestine philosophical literature of the first half of the eighteenth century. It was written in the early twenties and first published in 1743 in the groundbreaking collection of philosophical essays entitled *Nouvelles libertés de penser.* In 1765, a shortened and somewhat watered-down version of the text appeared as the article "Philosophe"[1] in the twelfth volume of Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. *After that, it went through several editions* before the end of the eighteenth century.

The collection *Nouvelles libertés de penser* – there is no name of the editor or the publisher on the title page, and "Amsterdam" is intentionally incorrectly given as the place of publication – consists of five shorter philosophical treatises, all of them anonymous: *Réflexions sur l'argument de M. Pascal et de M. Locke concernant la possibilité d'une autre vie à venir, Sentimens des Philosophes sur la nature de l'âme, Traité de la liberté, Réflexions sur l'existence de l'âme et sur l'existence de Dieu,* and – as the last one – *Le Philosophe.* While the authors of the first two treatises are still shrouded in mystery, the third essay was authored by Fontenelle,[2] and the fourth and the fifth are attributed to

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[1] Diderot in d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers,* 17 vols. (Paris: Briasson, 1751-65), 12: 509b-511a.

[2] Incidentally, this is not the only Fontenelle's contribution to the corpus of clandestine philosophical literature. The perpetual secretary of the French Academy of Sciences has also authored a philosophical novel entitled *La République des philosophes, ou Histoire des Ajaoïens* (Geneva, 1768), depicting an idyllic island state Ajao somewhere in today's Sea of Okhotsk, embodying Bayle's society of "virtuous atheists." Reading Fontenelle's novel, one is left with the impression that it may have been the

Du Marsais, who presumably also assembled and edited the volume.[3] The volume is groundbreaking in that it is the first printed collection consisting entirely of the texts of the clandestine philosophical production that, moreover, all belong to "the most radical line of the clandestine thought of the first half of the [eighteenth] century."[4]

Philosophical historiography has known about this segment of philosophical production for less than a century, more precisely since 1912, when it was first described by Gustave Lanson, whose attention was attracted by philosophical manuscripts, scattered around various French libraries, which – due to their subversive nature – clandestinely circulated around France and have importantly shaped the philosophical scene in the first half of the eighteenth century and had a significant effect on the history of philosophical ideas in the second half of the eighteenth century. As a rule, the texts are irreligious, either deistic or atheistic; they argue for morals, which would be entirely independent of religion, and most often deny the existence of the spiritual soul, which would survive the death of the body. In 1938, Ira O. Wade listed 102 clandestine philosophical texts from this period,[5] while on a more recent list compiled in 1996 by Miguel Benítez there are already 269 titles, copies of which are to be found not only in France, but also elsewhere around

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source of inspiration for James Hilton's fantasy *Lost Horizon* (1933). Hilton's descriptions of the mythical valley of Shangri-La, hidden high in the Himalayas, closely resemble the island of Ajao, even the endings of both novels are alike: the main characters of both novels, Fontenelle's van Doelvelt as well as Hilton's Conway, are seen at the end – after deep disapointment they felt upon returning to Europe – as trying to find their way back to the wonderland they have left, and so forth. Unlike the state of Ajao, Shangri-La is not entirely atheistic: the spiritual growth of its inhabitants is being watched over by lamas from the nearby monastery whose "prevalent belief," that is, belief in "moderation" in all things, is such that it would most likely appeal also to the atheists from the island of Ajao: "We inculcate the virtue of avoiding excess of all kinds – even including, if you will pardon the paradox, excess of virtue itself," explains the lama Chang to the visibly thrilled Conway (James Hilton, *Lost Horizon* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960], 74).

[3] For a detailed account on Du Marsais's presumed role in assembling the collection of essays and on circumstances leading to the publication, see Gianluca Mori, "Du manuscrit à l'imprimé: les *Nouvelles libertés de penser,*" *La Lettre Clandestine* 2 (1993), 15-18. For more on Du Marsais and his place in the clandestine philosophical thought of the first half of the eighteenth century, see Mori, "Du Marsais philosophe clandestin: textes et attributions," in *La Philosophie clandestine à l'Age classique,* ed. Antony McKenna and Alain Mothu (Paris: Universitas/Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1997), 169-92.

[4] Mori, "Du manuscrit à l'imprimé," 15.

[5] Ira O. Wade, *The Clandestine Organization and Diffusion of Philosophic Ideas in France from 1700 to 1750* (New York: Octagon, 1967), 11-18.

Europe.[6] Without the texts of this production, it would seem as if nothing really significant happened in French philosophy between Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique* and Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois,* with the exception of Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* and Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes.*

A brilliant literary treatment of the "dark side" of the French Enlightenment can be found in the voluminous novel by Abbé Prévost *Cleveland* (1731-39). The title character of the novel, who is otherwise a convinced Cartesian spiritualist and a theist, in a certain period of his life when his travels bring him to Paris where he encounters some materialist and atheist philosophers, embraces *la doctrine impie,* the impious doctrine, according to which death of the body entails death of ourselves since soul is not really distinct from body but identical with it, and *le premier Être,* the first Being is nothing other than *chimère, dont l'existence renferme bien plus de contradictions que celle de notre âme,*[7] a chimera whose existence contains even more contradictions than that of our soul. Cleveland's interest in these ideas which closely resemble those disseminated at the time by the clandestine philosophical texts is aroused by *un homme célèbre par son esprit,* a man famous for his mind whom Prévost might well have modeled after Du Marsais who was once thought to have authored one of the most notorious clandestine texts on the subject, namely *L'Ame matérielle.*[8] There are also some other details that suggest that, through Cleveland's materialist episode, Prévost may be depicting the "hidden face" of the French Enlightenment and thus offering us a glimpse into the secret life of the philosophical ideas of that period. Like the authors of the clandestine philosophical texts, Cleveland and his philosophical friends keep their materialist belief to themselves; their meetings are held in the strictest secrecy, no one uninitiated in the secrets of their sect is allowed to attend, and so forth. While they are all inwardly convinced atheists, outwardly they do not want to attract attention to themselves and thus they still observe the established religious rituals. Just like the authors of numerous clandestine philosophic texts are unwilling to sign the manuscripts and reveal their names, so also Cleveland cautiously keeps the names of his materialist friends to him-

[6] Miguel Benítez, *La Face cachée des Lumières: Recherches sur les manuscrits philosophiques clandestins de l'âge classique* (Pariz: Universitas/Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 22-61.

[7] Antoine Prévost d'Exiles, *Le Philosophe anglais ou Histoire de M. Cleveland, fils naturel de Cromwell,* ed. Jean Sgard and Philippe Stewart (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2003), 965.

[8] See Alain Niderst, "Traces de la littérature clandestine dans la grande littérature de la première moitié du XVIII[e] siècle," in *La Philosophie clandestine à l'Age classique,* 454.

self. The only materialist sage whose name Cleveland is willing to divulge, is the one who – after he has unexpectedly survived a supposedly terminal disease – relinquished the "impious doctrine" and entered the fraternity of Oratorians. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that his friend's example is soon followed by Cleveland who, before the end of the novel, again becomes a convinced spiritualist and a theist. A novel whose hero triumphantly clinged to *pernicieuse nouveauté,* pernicious novelty, as Cleveland in retrospect calls his one-time materialist belief, would probably – like some other materialistically inspired literary bestsellers of the period – itself end up in the corpus of the clandestine literature. That the extreme caution Cleveland's philosophical friends exercise when expressing their materialist belief, and Cleveland's own unwillingness to reveal their names, are not exaggerated, but a realistic depiction of the goings-on in the Parisian philosophical underground of that time, can perhaps best be seen from the real-life fates of the first two published materialist authors, La Mettrie and Diderot: it was on account of their disseminating the ideas which they often owe to clandestine philosophical texts that the former was exiled, and the latter sent to jail.

If one wanted to find an approximate modern-day equivalent of the texts of the most radical line of the clandestine thought, such as Jean Meslier's *Mémoire contre la religion* and Nicolas Fréret's *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe,* one could, perhaps, see it in the two recent books by Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. Although the contrast between *The God Delusion* and *God Is Not Great* on the one hand, and the works of the clandestine thought on the other could hardly be greater – while the former are huge literary bestsellers, the latter clandestinely circulated in a few dozen manuscript copies at most and were so meticulously hidden from the public eye that the history of philosophy was long unaware of their existence – in those chapters in which Dawkins and Hitchens dissect the inner contradictions and absurdities of the Old and the New Testament, there is hardly anything that cannot be found already in, say, Meslier's *Mémoire*.[9]

2.

The notorious materialist conception of the human body as a machine (or clock) that "winds itself," that is, the conception which is generally associ-

[9] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), 237-54; and Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007), 97-122.

ated with La Mettrie and his work *L'Homme-machine* (1747), is without doubt one of the ideas that the latter might well have found in Du Marsais's *Le Philosophe*. When La Mettrie says that "the human body is a machine which winds itself up,"[10] what he means is, roughly, that organized body generates its movement by itself; according to him, "organized matter is endowed with a motive principle."[11] But when Du Marsais writes that *le Philosophe* [...] *c'est une horloge qui se montre pour ainsi dire quelque fois elle-même,* the philosopher is [...] so to speak, a clock that sometimes winds itself,[12] he seems to have something different in mind, namely: while all men are machines, only the philosopher is a machine that "winds itself." What distinguishes the philosopher from the majority of the (ignorant) fellow men is that he is *une machine qui par sa constitution mécanique, réfléchit sur ses mouvemens* (174), a machine which by its mechanical constitution reflects on its movements. According to the determinist Du Marsais, men are *déterminés à agir* (174), determined to act, which of course holds also for the philosopher; the difference between the philosopher and the ignorant is that the letter do not know the causes which determine them to act, and most often they are not even aware that any such causes exist, whereas Du Marsais's sage tries, to the best of his abilities, to discern these causes (175). Behind Du Marsais's distinction between knowledge and ignorance of the causes that determine our actions it is not hard to recognize the classical Spinozist theme: on the one side we have a sage who reflects on determinism and on the other the ignorant mistakenly believing themselves to be free. According to Spinoza, men mistakenly believe themselves to be free because they are conscious only of their actions but not of the causes by which they are determined; or, as he writes in the "Appendix" to the first part of the *Ethics:* "men take themselves free, because they are conscious of their volitions and their appetite, and do not think, even in their dreams, of the causes by which they are disposed to wanting and willing, because they are ignorant of [those causes]."[13] In Spinoza's view, this kind of mistaken belief in their freedom is so common and so typical of the ignorant that later on in the second part he uses it to illustrate the error

[10] La Mettrie, *Machine Man,* in *Machine Man and Other Writings,* trans. Ann Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7.

[11] *Ibid.,* 33.

[12] [César Chesneau Du Marsais,] *Le Philosophe,* in *Nouvelles libertés de penser* (Amsterdam, 1743), 175. Quotations from this text will be referenced in the body of the article. The translation is based on Dena Goodman's English translation of the *Encyclopédie* article "Philosophe," which may be reached at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/index.html.

[13] Spinoza, *Ethics,* trans. Edwin Curley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), 26.

(or falsity) which consists in "the privation of knowledge":[14] since their (inadequate) ideas of their actions do not include ideas of causes by which they are determined, they can be said to be like "conclusions without premises," as Spinoza's famous comparison runs. Insofar as Du Marsais's philosopher is conscious of the causes which determine him to act, he knows when and in what circumstances they can be expected to occur, and when they do occur he surrenders to them *avec connaissance* (175), with full knowledge. Thus, he keeps away from the objects he knows are going to excite in him "feelings" not conducive to his well-being and strives after those he expects to give rise to beneficent "affections." And it is in this sense that the philosopher – but not the ignorant – can be said to be "a clock that sometimes winds itself." In short, while the ignorant are "carried away" by their passions and therefore act without reflection, the philosopher, by contrast, is determined by "reason" (175). Reason determines the philosopher to such an extent that, like the Spinozist sage, he has a firm control over his passions; even in his passions he *n'agit qu'après la réflexion* (176), acts only after reflection. Du Marsais, who says that *ce qui fait l'honnête homme, ce n'est point d'agir par amour ou par haine, par espérance ou par crainte,* what makes a man honorable is not acting from love or hate, from hope or fear, but, rather, *c'est d'agir par esprit d'ordre ou par raison* (189), acting according to the spirit of order or by reason, cannot hide that his inspiration is coming from Spinoza, for whom, similarly, "acting absolutely from virtue" also means acting "by the guidance of reason."[15]

Du Marsais's philosopher is an atheist who in many ways resembles Bayle's celebrated "monstrosity," that is, the "virtuous atheist," whose existence is defended by Bayle as follows: "it is not stranger for an atheist to live virtuously than it is strange for a Christian to venture on every sort of crime. If we see every day this latter kind of monstrosity, why would we believe the other to be impossible?"[16] In Bayle's elaborate division of atheists, Du Marsais's philosopher could be classified as a "positive" or "speculative atheist," that is, placed alongside Spinoza, Epicurus, Vanini, and so forth. For Bayle, there are several kinds of atheism. People can first be divided into those who are convinced of God's existence and those who are not convinced of it, that is, into theists and atheists. The class of theists could be subdivided according to different ideas its members entertain about divine nature, and the class of atheists can be subdivided into those who have examined the

[14] *Ibid.,* 53.
[15] *Ibid.,* 128.
[16] Pierre Bayle, *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet,* trans. Robert C. Bartlett (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 214.

question of God's existence and into those who have not examined it. The class of the latter, whose attitude Bayle characterizes as *l'athéisme négatif,* the negative atheism, is composed of peoples who have no knowledge of God, for example, the native peoples of the Antilles, Canada, and so forth. The attitude of those who have examined the question of God's existence is called *l'athéisme positif,* the positive atheism. In order to distinguish the positive atheists from *les athées pratiques,* the practical atheists, that is, from common debauchees, Bayle characterizes them also as *les athées spéculatifs,* speculative atheists. Practical atheists are the flip side of Bayle's "virtuous atheists": while the latter are convinced that there is no God, yet they live as if they believed that there is a God, the former are *persuadés qu'il y a un Dieu, mais ils vivent comme s'ils ne croyaient point qu'il y en eût,*[17] convinced that there is a God, yet they live as if they did not believe that there is a God. Practical atheists, in short, are nothing other than sinful theists who, precisely on account of their belief cannot fully enjoy their debauchery: since "the fear of hell sometimes comes to trouble their repose," says Bayle, they realize that "it is in their interest that there be no God,"[18] and they, consequently, try to convince themselves that there is no God. The practical atheists are characterized as "the most vicious men in the world"; however, "they are not vicious because they are atheists," rather, "they become atheists because they are vicious."[19] Positive or speculative atheists are divided into those who find it as difficult to deny God as to affirm his existence and who therefore remain undecided, and into those who decide to deny God. The undecided ones are of two kinds, either sceptics or acataleptics: the former continue to examine the question of God's existence in the hope of finding some kind of certainty, whereas the latter declare the question to be incomprehensible and cease searching. Those who decide to deny God, do so either because they find the atheism more probable than theism, or because after carefully weighing arguments for and objections against God's existence they have come to see that "the existence of God is either false or problematic."[20]

Du Marsais's philosopher deals rather briefly with the Cartesian real distinction between body and soul, and, consequently, with his post-mortem

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[17] Bayle, *Continuation des Pensées diverses sur la comète,* in Bayle, *Pensées sur l'athéisme,* ed. Julie Boch (Paris: Éditions Desjonquères, 2004), 137.

[18] Bayle, *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet,* 220.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] For Bayle's comprehensive list of various forms of atheism, see *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial,* in Bayle, *Pensées sur l'athéisme,* 174-75; for a thorough analysis of Bayle's speculative atheism, see Mori, *Bayle philosophe* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999), chapter 5.

fate, or the absence thereof. Not only is "the idea of thought" not incompatible with "the idea of extension," but, moreover, thought clearly belongs to the extended substance and stems from it, or in his own words: "only the substance of the brain" – that is, only a highly complex and adequately internally differentiated matter – "is capable of thoughts" (181). In accordance with the otherwise only implicit materialist belief that the soul does not survive the death of the body, the philosopher "neither hopes for nor fears anything after death" (193). The theism is dealt with even more briefly, as if the philosopher considered the subject unworthy of his attention. The philosopher, as portrayed by Du Marsais, is an already fully formed speculative atheist who has clearly already finished examining the question of the existence of God and has reached a satisfactory answer, that is, an atheist, who has already successfully dealt with all far-reaching consequences of his attitude. Hence the "astonishing modernity" of *Le Philosophe,* whose title character acts at the beginning of the Enlightenment as if "the barely begun process of secularization is already accomplished."[21] Firmly convinced that "no supreme being demands worship from people" (173), the philosopher worships, as "the only deity he recognizes on earth" *la société civile,* civil society; "honor and probity" are *son unique religion,* his only religion (188). The philosopher worships *son unique Dieu,* his only God – that is, civil society – "by his probity" and "by an exact attention to his duties" (188). The philosopher is, in short, *un honnête homme,* an honorable man, who "acts in everything according to reason" (200), as Du Marsais's definition reads.

Du Marsais's atheist sage can not only be virtuous, like Bayle's speculative atheist, but, moreover, his rationally grounded morals are, perhaps, even more genuine and purer than that of the theists, for the simple reason that they are entirely disinterested or unselfish. His morals are independent from the system of post-mortem rewards and punishments, in which the theist's morals are grounded. Du Marsais's sage, who *n'attend ni peine ni récompense après cette vie* ([1]96), after this life expects neither punishment nor reward, does not abstain from those evil acts which escape human justice for fear of divine justice, that is, for fear of punishment in the afterlife. Thus, what leads him to be "honest in this life" is not the invisible hand of justice which would know all his thoughts and deeds and which would reward the good and punish the evil ones after death; rather, what leads him is a "purely human and natural" motive, namely "the pure satisfaction" he feels when he observes *les règles de la probité,* the rules of probity (193-94). Thus, virtuous acting, that

[21] Gianluca Mori and Alain Mothu, eds., *Philosophes sans Dieu: Textes athées clandestins du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), 23.

is, observing the rules of probity, is in itself a source of philosopher's true, profound satisfaction.

Since Du Marsais's philosopher, like the Spinozist sage, wants virtue "for its own sake," we can, of course, be sure in advance that he is not going to break "the rules of probity" even when "no one is watching him" (195), that is, not even when someone who does not recognize the divine justice could, in principle, break them – this, at any rate, would be the thinking of those who abstain from sinful acting solely out of fear of the post-mortem punishment. This latter attitude is embodied by the heroine of Diderot's dialogue *Entretien d'un Philosophe avec la Maréchale de* *** of 1774. One of the editions of this brilliant dialogue appeared in 1796 in a volume *Opuscules philosophiques et littéraires* together with the text of Du Marsais's *Le Philosophe,* which was this time published under the title *Le vrai Philosophe* and Du Marsais was given as the author.[22] The heroine, marshal's wife, asks her interlocutor, the philosopher who to some extent resembles Du Marsais's atheist sage: "But what motive can an unbeliever possibly have for being good, supposing he isn't mad?"[23] That is, she believes that one who knows no fear of post-mortem punishment can have no motive for being good; or, in other words, one who acts virtuously in spite of one's denial of God as a "terrible avenger" can only be mad.

The heroine of Diderot's dialogue simply cannot see how the character of the "virtuous atheist," embodied by her interlocutor, is even possible. If she had "nothing to hope for or fear in the next world," she admits she would act differently in this one and would not deprive herself of several "little indulgences" from which she is currently being deterred by the fear of post-mortem punishment.[24] The attitude of the one who would forsake virtuous acting in the absence of post-mortem rewards and punishments, surely cannot be entirely uncalculating. Marshal's wife allows the possibility that people who believe act as if they did not believe, that is, sinfully; in her view, however, it is not possible for the people who do not believe to act as if they believed, that is, virtuously. Thus, in her eyes, there can be sinful theists, but not virtuous atheists. The philosopher now explains the attitude of the virtuous atheist she is unable to understand by giving perfectly rational reasons for people to be good independently of post-mortem rewards and punishments. It is possible, he says, that we might be *si heureusement né,* so fortunately

[22] See *Opuscules philosophiques et littéraires, la plupart posthumes ou inédites* (Paris: Chevet, 1796), 73-110 and 133-68.

[23] Diderot, *Conversation with a Christian Lady,* in *Diderot's Selected Writings,* trans. Derek Coltman (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 254.

[24] *Ibid.,* 253.

born – that is, such by our nature – *qu'on trouve un grand plaisir à faire le bien,* that we find a great pleasure to do good. That is, for Diderot's philosopher, "doing good" is in itself a source of "great pleasure," like observing "the rules of probity" is in itself a source of "pure satisfaction" for Du Marsais's sage. It is possible, the philosopher goes on justifying the viability of the atheist morals, that in our youth we receive "an excellent education calculated to strengthen this natural inclination toward the good," while later in life we have learnt from experience that "we are more likely to achieve happiness in this world by being honest than by being rogues."[25]

In the eyes of both atheist sages, Diderot's as well as Du Marsais's, the ways of virtue are not necessarily as hard and painful as they might seem to those who, like the marshal's wife, are willing to stick to them solely in the hope for the promised post-mortem rewards. Likewise, the ways of vice are not necessarily as easy and pleasant as they might seem to those who, again like marshal's wife, avoid them primarily out of fear of the threatened post-mortem punishment. On the contrary, for both atheist sages the ways of virtue are in themselves a source of genuine "pleasure" or "satisfaction." The same holds true also for the ways of vice, from which Du Marsais's sage is not deterred by the thought of the threatened post-mortem punishment; rather, he finds the sinful acting repelling in itself: since the "sense of probity" is as much a constituent part of "mechanical constitution of the philosopher" as "the enlightenment of the mind" (188-89), any "action contrary to probity" is also contrary to the philosopher's very nature and "the idea of the dishonorable man" as incompatible with the idea of the sage as "that of the stupid man" (197).

3.

When the heroine of Diderot's dialogue hears that in spite of the fact that "he doesn't believe in anything," her interlocutor's moral principles are the same as those of "an honest man," she says, shaking her head in disbelief: "What? You don't steal? You don't kill people? You don't rob them?"[26] Du Marsais anticipates a similar reaction to his character of the atheist sage on the part of his readers. He expects the philosopher, who "neither hopes for nor fears anything after death" to arouse in them fear for their own lives and possessions (196). That is, since he knows no fear of the "terrible avenger,"

[25] *Ibid.,* 254.
[26] *Ibid.,* 253.

they may soon fall prey to the atheist philosopher. Only the one who considers religion to be the only "brake," only the one who oneself abstains from evil acts for fear of eternal perdition and acts virtuously in the hope of reward, is able to think in this way. And when he is faced with the possibility that the rewarding and avenging God may not exist, he begins to wonder why even act virtuously or why abstain from evil acts when there is nothing one could hope for or fear after this life. Where marshal's wife and Du Marsais's readers – in the absence of post-mortem rewards and punishments – see an opportunity for unpunished vice, Diderot's as well as Du Marsais's atheist philosopher acts virtuously without being able to expect any reward for it. Instead of thefts, murders, and robberies that the readers fear from the atheists, they are offered benevolence, friendship, and gratitude. That is to say, not only do the atheists not sin although, without the fear of hell, they could, but moreover, they act virtuously without any hope of reward. From the standpoint of someone whose morals are grounded in the system of post-mortem rewards and punishments, it must seem utterly absurd to give up unpunished vice on account of unrewarded virtue.

Incidentally, it is the same disinterested attitude of the materialist philosophers that, in the above-mentioned novel of the same name, enraptures Cleveland so forcefully that he converts to materialism and embraces their philosophic belief. When Cleveland meets the materialists for the first time, they fascinate him not with arguments – although some of them are original and persuasive – but rather with their sincere and uncalculating attitude. Although, on the one hand, on the basis of the enthusiasm with which the materialists persist in their philosophic belief and on the basis of their eagerness to win Cleveland over to "the impious doctrine," it seems as if they are motivated by some kind of self-interest, on the other hand, on the basis of the fact that they kept their materialist belief secret from the public, and on the basis of the principles of the materialist philosophy themselves it is clear that they could not hope to derive any benefit from their philosophic belief neither in this world nor in the next.[27]

Marshal's wife, who expects her belief to bring in a considerable gain, in accordance with her calculating attitude asks the philosopher about a possible payoff of his atheist attitude: "What do you gain by not being a believer?" Astonished by the fact that one can be "a believer from motives of profit," the philosopher candidly admits that by not being a believer he gains "nothing at all." While the philosopher expects no benefit from his unbelief, the purpose of her belief is nothing less than *d'attraper le ciel,* to get into heaven.

[27] See Prévost, *Le Philosophe anglais ou Histoire de M. Cleveland,* 957.

"No matter how vast the amount we invest, it is still as nothing to the return we expect,"[28] she believes. That is, while marshal's wife expects the virtue she has invested during life to yield a disproportionately high return after death, that is, "heaven" and eternal happiness, the philosopher invests his virtue "without any guarantee of returns."[29]

Clearly, the interlocutors cannot both be right. It is either the philosopher's materialism and atheism or the spiritualism and theism of his interlocutor that is true. Yet, strictly speaking, none of the two can be said to know any better than the other that it is his or her philosophical position that is true; the philosopher knows no more that there is no life after death than his interlocutor knows that we will have to face the rewarding and avenging God in the afterlife. If it turns out that the philosopher is right and that there is in fact no life after death, then his interlocutor would not gamble away anything substantial apart from those "little indulgences" she deprives herself of in this life for fear of post-mortem punishment, while he himself does not expect to gain anything if his belief proved to be true. If, on the other hand, it turns out that her interlocutor is right and that there is in fact life after death, then what awaits her is heaven and eternal happiness, while what awaits the philosopher is hell and eternal perdition. Thus, marshal's wife now asks the philosopher how he can be so untroubled by his unbelief, when everything he believes to be false may well prove to be true and he will therefore be damned, that is, condemned "to burn for all eternity." The philosopher's untroubled attitude is based on a version of Pascal's wager Colas Duflo calls "pari 'à l'envers',"[30] a wager turned upside down: although the philosopher, as an atheist, believes that there is no God and no afterlife, in case it turns out that nevertheless there is a God and afterlife, he need not fear the eternal perdition because God is most likely just and good and will therefore pardon the philosopher who was virtuous in this life although he denied God. It was in good faith that he denied God, and no just judge is likely to punish him to eternal perdition for that.

The philosopher illustrates the soundness of his wager argument with a story of a young Mexican,[31] who did not believe his grandmother's stories about a country which supposedly existed somewhere far across the sea; he finds the existence of this country improbable because all he can see on the horizon, i.e., where this country should be, is the sea and the sky touching

[28] Diderot, *Conversation with a Christian Lady,* 254.
[29] *Ibid*.
[30] Colas Duflo, *Diderot philosophe* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003), 391.
[31] Diderot, *Conversation with a Christian Lady,* 265-67.

each other – how is he, then, to believe the ancient tales about the existence of a country, which is so obviously contradicted by the testimony of his senses? Then one day while walking on the beach he sees a plank in the water, lies down on it and, reflecting on the absurdity of his grandmother's tale about the far-off country, falls asleep. Whereupon the wind rises and carries the plank with the sleeping Mexican out to open sea; when he wakes up he looks around and to his surprise he sees an open, coastless sea all around him. As the sea now touches the sky even where there should be the shore on which he was walking not so long ago, the Mexican realizes that he may well have been wrong to deny the existence of the country beyond the sea. Just as there surely is Mexico somewhere behind the horizon, so also the country his grandmother told him about may well exist somewhere beyond the sea. If the wind continues, it may even carry him to its coast! In retrospect, he rationalizes his previous rash denial of the country's existence as follows: "I have reasoned stupidly, it's true, but I was honest with myself, and no one can ask any more of me than that. If being clever isn't a virtue, then not being clever can't be a crime." When some time afterwards he reaches an unknown shore and learns from "a venerable old man," who met him on the shore, that this is precisely the very country whose existence he had denied, and the old man its ruler in whose existence he had not believed either, he repentantly falls to his knees at the old man's feet and the latter forgives the Mexican for his unbelief. The old man pardons the Mexican because in the bottom of his heart he can see that the latter denied his existence and that of his empire in good faith. (However, since several other Mexican's thoughts and deeds in the past cannot be said to have been as innocent as the denial of the country beyond the sea and its ruler, the old man pulls his ear and enumerates all the errors he committed in his life; as each one is spelled out, the Mexican repents and asks the old man for forgiveness – to a just and wise judge, this kind of punishment should suffice, he is not going to pull the Mexican's ear on account of his errors "for all eternity.") Just as the "venerable old man" did not punish the Mexican for denying him and his country, so also God, if he exists, will not punish the philosopher for being so stupid in his life-time as to deny God's existence and the life after death: just as in the next world no one will be rewarded for being clever in this world, so no one will be damned for being a fool either; or, as the philosopher remarks, "do you think, though, that whoever created the people as fools is going to punish them for being so?"[32]

Incidentally, this idea, often repeated in Diderot, can be found in an

[32] *Ibid.,* 265.

even more explicit form in Bayle, according to whom God cannot punish atheism since it was he himself who allowed certain individuals to deny his existence. Some readers of *Dictionnaire historique et critique* found it appalling that while the author treats favorably the morals of certain atheists from the past, he does not fail to stress that some villains were religious. In the *Éclaircissement sur les athées,* first in the series of four clarifications he wrote for the second edition, Bayle responds by claiming that the state of affairs where "the worst villains are not atheists, and [...] most atheists, whose names have come down to us have been virtuous according to ordinary standards" is actually a sign of an extraordinary and little known kind of grace at work, namely the so-called *grâce réprimante,* restraining grace, which "like a strong dike holds back the flood of sins, as much as is requisite to prevent a general inundation that would destroy all monarchic, aristocratic, democratic, and other states."

> Is it not that, if there are some persons whom God does not abandon so much as to allow them to fall into the philosophy of Epicurus or the atheists, they are chiefly those ferocious souls whose cruelty, audacity, avarice, fury, and ambition would be capable of soon destroying all of a large country? Is it not that if he abandons certain people to the point that he allows them to deny either his existence or his providence, these are chiefly people whose dispositions of temperament, education, liveliness of ideas of virtue, love of glory, or dread of dishonor serve as strong enough brake to keep them within the bounds of their duty?[33]

For Bayle, then, the existence of the virtuous atheists and the sinful theists results directly from God's providence: while the former are, as a rule, persons who were good enough for God to allow them to deny his existence without having to fear for the fate of humanity, the latter are, as a rule, persons who were too vicious for him to allow them any such thing and has therefore to restrain them with the system of post-mortem punishments and rewards. Like the title character of Diderot's dialogue, Bayle's virtuous atheists too could wager reasonably enough that God, if he exists, would not punish them for denying his existence, since after all it was he himself who – precisely on account of their virtue – allowed them to do so.

This sort of wager where the philosopher expects a just punishment for his denial of God cannot be a true alternative to the calculating theist at-

[33] Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary,* trans. Richard H. Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 407.

titude. It is one thing to persist in the materialist and atheist belief and at the same time expect the punishment for it, if this belief turns out to be mistaken, to be just, or, as in the case of the young Mexican, even pardoned. It is quite another to persist in one's materialist and atheist belief in spite of the possibility that the punishment awaiting one if the belief turns out to be mistaken might be totally disproportionate (i.e., eternal perdition). Unlike the former, the latter *ont tout à perdre et rien à gagner à nier un Dieu rémunérateur et vengeur,*[34] have everything to lose and nothing to gain by denying a rewarding and avenging God, as Diderot elsewhere describes the attitude of the genuine virtuous atheists. It is only such attitude – and not the one of marshal's wife's interlocutor who denies God, yet at the same time already weighs what punishment God will inflict on him if he happens to be wrong – that is the proper materialist alternative to the calculating theist attitude. While the title character of Diderot's dialogue does not seem to be entirely sincere and uncalculating in his denial of God and the life after death – would he persist in his atheist belief equally unshakably and unreservedly even if he could not reasonably expect God, if he exists, to be a just judge? – by contrast, when Du Marsais's sage declares that "he neither hopes for nor fears anything after death" (193), or that "after this life he expects neither punishment nor reward" (196), he really means it and is not concerned over the question whether the punishment awaiting him if he proves to be wrong is going to be excessive. Du Marsais's sage knows that the one who calculates the gravity of the punishment he would have to suffer if he proves to be wrong cannot be entirely sure that he is really right.

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In the *Eclaircissement sur les pyrrhoniens,* third of the above-mentioned four clarifications written for the second edition of his *Dictionnaire* – this work seems to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the majority of the authors of the clandestine philosophical texts – Bayle says that "a true believer," that is, "a Christian, who knows the spirit of his religion well," is well aware that philosophy will never be able to perfectly harmonize "the Gospel mysteries" with "the Aristotelian axioms." Since "natural things are not proportional to supernatural ones," demanding from a philosopher to put in harmony philosophy and the Gospel would simply mean demanding from him "what the nature of things will not permit." And then he continues as follows:

[34] Diderot, *Observations sur Hemsterhuis,* in *Œuvres,* 5 vols., ed. Laurent Versini (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1994-97), 1: 759.

> One must necessarily choose between philosophy and the Gospel. If you do not want to believe anything but what is evident and in conformity with the common notions, choose philosophy and leave Christianity. If you are willing to believe the incomprehensible mysteries of religion, choose Christianity and leave philosophy. For to have together self-evidence and incomprehensibility is something that cannot be. The combination of these two items is hardly more impossible than the combination of the properties of a square and a circle. A choice must necessarily be made. If the advantages of a round table do not satisfy you, have a square one made; and do not pretend that the same table could furnish you with the advantages of both a round table and a square one.[35]

Clearly, it is not only "a true believer" that "must necessarily choose" between the two mutually exclusive options, but also a true *philosopher,* that is, a sage who knows the spirit of *philosophy*. Faced with this alternative, Du Marsais's sage – like numerous other thinkers in the French philosophical underground of the period – chose philosophy and left Christianity. And it is perhaps for this reason that Du Marsais's *Le Philosophe,* in the edition where it appears alongside Diderot's *Entretien d'un Philosophe avec la Maréchale de ***,* is entitled *Le vrai Philosophe,*[36] *The True Philosopher*.

[35] Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary,* 429.
[36] See note 22 above.

RADICALIZING THE SENSES

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TOUCHING GROUND

Mladen Dolar*

The title relates to a quip by Lacan, notoriously a man of many quips. When debating the question 'what does one think with', he maintains that he thinks above all with his feet, since it is with the feet that one touches ground. Touching ground, however, as we will see, is no easy feat, it doesn't come naturally, if we are to conceive it as the locus of both thought and touch.

Tactility, touching, the sense of touch, all appear to be the firmest thing there is. What one can touch is, tautologically, the most palpable and the most tangible, not only in relation to the hazy realm of concepts, ideas, names and thought, all those 'untouchables' by definition, but also in relation to other senses, reputedly five of them, if we are to trust a long and venerable tradition. What we can touch is closer to us, closer to the bosom, more 'real', to adopt this naïve parlance for the moment, than what we can see or hear or smell, while taste, the 'closest contender' of touch, seems to present a special case of touching, special by its strict localization and by its endowment with an additional quality ('touching plus'). Touching is singled out by its immediacy, while other senses are subject to a certain deferral in various ways, and by its spatial proximity, indeed the collapse of any spatial distance, the zero distance, the zero space. It is further singled out as the seemingly first and originary sense, being there most prominently from the outset, what one can most massively feel to start with, and by extension a prenatal experience, before one can sense anything else, for as far back as one can imagine a living creature with a surface, a membrane, a skin, there must also be a touching involved, the surface being affected by another element touching it, surrounding it, infringing upon it, pressing it. There is an inside and there is an outside, in the most elementary sense, only insofar as we can conceive a

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limit of touching, of a surface rubbing against another surface, bumping into something else, into the first other. To touch is to limit, it happens at the limit and it constitutes a limit – one cannot conceive of a limit without it touching what is supposedly beyond the limit. So touching is a difference, it implies the possibly first notion of a difference, the difference of an entity to its other touching it. It takes two to touch. It takes a split to render touching possible. Hence an entity that touches itself, like the human body constantly does, is thereby turned into a split entity, doubling itself. There is a 'philosophy of the two' implied in the very notion of the touch.[1]

To put it in those very abstract and the roughest of terms, one can already sense the vastness of the problem. What seems to be the most firm and palpable, solid and plain, starts to get ridden with speculation, we find ourselves immediately involved in the scene of philosophy, indeed a metaphysics, we cannot be spared the speculative concepts not even for a moment. Even to use a very rough and approximate description – and I am not trying to be accurate or subtle in this first approach – one has to engage a set of concepts, rather spectacular and decisive concepts which bear heavy consequences, such as the limit, the difference, the inside and the outside, the nutshell of a self, the body, affecting and being affected, materiality, the other, otherness, immediacy, mediation, distance, reciprocity, split, the very notion of space, of contiguity, of contact, of the limited and the unlimited. Touching immediately materializes and palpably presentifies some basic concepts and elementary speculative decisions, it touches upon metaphysics at its most physical, as it were. One could say, not without irony, that touching is the *touchstone* of philosophy.

There is, on the one hand, an old image of *lapis philosophorum*, the philosophers' stone, and the search for it epitomized the philosophical endeavour as such in some periods, the force of its wisdom epitomized by a stone: a stone which could supposedly possess the force of turning all baser metals to gold (and with the current collapse of economy there seems to be a renewal of the old demand put again to philosophers, when the economists have come to their wits' end, namely to come up with some new version of philosophers' stone and meet the greatest need of the hour).[2] This old image implies a cer-

[1] I make this reference to the subtitle of a book by Alenka Zupančič (*The Shortest Shadow. Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two*, Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, 2003), to which this paper is indebted, although in an oblique way.

[2] The modern counterpart to the mythical philosophers' stone is the notorious 'invisible hand', namely the invisible hand of the market, reputed to perform the same sort of miracles. Anything it touches is liable to turn into gold. Our Adam, the Adam of market economy, i. e. Adam Smith (the joke frequently made by Marx) used this

tain notion of touch, namely the magical touch which would, by mere touch, bestow value, the highest value on the worthless (one could say 'the value-added touch', VAT). The imagery of touch involves the capacity for magical transformation. The obverse side of this is the equally wide-spread imagery of touch as perpetrating the very opposite: its capacity to soil and spoil, to tarnish and sully whatever it touches, to stain and to taint, that is, to take away all value, to devaluate; the touch as the instrument of degradation and debasement, of destruction of worth. So the touch appears to be the agent of a maximum transformation in opposite directions (but is it 'the same' touch? what is the identity of a touch? can one step into the same touch twice?): it can bestow highest value or bring about a maximum loss of value – and there is no shortage of evidence in the cultural history for both. What soils has the capacity to purify, and vice versa. Could one say, a propos of touch: *Die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur der sie schlug*? The touch has all the makings of *pharmakon*, of Plato's poison and cure in one, that Derrida has magisterially singled out.

As opposed to the magical philosophers' stone, the dream of the alchemists, the touchstone was a very real device, going back to antiquity,[3] a probing stone with which one could prove or disprove the worth of a metal, by the streak made on it, to tell gold and silver from the worthless stuff. Its purpose was, most philosophically, to go beyond the appearance, to tell the real thing from its counterfeit. The touchstone should be the prerequisite of true philosophy, of its ability to sift and sort out the appearances, and more poignantly, to probe the truth or falsity of the word by touching, by streaking the word against the stone, as it were. The alleged claims of value are to be tested against the stone. It appears that probing can most convincingly be done by touch, not by sight or hearing or smell or taste. Touching seems to be the least deceiving of them all, the least prone to trickery and ruse, and the stone the

formula only once in *The Wealth of Nations*, but it justly came to epitomize the whole. One could say that the present predicament displays another wonder, namely how one can be harshly and most palpably touched by the invisible hand. Indeed knocked out.

[3] It was a dark, flinty schist, jasper or basanite. Its mythical source in Antiquity is the story of Battus (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II, 11), who saw Mercury (Hermes) steal Apollo's oxen, and Mercury offered him a cow as a bribe to keep silent. But Mercury then decided to probe the man, he disguised himself and offered him a cow plus an ox if he would be willing to tell where he got the cow. Battus couldn't resist the temptation and divulged the secret, and Mercury changed him into a touchstone. – Touchstone is also the name of the clown character in Shakespeare's *As you like it*, the fool – as many Shakespearean fools (cf. *King Lear*) – being the natural touchstone of wisdom. "For always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits." (I, 2).

least volatile of all substances. – If the philosophers' stone has everything to inflame imagination, then the touchstone points towards the empirical and the material as the discriminating criterion of validity. But there is no easy way to separate the two in touching, its empirical side is constantly intertwined with the imaginary, its literality with metaphor, its groundedness with the elusive; and furthermore, the physiological in touch is interwoven with the social, since the first social command is the injunction: don't touch. The society begins with a severed touch, a gap introduced into touching. We will come back to this.

If touching could thus serve as the touchstone of philosophy, this already implies a number of presuppositions. There is a certain metaphoricity of touching which puts it in close kinship with sense certainty (cf. Saint Thomas, no doubt the patron-saint of touching), and thus at the same time the most basic and the most remote from the proper philosophical endeavour. For if one takes the more elevated senses of sight and hearing, the gaze and the voice, as the guiding metaphors of philosophy, one has already operated a certain disentanglement, a separation, an extrication, a detachment from the lower senses, one has taken a distance to touch and the sort of sense certainty it implies. Sight and hearing operate by interposition, mediation and distancing, they function at a distance through a medium, one has already separated the subject and the object from their contiguity, their contingence (contingence, from *con-tango*, co-touch, implies a haphazard contact, as opposed to necessity). And to be sure the guiding metaphors were taken from sight – theory, speculation, insight, reflection, mind's eye, *eidos*, form, *phainomenon*; and there was a hidden metaphorical connection with the presence of the voice, including the voice of conscience, voice as presence, which Derrida has taught us to unravel as the history of phonocentrism. To establish philosophy one has to take distance from the mere touch, one has to detach oneself from the immediacy (one has to de-touch), from the contamination of the most immediate and enveloping of senses. Conceptuality and ideality depend on being 'out of touch' – if I leave aside here the utter chaotic volatility of smell, the nightmare of philosophers, supposedly the basest and the most inchoate of all senses, a telltale streak of animality, and the very special case of taste (which eventually got its metaphorical credentials and social promotion as the standard of judgment at the point where all universal and conceptual standards fail, cf. Kant). So touching is the touchstone, being both the most basic and the most remote from concepts – but concept, as well as *Begriff*, stem from *con-capio, begreifen*, i. e. to seize, to grab, to capture, so the conceptual edifice has to be probed by touching, it has to test its validity with the contiguous and the contingent, with something that presents its counterpart,

something too firm to be liquefied by ideas and concepts, and yet not simply something outside them, but presenting precisely their boundary, the line where concepts and ideas touch upon their other – their real?

Aristotle, on the classical spot about touching in *De anima*, as classical as they come, took the boundary very seriously. Many basic philosophical questions are immediately touched upon: to start with the question of the One, of the unity of touch – can one speak of one sense at all? Isn't the touch from the outset ridden with multiplicity and the heterogeneous, so that one cannot quite bring it to a common denominator? It seems to imply a multiplicity of senses and a multiplicity of objects. And then the *hypokeimenon* – what is the substance of what one touches? Is there one substance of touching? But I am in particular concerned with the question of the limit, the boundary which is involved in the very notion of touch. How can one conceive it? A simple externality of two bodies, or objects, touching each other? Is the touch as such inner or outer? What do we touch with? For "if the experiment is made of making a web and stretching it tight over the flesh, as soon as this web is touched the sensation is reported in the same manner as before, yet it is clear that the organ is not in this membrane" (423a).[4] So one can interpose a membrane, a very thin foil, one can redouble the limit, redouble the skin, but the touch doesn't reside there. It is as if, to conceive the touch, the touching surface would have to redouble itself. The surfaces touch, but the touch recedes, it is an inner faculty of the surface. The membrane stretched over the surface of the body redoubles the limit into the outer and the inner, so the experiment is on the one hand useless, but at the same time it testifies to a necessity of complication the moment we start conceiving the limit. It involves both adding another skin and peeling the skin, the limit is an addition and a subtraction, for the organ of touching lies beneath.

On top of that there is an interposition also on the outer side: "If two bodies touch one another under water, their touching surfaces cannot be dry, but must have water between, namely the water which wets their bounding surfaces; from all this it follows that in water two bodies cannot be in contact with one another. The same holds of two bodies in air – air being to bodies in air precisely what water is to bodies in water – but the facts are not so evident to our observation, because we live in air [...] For we perceive everything through a medium; but in these cases (of touch) the fact escapes us." (423a-b). So there is a contact and not a contact, one has to suppose an ever so thin a layer of water or air between the surfaces, making the touch impossible, or

[4] I am using the translation by J. A. Smith in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon, New York, The Modern Library Classics, 2001.

mediating the touch. We live in a bubble, yet the touch nevertheless pierces the bubble, it is the most elementary sense for Aristotle, something that enables life – everything else is dispensable, except the touch. "For without touch it is impossible to have any other sense; for every body that has soul in it must [...] be capable of touch." (435b) Touch is necessary to animals for their being, while all the other senses are necessary merely "for their well-being". Touch pertains to being, to live being, to being alive, the rest is luxury and sophistication, a bonus, an extra.

Minimal medium is still a medium – the medium is the message? –, and it is just the question of distance and scale: with hearing, sight and smell we perceive "over a greater distance". The collapse of a medium would entail the sameness, the coincidence, but perception is distinction, the distinction of the inner and the outer, and the distinction of the limit and the medium, if we are to get to tactile distinctions at all. And ultimately the distinction of the tangible and the intangible: "Touch has for its object both what is tangible and what is intangible. Here by 'intangible' is meant (a) what like air possesses some quality of tangible things in a very slight degree and (b) what possesses it in an excessive degree, as destructive things do." (424a) There is a threshold of touch, of too little or too much touch, beyond which there is the intangible, the collapse of touch, but which is also the collapse of a living creature, its death.

So what follows from Aristotle's rough description could be summed up by a slogan that the elementary difference, implied by the touch, needs a third – the two cannot touch without a third. *It takes three to be two*, it takes three to make a difference, both as the reduplication of the surface, the additional membrane, the split into inner/outer, and the intervention of a medium – the bottom-line is: it takes a medium, but the medium keeps shifting. And this is, in a general way, where I want to get: to the object implied in the touch which is a surplus in relation to the two touching surfaces. The difference plus the object – not as a medium of the difference, not as its encompassing cover, but as its surplus, or its cut in the midst of the difference, the object emerging in the cut, and which strictly speaking can't be quite counted as a third, for the cut with its object is not quite an element to be counted. There is 'two plus'. Admittedly, Aristotle points to it in a way which is both rough and convoluted.

From the reduplication, the complication of the limit Aristotle wants to get to the proper medium of the touch, which is for him the flesh, *sarx* (as opposed to *soma*, the body). The addition of another layer of skin and of another layer of air has to lead to subtraction: we do not touch and feel with the surface and at the surface, we touch and feel with the flesh which redoubles

the surface. The complication of the limit makes the touch recede into the flesh as the medium. The proper medium of touch is not detached from the body as in other senses, but is part of the body itself, the flesh which connects the surface, the skin, with interiority, with the inner sense, the seat of sense, its heart, which is precisely the heart (for Aristotle as well as in antiquity in general). One touches with the heart, ultimately, but only through the medium of the flesh. So the flesh is the distance of the body to itself, its inner distance, the distance between the skin and the heart. Other senses, seeing, hearing, need an outer medium, they are like touching at a distance, they are out of touch, yet there seems to be more the question of scale, the stretching of the medium.

Aristotle's book is called *De anima*, 'On the soul', so the question lying at the bottom and framing the discussion of the senses would appear to be the question of the soul and its touching the body, the interface of the body and the soul. Yet this is not a good way of putting it, this is not a version of the mind-body problem in any modern sense; rather, the soul, for Aristotle, is the very principle of life, it is what informs life and drives it, it is the very form of the body, not a disconnected entity which would then seek connection to its other. It is in touch with the body (*De anima* is indeed mostly *De corpore*), it inhabits all senses, and there is a question of gradation, of graduation, graduality: from the vegetative soul to the animal and sensing soul, to finally the *nous*, the seat of reason, the only part of the soul which can pretend to immortality – there is like a ladder to immortality (and the question of the way to conceive the immortality of the soul in Aristotle is a traditionally disputed one). So the basic distinction is not between the physical and the psychic, but between the lower and the higher, and the soul, in the graduality of its forms, inhabits both.

It is not quite so with Plato, who is far more adamant in severing the graduality, severing the tie of touch and of all other senses, for the benefit of a pure gaze. Plato is not in touch with touch, one has to be out of touch in order to see with the eyes of the soul alone. Soul has an eye and no touch, and the gaze is not touching at a distance. In order to touch the thing itself one has to desist from touching. No doubt one can say that there is denigration of the touch, but also, at the same time, there is the question of what is the proper touch. How can one properly touch the thing itself? Can one? Under what conditions? Being out of touch also means taking the touch most seriously – and a whole line of metaphysical (haptocentric?) tradition follows from there.

There is already in these ancient texts an outline of something one could call the basic predicament of touch. On the one hand touching is ubiquitous,

omnipresent, unavoidable, one cannot escape being touched and touching, at every moment, from the outset. The world, the other, keeps in touch, whether we want it or not. Yet, at the same time there is also the impossibility to touch, the inability to touch properly, which accompanies touching as its shadow. While being constantly in touch, there is also a pervasive sense of being out of touch, of not being able to reach out, and to be reached. But this basic dilemma is rather a description of a very modern predicament, which can be described as an overwhelming and increasing flow of perception, of a constant amplification of perception, accompanied by a diminishing capacity to perceive; an overwhelming tide of contacts increasingly deprived of a possibility of making a contact. We are both more in touch and more out of touch than ever, and what we touch most is the keyboard, and what is most appropriately called the touch-screen.

With the notion of the flesh, one can get in one deceptively simple step from Aristotle to Merleau-Ponty (whose centenary is celebrated this year). Merleau-Ponty's notion of *la chair*, the flesh, as opposed to the body, is a very Aristotelian move to start with, although Aristotle is never quoted, and rarely mentioned, in *Phenomenology of Perception* or *The Visible and the Invisible*, where the 'idea' of the flesh is expounded – a singular omission? Merleau-Ponty is, after a long out-of-touch era of philosophy, perhaps the most prominent philosopher of the touch, until the recent surge spurred by Jean-Luc Nancy. Not quite of the touch as a separate problem, for touching is implicated in perception as one of its facets, and none of its facets can be, at least *de iure*, quite singled out as the basic or the primary.[5] Perception, to put it simply, is precisely the problem, not of how to conceive the boundary, but rather of how it is impossible to posit a boundary: the 'body' extends itself into the world and the world extends itself into the 'body', and this is why it is inappropriate to speak of either the body or the world as given, already constituted in themselves prior to perception. The body has to turn into flesh, which is not something simply pertaining to the body, but is at the same time the flesh of the world itself, *la chair du monde*. Having a flesh as the 'medium' of perception is but another side of the world itself being endowed with flesh. It is the interface, or rather the interlace, which has to be the starting point of the renewal of philosophy: the point where we are not dealing with the constituted subject and object, the self and the world, but the very area of their overlap-

[5] For the criticism of the tacit hierarchies in Merleau-Ponty cf. Jacques Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Paris, Galilée, 2000, p. 233, 235 etc. There is an underlying primacy of vision and a hidden primacy of the hand, according to Derrida. Cf. *Phénoménologie*, p. 270.

ping, a pre-subjective and a pre-objective area, *a touching without a subject and an object*. "Nothing determines me from the outside," says Merleau-Ponty in a famous statement on the last page of *The Phenomenology of Perception*, "not that nothing solicits me, but on the contrary, because I am from the outset outside myself and open to the world" (p. 520).[6]

In this view, seeing and being seen are not divided as subject and object, but reversible, and so is touching and being touched (and furthermore, an insertion of touching into seeing and vice versa). There is a fundamental reversibility, yet a reversibility with a hiatus, a lag, a non-coincidence in the coincidence, a gap constantly recuperated but never bridged or sublated, never *aufgehoben*.[7] The perceiving and the perceived, the touching and the touched are like on a Moebius strip,[8] they are parts of the same surface – not surface, but depth and surface in one, there is no simple surface for Merleau-Ponty[9] – but with a gap in their very indistinction.[10] Through me, in me, the world sees itself and touches itself. "I ought to say that one perceives in me [*on perçoit en moi*] and not that I perceive" (*ibid*., p. 249), there is a dimension of anonymity of perception that has to be rescued and rehabilitated, as opposed to all philosophical subjectivism and empiricism, idealism and materialism, intellectualism and sensualism. Flesh is not matter, but neither is it an ideality – Merleau-Ponty insists on this at length in *The Visible and the Invisible*; it is rather the point of their indistinction and distinctivity in one. It is not a positive given, it is both tangible and intangible, its intangibility resides in its tangibility, not opposed to it but internal to it.

But I don't want to dwell on Merleau-Ponty at length, I just want to single out one aspect. If I started to describe the problem of touch as the problem

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[6] I refer to the French original, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris, Gallimard, 1945 (Tel, 1978).

[7] "Reversibility is the ultimate truth," states the last sentence of the famous paper "L'entrelacs – le chiasme", "Intertwining – chiasmus" (*Le visible et l'invisible*, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p. 204), but a non-symmetrical and non-dialectical reversibility.

[8] "[...] the sensing and the sensed body are like the top side and the underside, or two segments of the same circular course, which runs from left to right on the top side and right to left on the underside, yet it is in both phases one single movement." (*Le visible et l'invisible*, p. 182)

[9] Merleau-Ponty is not the man of the surface, as opposed to Deleuze, with whom he otherwise shares many features.

[10] The circle of distinction and indistinction also applies to the distinction of (five) senses: "The senses translate each other with no need for an interpreter, they understand each other without the recourse to the idea." (*Phénoménologie*, p. 271) Yet they constitute separate realms; the world is constituted in their contacts, through their 'touching' each other, infringing upon each other. What constitutes the world is '*la chose intersensorielle*', the intersensory thing.

of the two, the problem of counting, of the proper count, then one can say that Merleau-Ponty very much insists on not counting. What he keeps saying is that one should never start with two – subject-object, body-world, materiality-ideality, senses-intellect, outside-inside, the One-the Other (one could economically say sense-sense, the sensual vs. meaning, this encapsulates his problem: the equivocation of the two senses of sense, the birth of sense out of sense). It is starting with two, with the split, the distinction, which got metaphysics into all the trouble, the two parts could then never quite meet and intersect – and the meeting of the two, the point of their indistinction, is for him the real of the human experience, its crux, its knot. But one cannot start with one either, there is no originary one, no underlying unitary principle, an *arché*, one substance, which would then split into two, divide itself, so that the difference and the distinction would be derived as a self-splitting of a single source. One should start with the uncountable, something that cannot be submitted to count, cannot be legitimately counted, something which is *neither one nor two*. Counting doesn't apply. Perception, sensation, flesh are the names variously given this area ("What we call the flesh [...] has no name in any philosophy," *Le visible*, p. 193). His prevailing rhetorical formula is neither-nor: neither subject nor object, neither matter nor spirit, neither inside nor outside. The unlimited and the uncountable can only be circumscribed by being delimited from the limited and the countable, they cannot avoid being defined *per negationem*.[11] If the area which 'counts' is uncountable, if it is neither one nor two, then it is the *constant becoming two*, but a becoming which cannot reach its end, the two sides can never quite become two, they cannot get loose from their tie, but their unity resides only in their split. Their common ground is not their common measure, but the incommensurate as such. They can never cut loose from each other, but they cannot coincide either. There is their coincidence and non-coincidence 'in one', their distinction and indistinction 'in one', but 'one' is precisely not the word. (That would lead us into the dialectical trap of the Hegelian 'identity of identity and non-identity'.)

The uncountable area of flesh – one could put it simply: bodies can be counted, flesh can't – is not an area of chaos. Merleau-Ponty insists on it: "The flesh (the flesh of the world or my flesh) is not contingency, chaos, but texture [...]" (*Le visible*, p. 192). It is a texture of minimal differences which

[11] But if it is uncountable, it has to account for counting – for where does this ubiquitous fallacy come from? Why are we so easily prey to the illusion of counting, to making illegitimate distinctions? Why does the intertwining so readily withdraw and disguise itself? Why does illegitimate counting start at all? Why is perception deceptive while being itself the very cure against its deception?

overlap and infringe upon each other, so they can neither be united nor separated. Perception is both lucid and obscure, it produces sense and remains enigmatic, withdrawing and revealing itself 'in one'. The texture is not a structure, for structure implies difference (even more: this is all it is made of), the texture is a sub-difference, the neither-one-nor-two. One could sum up: there is touch, but there is no two. One should start by touch, but one cannot arrive either at its unity or a difference. *There is touch, but there is no cut*. For positing an emphatic difference would, for Merleau-Ponty, be tantamount to falling into the trap of the traditional differences which have haunted the history of metaphysics – but can one conceive of a difference which would avoid this pitfall? A difference which wouldn't amount to the traditional duality nor to the self-split of One?

I have evoked the Moebius strip – it is a notorious Lacanian device, not something used by Merleau-Ponty. There is a top and a bottom, an upper side and an underside of a surface, but both find themselves on the same surface, they don't touch, but they are nevertheless contiguous, they cannot be detached from each other (although one only finds oneself on one side at the time). But Lacan's point, in his multiple uses of this device, is precisely that the Moebius strip implies a cut, it results from a cut, although it has no simple outside, both outside and inside are on the same strip. And it is the nature of this cut which implies the object – precisely the *objet a*, not on some separate location beyond the strip, but inhabiting its very margin, the edge of a cut. In the simplest terms one could say that what informs Merleau-Ponty's endeavour is a *disavowal of the cut*, or a circumvention of the cut. Psychoanalysis would agree with everything else except for this: there is a cut.[12]

[12] I can add a brief footnote to Merleau-Ponty's construction of perception. It is very curious and telling that, in the first part of the first part of *The Phenomenology of Perception* after the lengthy Introduction, he practically starts his analysis of the body not with the normal and common state of affairs, but with a strange peculiarity, an oddity: with the discussion of the phantom limb (*Phénoménologie*, p. 90). An amputated leg or an arm still 'feels', it is still endowed with perception, and he looks at some length at the medical evidence. The move is in a way 'vintage Merleau-Ponty': perception is not simply some closeness of contact (rather, it is *too close for contact*), but constantly haunted by phantoms, permeated by something pertaining to phantasy and endowed with a dreamlike quality (cf. "Each sensation contains a germ of a dream," *ibid*., p. 249), there is a streak of hallucination dwelling in it. He spends quite some time arguing that the phantom limb cannot be adequately accounted for either in physiological or in psychological terms, that the two strangely intersect in it, yet it is also irreducible to their simple intersection (that would already imply a separation of the inseparable). If Merleau-Ponty's position could be summed up not only by 'there is no cut', but also by 'there is no lack', then it can appear astounding that he starts off precisely at the point of a lack and at the point of a rather spectacular cut – a cut-

For Freud, if I start with summing up rather than leaving it for the end, the touch *is* the cut. The touch and the cut coincide. This is at the core of *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13) where one can find his most extensive passages on the touch, and I propose to briefly comment on them.

What defines the social as such, and hence the properly human dimension, is a cut in the touch. The core of the social injunctions, in a nutshell, can be seen as 'don't touch'. This is a zero-injunction which metaphorically (menotimically?) spreads to all others. This is at the core of taboo as the minimal 'model', implying the assumption that "certain persons and things are charged with a dangerous power, which can be transferred through contact with them, almost like an infection" (PFL 13, p. 75).[13] This entails some basic division of the social, a formal dividing line which separates persons and things into two categories, the ones that can be touched and the ones that can't – the divide embodied, in traditional societies, by the line between the sacred and the profane, the divide massively sanctioned by religious and political authority, which can in turn be seen as relying on it. But this will not concern us any further here. What Freud is trying to get to is a parallel between those traditional injunctions, old as mankind, with the behaviour of modern day neurotics (he announces in the subtitle of *Totem and Taboo* "Some points of agreement between the mental lives of savages and neurotics", *Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker*). The modern neurotics appear to be suffering from a re-enactment of the taboo in an era where the prohibition of touching has been divested of its religious underpinning. One could say, tentatively, that once upon a time, with the savages, it was possible to touch because it was prohibited to touch, and now, with the modern-day neurotics, *it is prohibited to touch because it is impossible to touch*. What Freud is after is the modern predicament of touching and its

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off limb, and that he chooses the lack as the privileged vantage point. But what appears as a lack and a cut, as a paradox in the seeming continuity of perception, of the body-world continuum, as it were, doesn't contradict his basic stance, but endorses it: his point can even be best made through the aspect of this gap which is precisely not a gap, but like an inner fold (to use this Deleuzian term) of perception itself, a lack which is not an absence, but a 'feeling lack', a 'perceiving lack', the simplest testimony to the fact that the body extends over its limits. – If Merleau-Ponty's 'example' (or rather a 'crown-case') rather massively invokes castration, one could propose, simply, that *phallus is a phantom limb*, yet not a limb feeling anything (despite the seemingly massive evidence to the contrary, it figures as the apex of most intense feeling and enjoyment, its paramount embodiment), but something which, as a cut, a bodily cut, enables access to enjoyment, to human 'feeling', to what constitutes a surplus in human feeling, its 'object'.

[13] I refer to *The Pelican Freud Library* (PFL), 15 vols., Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972-86, and *Studienausgabe* (SA), 10 vols., Frankfurt/M, Fischer, 1969-75.

vicissitudes,[14] not merely some surviving atavistic remainder of a prehistoric past. "As in the case of taboo, the principal prohibition, the nucleus of the neurosis, is against touching; and thence it is sometimes known as 'touching phobia' or '*délire de toucher*'. The prohibition does not merely apply to immediate physical contact but has an extent as wide as the metaphorical use of the phrase 'to come in contact with' [to be in touch with]. Anything that directs the patient's thoughts to the forbidden object, anything that brings him into intellectual contact with it, is just as much prohibited as direct physical contact." (p. 80)

As the touch is contagious, so is the prohibition: given the infinite possibilities of connectivity of things, the prohibition spreads along all these ways of possible connections, it is endowed with 'an extreme liability to displacement', new and new objects become 'impossible', "till at last the whole world lies under the embargo of impossibility" (p. 81). Things and people are imbued with a fatal tendency to connect, to be in contact, so the whole world has the fatal proclivity to become impossible. There is no way of containing contact, and there is no way of containing prohibition. One could say that the area of the untouchable, on which the prohibition bears, could be localized and circumscribed in traditional societies, whereas the modern predicament is rather that the boundless propagation of contact entails a boundless transitivity of prohibition – which is one of the ways to describe the mechanism of the superego, as opposed to the rule of the name of the father. Boundless profanation through contact has not done away with the sacred, but has in a paradoxical way reinstated it and made it intractable.[15] – Freud sums up the nature of these prohibitions in four points: their lack of motivation; their internal necessity; there easily displaceable nature; and their imposition of ritualistic behaviour.

So how does this structure come about?

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[14] As, in another context, Freud tries to debunk the father as the secret of all authority precisely in an era of the demise of the father. It is not that the dead father (of the primeval horde) is the hidden core of authority, but rather that the dead father himself has died, but this hasn't terminated his rule. Everything can be allowed, but authority persists. The prohibition of touch has died along with the dead father, and yet remained in vigour.

[15] Here I must refer to the work of Giorgio Agamben on profanation. E. g.: "An absolute profanation without the slightest residue coincides henceforth with a consecration which is just as empty and total" (*Profanations*, Paris, Payot & Rivages, 2005, p. 102). One should carefully distinguish between secularization and profanation, secularization being "a form of repression, leaving intact the forces which it limits itself to displacing from one place to another" (p. 96). So the modern predicament, for Agamben, is that of an absolute impossibility of profanation.

"Right at the beginning, in very early childhood, the patient shows a strong *desire* to touch [*Berührungslust*; the word is utterly ambiguous: it can be the pleasure of touching, and this is how I am inclined to understand it, as opposed to Strachey, *Lust* like in *Lustprinzip*; curiously, Freud italicizes just the last part, Berührungs*lust*; maybe one can propose a contingent homonymic English translation with *lust,* the touching lust], the aim of which is of a far more specialized kind that one would have been inclined to expect. This desire is promptly met by an *external* [*von aussen*] prohibition against carrying out that particular kind of touching." [At this point Freud most curiously inserts a footnote: "Both the desire and the prohibition relate to the child's touching his own genitals." Nothing sexual is mentioned in the main text, sexuality appears relegated to the footnote, as if, self-referentially, repressed from the text to the bottom of the page, literally under the bar. The text merely hints at the very special kind of touching – but isn't touching what makes a particular point special? Couldn't one rather maintain that touching *sexualizes* the part of the body concerned? Is the sexual special before touching, without touching, apart from touching? Isn't one of Freud's main points, say in *Three essays*, that any part of the body could be sexualized and that there is an erroneous traditional assumption that sexuality resides in the genitals?] "The prohibition is accepted, since it finds support from powerful internal forces [here again a footnote is inserted: "That is, from the child's loving relation to the authors of the prohibition."], and proves stronger than the drive[16] which is seeking to express itself in the touching. In consequence, however, of the child's primitive psychical constitution, the prohibition does not succeed in abolishing the drive [*aufzuheben*, sublating, the notorious Hegelian term: there is no *Aufhebung* of the drive]. Its only result is to repress [*verdrängen*] the drive – the desire/pleasure to touch – and banish it into the unconscious. Both the prohibition and the drive persist: the drive because it has only been repressed and not abolished, and the prohibition because, if it ceased, the drive would force its way through into consciousness and into actual operation [*Ausführung*]. A situation is created which remains undealt with – a psychical fixation [*eine psychische Fixierung*] – and everything else follows from the continuing conflict between the prohibition and the drive." (p. 82-3; SA IX, p. 321)

Everything else follows. All Freud is like encapsulated in this scene of touching: sexuality and prohibition, the internal and the external, drive and its repression, conflict and fixation, finally the unconscious. – The scene no

[16] *Der Trieb*. I am replacing the unfortunate Strachey's translation 'instinct' by 'drive'.

doubt lends itself to commonsensical reading: the child touches his genitals, finds pleasure in it, wants some more, but the parents prohibit it, they step in in no uncertain terms, driven by the sense of common propriety and decency, if not by religious zeal. Enough to make anyone neurotic. Yet one can also see that the conflictual alliance which sustains the touch is far more complicated. The prohibition can never simply just come from the outside, it would never be effective if it was not sustained from the inside, if prohibition and pleasure didn't form a sort of pact. And also and above all, prohibition itself has to take the form of touching, it cannot be sustained by mere word, it has to be the word sustained by touch, the word touching flesh, imposed by the parental touch, this first language imposed on the infant, the mother's touch being the first mothertongue.[17] There is the touch which imposes the cut, the cut of the touch, the cut of the self-touch – and this is where the supposed mythical first phase of auto-eroticism, the self-sufficiency and self-affection of self-touching, is cut short, the self-circuit is interrupted, in order to impose the step towards the object, *Objektwahl*, if we follow Freud's account of the sexual progress from the *Three essays*. But this primary auto-eroticism is rather itself a retroactive myth, it is rather something coinciding with the cut: the incidence of sexuality results from the cutting and the cut touch. And this is, rather than preventing simple pleasure, what creates it, or rather creates it as enjoyment: "He is constantly wishing to perform this act (the touching), and looks on it as his supreme enjoyment [*den höchsten Genuss*], but must not perform it and detests it as well." (p. 83) One can sum this up simply by saying that *the cut creates the touch as object*, the touch cutting touch, and it is there that enjoyment sneaks into the gap.

There is no neutral touch. To touch is to infringe, to trespass, to overstep, to invade, to go too far, to transgress, to violate. *To touch is to touch too much*. But this excessiveness of touch stems from the touch as the cut: it is the cut that exceeds the touch. For if there is infringement and transgression, there has to be a limit which is thus exceeded, and it is the cut which both imposes the limit and creates the touch as its trespassing. There is a supposed primary given of touching oneself, of discovering one's body by self-touch, but there is a touch which interrupts this self-circuit, and this 'second touch' is not simply external to the self, rather the self-touch, feeling oneself, is instated only through 'external' interruption, and the supposed primary self-eroticism

[17] The loving mother's touch has its flipside in the inscription of the law into the skin, as it were. The law is a tattoo. A sinister and most palpable parable of this is Kafka's "In the penal colony", where law is literally inscribed on the skin surface, the invisible tattoo made visible by the lethal machine.

emerges at the same time with it. One touches one's body as the other touches it, in a movement which both produces, links and separates the two.[18] It is through the cutting touch, the cut touch, that one relates to one's body at all, the body emerges through the prohibition of touch.

No doubt this coincidence of the touch and the cut is the point where the basic 'don't touch' occurs, where religion, politics, metaphysics, transcendence come bursting in, molding the difference it implies into the divide of the touchable and the untouchable, the sacred and the profane, and solidifying the object, endowing it with an aura, separating it. But the point is precisely to try to 'redeem' the object touch from this heavy burden, to hold on to the difficult touch and its cut structure, to reestablish it not in its immediacy and deceptively simple palpability and materiality, without a cut, but in its ability to touch through the very cut.

There is a double face to the touch: on the one hand it is constituted by the cut, on the other hand it creates a fixation. The touch not only fixes, *it transfixes*, so to say, it creates a mark of attachment, an anchorage point of enjoyment. It is like the first mark, the first signifier, written on the skin, and its elementary 'signifying' property stems from its double edge of being cut in the very gesture of touching. The way Freud spells it out, *fixation coincides with the unconscious*. The touch, the cut and the fixation are the flipsides of the advent of the unconscious. Although Freud immediately simplifies things, sorts them out in an unfortunate way by saying that "the prohibition is noisily [*laut*] conscious, while the persistent desire to touch [*Berührungslust*] is unconscious." (*ibid*.) It is rather that the prohibition is the very kernel of the unconscious, tending in the limit to make the world itself impossible, untouchable.[19]

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[18] Cf. Nancy: "[...] the unity of coming to oneself as 'feeling oneself', 'touching oneself', which necessarily passes by the outside – which effectuates that I cannot feel myself without feeling the other and without being felt by the other." (*Corpus*, Paris, Métailié, 2000, p. 125)

[19] I am well aware that what Freud is describing is the basic mechanism of obsessional neurosis which, for him, can provide an insight into the origins of religion. Religious practices, with the institution of the sacred/profane divide, with the privileged handling of the untouchable, are for him ultimately all derivative of the obsessional neurotic elementary stance. It is the way that neurosis constitutes a social tie by codifying and sanctioning the untouchable. Hysteria rather functions by an opposite mechanism: to push towards the impossible touch, to try to touch too much, to touch properly, to exceed the imposed limit, and discovering that 'this is not it'. 'I cannot touch, however spectacularly I try.' The hysterical subject precipitates herself into the touch, while the obsessional fends off any touching. The obsessional cannot escape touching, however impossible the world is, and the hysterical cannot touch despite ever more transgressive gestures. They are two ways to deal with touch as cut,

The touch coinciding with the cut has the fatal tendency to spread. There is no way of containing the touch, it spreads not merely by contiguity, by contact and physical connection, so that things touching become contaminated, it also spreads by contiguity of something apparently not touching, disconnected, such as, by definition, the word. If disconnection is what seemingly defines the word as a signifier – having no common ground or similarity with the thing (*le meurtre de la chose*, as Lacan, following Kojève, used to say in early days) – then touching entails at the same time a disavowal of cut, a supposition, an underlying and pervasive belief, that words touch things. The word is treated as a property of a thing, on the same level, there is no disentangling words from things. Freud relates about a patient who wouldn't touch a gift bought by her husband on Hirschengasse, on the grounds that Hirsch was the married name of her childhood friend with whom she has fallen out. The friend may be living in a distant city, but her touch pollutes the objects purchased on the street contingently bearing her name (p. 81). The touch is an ubiquitous threat, the world is not big enough to prevent touching, everything touches, so nothing can be touched. The taboo concerning names evokes well-known traits of the 'primitive' societies, where the persons and objects which are taboo – kings, the dead, the enemies, the polluting substances etc. – also fall under the ban of using their names. Words are treated as objects touching other objects, they are tainted by objects they stand for, and one can inversely touch objects by mere words. The cut instigates a contiguity and a continuity without a cut – but this supposition is precisely based on a disavowal of the cut, and this is why, for Freud, it defines the magical world and the magical thinking. Which brings us to this new kind of magic, namely psychoanalysis, the art of touching the body with the word.

The touch involves both metaphor – basicly the cut – and metonymy – basicly the endless transitivity. It is the crossing of both. For Freud this recalls the two basic types of magic singled out by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, the great work which appeared just shortly before *Totem and Taboo* and still figures as the touchstone of anthropology. There is on the one hand the imita-

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and they could both be seen as '*délire de toucher*'. – To round off the clinical picture, one could say that perversion, as the 'negative of neurosis', relies on the mechanism of domesticating the touch, trimming it into the quantum of pleasure that one can handle and play with, it 'cuts to size' the cut into a proper distance, while psychosis collapses the cut and makes the touch 'too possible', 'too successful', so it slides to coincidence. Their various ways of relating to touch, to follow Freud, are formative of basic patterns of culture: "It might be maintained that a case of hysteria is a caricature [*Zerrbild*, distortion] of a work of art, that an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of a religion and that a paranoiac delusion is a caricature of a philosophical system." (p. 130, SA p. 363)

tional magic, which operates by a metaphorical substitute – one sticks needles into dolls, one makes an effigy of the enemy and what befalls the effigy will befall the enemy, or one stages making rain to remind nature how to make one. What counts is similarity or analogy, while distance plays no role – this magic works across distances on the supposition that analogy provides sufficient ground to secure efficacy. On the other hand there is 'contact magic' which works by physical contiguity: one has to obtain some object belonging to the enemy, or his hair, something which has been 'in touch' with the person, so by affecting the contiguous one will affect what it has touched.[20] So in magical thinking we oddly find the very mechanisms which for Freud constituted the basic dreamwork, the work of the unconscious, condensation and displacement.[21] "Similarity and contiguity are the two essential principles of process of association" (p. 140), says Freud, adding a bit later that they "are both included in the more comprehensive concept of *contact* [*Berührung*, touch]. Association by contiguity is contact in the literal sense; association by similarity is contact in the metaphorical sense. The use of the same word for the two kinds of relations is no doubt accounted for by some identity in the psychical processes concerned which we have not yet grasped [*eine von uns noch nicht erfasste Identität*]." (p. 143, SA, p. 374) So there is some basic fact of psychical processes which resides in the touch, *Berührung*, of metaphor and metonymy; two ways of touching touch each other. The cut and the touch both touch in something which eludes us. The two ways of touching, by analogy and by contiguity, touch upon, or circle around, an impossible point where the word would touch the thing, the impossible intersection of words and things.[22] The magic is based on the belief that this works, that this can be simply effectuated, that it only takes an appropriate ritual. It is based on a disavowal of the cut and firmly trusts that there is nevertheless a secret

[20] Indeed, the paramount example of the contact magic would be *Die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur der sie schlug*. Freud in a disguised reference (?) to Wagner says: "The belief that there is a magical bond between a wound and the weapon which caused it may be traced unaltered for thousands of years." (p. 139)

[21] Jakobson's famous paper on the two types of aphasia, which influenced Lacan so much (cf. "L'instance de la lettre"), singled out the core opposition metaphor/metonymy using at some point the examples from both Freud's dreamwork and Frazer's theory of magic. (*Essais de linguistique générale I*, Paris, Minuit, 1963, p. 65-6.)

[22] There is, apart from that, but not quite apart, the problem of the symbolic 'touching itself', as it were, the words being contaminated by each other through their sound contacts, similarities, echoes, reverberations. This is what constitutes homonymy, the contingent sounding alike, which is at the basis of the mechanisms of the unconscious and which Lacan, in his later work, tried to pin down with *lalangue*. Cf. *A Voice and Nothing More*, MIT, Cambridge (Mass.), p. 139 ff.

touch which operates by occult ways. 'I know very well, but nevertheless […]', the formula of disavowal made famous by Octave Mannoni (and admirably expounded by Robert Pfaller).[23] But this illusion, shared by both savages and neurotics, is 'nevertheless' not just an illusion to be simply dismissed, for words in some way do touch upon things, the symbolic does touch the real, and if there is a cut, it is not between the symbolic and the real, but they are both parts of 'the same' cut, they result from the same cut – though the cut is precisely what cannot be the same, but institutes the incommensurate. The cut intertwines both and embodies the absence of their common measure. So the supposition that words do touch upon things is at the basis, apart from magic, of psychoanalysis.

Freud, in his early days, didn't shy away from touching his patients. In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) he discusses at some point the problem of what to do when the flow of associations runs dry and the patient claims not to remember, resists remembering. "In these circumstances I make use in the first instance of a small technical device. I inform the patient that, a moment later, I shall apply pressure to his forehead, and I assure him that, all the time the pressure lasts, he will see before him a recollection in the form of a picture or will have it in his thoughts in the form of an idea occurring to him; and I pledge him to communicate this picture or idea to me, whatever it may be." (PFL 3, p. 354)[24] So the touch should remedy the gap in the free associations, it should give a push to their freedom. The touch is called in at the point where the word fails, it is the relay of the missing word. And its point is to trick the defense, to catch it off guard: "The procedure by pressure is no more than a trick for temporarily taking unawares an ego which is eager for defense." (p. 363) One touches to get around the ego, one touches to reach the unconscious. – So there is a point where psychoanalysis, in its infancy, relied on a magical touch at the point where the talking cure didn't quite work out, the touching cure had to supplement the talking cure, and this is in line with what Freud would later describe as the magical touch of the person in authority, the ruler, the royal touch which could cure (thus Charles II alleg-

[23] Cf. "Je sais bien, mais quand même" in *Clefs pour l'Imaginaire*, Paris, Seuil, 1969; and *Die Illusionen der anderen*, Frankfurt/M, Suhrkamp, 2002, respectively.

[24] One gets a graphic description in the case of Lucy R.: "I placed my hand on the patient's forehead or took her head between my hands and said: 'You will think of it under the pressure of my hand. At the moment at which I relax my pressure you will see something in front of you or something will come into your head. Catch hold of it. It will be what we are looking for. – Well, what have you seen or what has occurred to you?'" (PFL 3, p. 173-4) Oddly and tellingly, the triggering point is once described as the touch and once as the removal of the touch, the cut.

edly touched a hundred thousand persons in his life to cure them of scrofula, PFL 13, p. 96-7). And this was in line with suggestion and hypnosis, these other ways by which Freud hoped to touch directly upon the unconscious and retrieve a missing bit of the puzzle from it.

How to touch the unconscious? How to lay hands on it? This is where the basic tenet comes in that I have been insisting on: the touch is the cut, and the cut is what institutes the unconscious. The royal road to the unconscious is a roundabout, encircling it not as a piece of positive being, an information, a missing bit of the puzzle which would complete the picture, but precisely as a cut. Since we are concerned with the connection between words, those untouchables, and things, the objects of the senses, there is a double injunction which institutes the psychoanalytic situation, this reduction of both personal and objectal relations to a minimal dispositive: on the one hand, there is the absence of any prohibition or restriction concerning words – its ground rule notoriously urges just to say freely whatever happens to fall into one's head without any restraints. In psychoanalysis there is no limit to the freedom of speech, it takes the freedom of speech a bit too seriously, to the extreme. On the other hand, its counterpart is a prohibition bearing upon senses, a real sense-deprivation: the analyst, this 'inhuman partner', *ein fremder Mensch*, is in principle not to be touched, not to be seen, not to be heard (with the notorious 'silence of the analyst'), and I suppose not to be tasted and not to be smelled (is there a smell of the analyst? is he the subject supposed to smell?). Well, Freud doesn't quite insist on the last two points. With the words, anything goes; with the senses, nothing goes. The analyst should be disconnected from the five senses, cut-off from senses, he is not a creature of senses, not a sense object, a non-sensual being. He undercuts any sense certainty. So psychoanalysis on the other hand takes traditional restrictions a bit too far as well, there is extreme permissivity and extreme restriction.

Is the analyst therefore an idea, a spirit, a ghost, a beyond, a deity, a supersensible entity? The point is precisely that this disconnection turns him into an object. He is constituted by a cut, and the cut *is* the object, the object emerges in the cut. There is the presence of the analyst, essential to the process of cure, the core of the cure, but this presence is there precisely by being cut-off, an alien presence, a surmised presence,[25] an unbearable presence, an intractable presence. The point is, in this cut-off presence, to make the object

[25] Of course the presence of the analyst is always surmised on the basis of some sensual vestiges and traces. One has seen the analyst to start with and his image and visual features may well linger on in what follows in various ways, one can e. g. glimpse his shadow; one has shaken his hand, there is indeed a smell of the analyst, and there is his rustling and breathing which informs his silence.

emerge as such.[26] The object of the senses *schlechthin*, the object thwarting the senses, bending the senses, transfixing the senses, haunting the senses.

To bring it to one simple formula: *there is no limit to the freedom of speech, except for the object* – the object which touches us, which finds itself not on the other side, as a reference or the addressee of speech, but on this side of my speech, too close. Or one could say, to exacerbate the paradox, that the analyst is my own body, the body invoked through my words, the body of the other which touches me. "The point of the untouchable is that it touches,"[27] (to quote Nancy, in a last minute hommage, who has developped this point repeatedly by a very different way).

I argued, in my book on the voice, that the analyst, precisely through being silent, embodies the object voice as such.[28] The argument can be extended to other senses, not quite by claiming that he embodies five different objects, but rather that the structure of the object is something transversal, a cross-over, making the five senses overlap in the same structure. The list of the objects – the breast, the faeces, the voice, the gaze [...] – is both instructive and elusive, inconclusive, they overlap, take relay from each other, condition each other,[29] present a multiplicity of facets, precisely by not being firm and countable beings, but inhabiting only the edge, the cut, something which emerges as a surplus created by the cut.[30]

The point of the analysis is to bring the two together, the word and the

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[26] From the double injunction of free association of words and prohibition of the senses one can infer the double function of the analyst: as the addressee of speech, he is 'the subject supposed to know'; in his presence cut-off from the sensual, he embodies the object. And one can say that the supposition of the subject supposed to know is a 'necessary illusion' which triggers off analysis and has to be dissipated by analysis, while the presence of the analyst is no illusion, no supposition – he is too much there and wouldn't be dissipated. It has to be linked to the notion of subjective destitution and the drive.

[27] Cf. Nancy: "Le corps est l'unité d'un être hors de soi. [...] L'intouchable, c'est que ça touche." (*Corpus*, p. 125, 127).

[28] *A Voice and Nothing More*, p. 123 f.

[29] The acousmatic voice – the voice whose origin cannot be seen or located – is a paradigmatic case where the voice assumes extraordinary power through its counterpoint to visibility, with the absence of visible framing.

[30] Cf. Lacan: "Observe that this mark of the cut is no les obviously present in the object described by analytic theory: the mammilla, faeces, the phallus (imaginary object), the urinary flow. (An unthinkable list, if one adds, as I do, the phoneme, the gaze, the voice – the nothing." (*Écrits – A Selection*, trans. A. Sheridan, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 349). There is a 'kinship' which links the various objects *a* to the bodily apertures – the mouth, the anus, the voice, the gaze [...] – and the touch, although closely associated to openings, the mouth to start with, has the ability to affect any part of the body, one can touch the body all over, so one could say it has the

object, to effectuate their link. The body and the word intersect in the object, the body can only be touched by the word through the object, the object is their 'interface', and the point – insofar we are concerned with tactility – is to effectuate their impossible touch. To restore to the touch the transformative power through this mediation, by this roundabout way. To restore the cutting edge of experience, the sensual and bodily experience in its inextricable knot with speech, but which cannot be touched upon directly, no more than the unconscious can.

It is no doubt unusual and I suppose counterintuitive to conceive psychoanalysis as a reinvention of touch, a restoration of touch in an era which has anaesthetized and virtualized experience, made touching quasi impossible, but this is what I tried to propose.

capacity to turn any point of bodily surface into an opening. The touch bores a hole, and creates an edge.

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COURAGE BEFORE THE EVENT: THE FORCE OF AFFECTS

Adrian Johnston*

In his early Maoist reflections on politics and ideology from the 1970s, Alain Badiou decisively denounces the tendency of many French theorists of the period to portray statist power as a monolithic colossus overshadowing the relatively weak, feeble masses, disparate and dispersed crowds whose sole option for defanged rebellion is the "intimate revolt" of desiring away in the dark corners and recesses of their depoliticized libidinal economies.[1] He vehemently asserts that Marxism requires seeing things the other way around: Statist power is inherently fragile and reactionary in the face of the masses[2] (an assertion echoing key statements from Mao's infamous "little red book," such as "We must never be cowed by the bluster of reactionaries"[3] and "We should rid our ranks of all impotent thinking. All views that overestimate the strength of the enemy and underestimate the strength of the people are wrong"[4]). Instead of positing the ideological and material domination of the alliance between capital and state as the point of departure for political analyses, a proper Marxist, according to Badiou, must begin with an opposed axiom: "*it is resistance which is the secret of domination*."[5] A few years later, in *Theory of the Subject*, he explicitly links this line of thought with Mao's dictum that one must have confidence in the masses.[6] In this vein, Badiou maintains

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[1] Alain Badiou, "The Flux and the Party: In the Margins of Anti-Oedipus" (trans. Laura Balladur and Simon Krysl), *Polygraph*, no. 15/16, 2004, p. 76, 78, 79–80, 84.

[2] Alain Badiou and François Balmès, *De l'idéologie*, Paris: François Maspero, 1976, p. 47, 48–49, 50–51, 53–54.

[3] Mao *Tse-Tung*, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* (ed. Stuart R. Schram), New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1967, p. 45.

[4] Mao, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 46.

[5] Badiou and Balmès, p. 50.

[6] Alain Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982, p. 345.

that, "In the matter of Marxist politics and the class subject, the one manner of giving up is to lose confidence."[7] He then proceeds to the statement that, "The essence of confidence is having confidence in confidence."[8] For Jacques Lacan, there is no Other of the Other, truth of the truth, or act of the act.[9] However, an essential feature of Lacanian desire is its reflexive character. As Lacan puts it in the seventh seminar of 1959-1960, "desire [...] is always desire in the second degree, desire of desire"[10] (along these lines, Badiou speaks of the "pure desire"[11] moving a subject-of-an-event as "the desire of a desire,"[12] the subjective willing of the willful pursuit of the implications of an event-revealed truth). Put differently, Lacan's 1959 proposition regarding the modes of desire peculiar to the subjectivity of speaking beings alleges that there is only desire of desire (of desire...). Badiou says something similar about confidence. On the basis of this, one could contend that theoretical confidence in "communist" *qua* generic-egalitarian political projects must be re-doubled and reinforced by a corresponding practical confidence surging forth out of the intermingled sources of will and affect.[13]

In his 1988 *magnum opus Being and Event*, Badiou, as is well known, uses the word "state" in two overlapping senses: on the one hand, the ontological-phenomenological conception of the state as the representational architecture of a state-of-the-situation (or, in the language of *Logics of Worlds*, the transcendental regime of a world), and, on the other hand, the state according to the common, everyday understanding of the word as referring to the institutional apparatuses of government endowed with a sufficiently recognized quota of sovereignty. At the beginning of "Meditation Eight" of *Being and Event*, a meditation devoted to the delineation of this concept of the state at the level of his set theoretic ontology, Badiou claims:

> The apparent solidity of the world of presentation is merely a result

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

[9] Jacques Lacan, "*Discours à l'École freudienne de Paris*," *Autres écrits* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller), Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001, p. 265.

[10] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller; trans. Dennis Porter), New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992, p. 14.

[11] Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (trans. Alberto Toscano), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 135.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[13] Adrian Johnston, "'Let a thousand flowers bloom!': Some Brief Remarks on and Responses to Žižek's 'Badiou: Notes from an Ongoing Debate,'" *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2007.

> of the action of structure, even if *nothing* is outside such a result. It is necessary to prohibit that catastrophe of presentation which would be its encounter with its own void, the presentational occurrence of inconsistency as such, or the ruin of the One.[14]

Careful attention should be paid to the fact that Badiou qualifies the "solidity" of the state-of-the-situation (i.e., the "world of presentation" resulting from "the action of structure") as merely "apparent." The full implications of this qualification for politics subsequently become clearer in the concluding chapter of his 1998 book *Metapolitics* (a chapter entitled "Politics as Truth Procedure"). Therein, he develops the implications for politics of *Being and Event*'s eighth meditation, arguing that a genuine political event causes the previously mysterious, spectral, and (most importantly) immeasurable excess of state power suddenly to become something with a precise and known measure[15]:

> The real characteristic of the political event and the truth procedure that it sets off is that a political event fixes the errancy and assigns a measure to the superpower of the State. It fixes the power of the State. Consequently, the political event interrupts the subjective errancy of the power of the State. It configures the state of the situation. It gives it a figure; it configures its power; it measures it.[16]

He continues:

> Empirically, this means that whenever there is a genuinely political event, the State reveals itself. It reveals its excess of power, its repressive dimension. But it also reveals a measure for the usually invisible excess. For it is essential to the normal functioning of the State that its power remains measureless, errant, unassignable. The political event puts an end to all this by assigning a visible measure to the excessive power of the State.[17]

This power's unknown, phantom-like virtuality is compelled to trans-

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[14] Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* (trans. Oliver Feltham), London: Continuum, 2005, p. 93.

[15] Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 96–97, 225.

[16] Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics* (trans. Jason Barker), London: Verso, 2005, p. 145.

[17] *Ibid*.

form itself, in response to the challenge posed by a revolutionary event, into a concretely expressed counter-exertion. In so doing, it loses something in the eyes of those subjected to it.[18] Paradoxically, power's passage from potentiality to actuality – the actuality of its exercise is often taken as the essential proof of power's potency – results in the diminution of this power itself (not due to an expenditure of a finite quantity of force usually held in reserve, but because the scope and limits of power are made to emerge into the light of publicly visible day – the famous photograph of the lone protester facing the column of Red Army tanks taken during the Tiananmen Square happening in China epitomizes this effect whereby state power is strangely diminished at the very moment it displays itself in all its raw, ferocious strength). Destructive, enraged outbursts of undiluted brutality are, as Mao himself observes in 1942,[19] often symptomatic manifestations of an underlying impotence on the verge of being revealed, desperate last resorts to protect an insubstantial Symbolic authority (beneath which lies nothing more than the physically violent means of blatant suppression). In Lacanian terms, the Badiouian political event reduces the state apparatus from a Symbolic authority to an Imaginary rival, from a quasi-omnipotent mediating medium to a less-than-omnipotent external adversary. Resonating with these reflections here, Giorgio Agamben remarks that, "The troublemaker is precisely the one who tries to force sovereign power to translate itself into actuality."[20]

Truly effective state power is thus always and necessarily a shadowy, potential sort of power.[21] For instance, it's worth observing that an institution common to authoritarian regimes is the secret police (who abduct people clandestinely in the middle of the night, who torture dissidents and subversives behind closed doors, who carry out executions of the regime's opponents in hidden locations). This can't really be due to shame or guilt on the part of the tyrannical rulers (such tyrants are, with justification, frequently presumed to be sociopathically devoid of conscience); nor can it be ascribed to the desire to "maintain appearances," to conceal the brutal nature of the regime (the public is, in nearly every case, aware of the dictatorial status of their given state authority – and, moreover, such a government wants the governed to be acutely aware of its willingness savagely to quash resistance to it). Rather, the phenomenon of the secret police as an institutional feature of autocratic state power reflects an understanding that the direct and visible

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] Mao, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 44–45.

[20] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (trans. Daniel Heller–Roazen), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 47.

[21] Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 144.

display of power in all its violent actuality somehow detracts from the intimidating allure of authority as a fearsome myth, as a force known about only at the level of rumor and speculation (after all, people's imaginations are capable of concocting the most horrific of scenarios, so leaving them to their own imaginations is indeed a clever strategy). This institution is, in fact, an ingenious way actually to exercise power while, nonetheless, preserving the mysterious immeasurability associated with power-as-potentiality. The devil one doesn't know is feared much more than the known devil. The overt actualization of power lessens this fear supporting the recognition of the Symbolic dimension of the state's authority. Keeping the workings of this power covert preserves this fear – and, in turn, this fear both preserves the recognition of Symbolic authority as well as deters the issuance of challenges that might call its bluff. What sort of courage has the chance to dispel this fear, this state terror?

What is needed here with such terrible urgency is a Leninist-type bravery buttressing the confidence to bet on change before it comes about, to wager on yet-to-occur possible trajectories of transformation that likely appear, from within the constraints of the present world, to be highly unlikely long-shots. This betting on act/event-level transformations, this gambling when the chips seem to be down licensed by the conviction that the big Other isn't, so to speak, really so big after all, is a version of what this author elsewhere has depicted as a pre-evental form of forcing.[22] Whereas Badiou restricts the procedure of forcing (*forçage*) to being a post-evental process[23] – events first must mysteriously arise, and only thereafter are there subjects who can engage in procedures of forcing that aim to inscribe the implications of events into situations – this intervention here, in line with its interest in pondering the conditions of possibility for act/event-level change (and this *contra* Badiou's prohibition of contemplating the pre-conditions for events[24]), believes that it's both valid and crucial to conceive of pre-evental varieties of forcing.

The exposition of the concept of forcing offered in "Part VIII" of *Being*

[22] Adrian Johnston, "The Quick and the Dead: Alain Badiou and the Split Speeds of Transformation," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2007. Cf. also Adrian Johnston, "From the Spectacular Act to the Vanishing Act: Badiou, Žižek, and the Politics of Lacanian Theory," *Did Somebody Say Ideology?: Slavoj Žižek in a Post-Ideological Universe* (ed. Fabio Vighi and Heiko Feldner), Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007.

[23] Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 206, 209. Cf. Alain Badiou, "*L'entretien de Bruxelles*," *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 526, 1990, p. 9. Alain Badiou, *Logiques des mondes: L'être et l'événement, 2*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006, p. 399.

[24] Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 371.

and Event focuses on the temporal mode of the future anterior (this focus on the time-tense of the "will have been" occurs elsewhere too[25] – including, in Badiou's 1985 text *Can Politics be Thought?*, a depiction of political interventions as wagers [i.e., bets or gambles] wagered on the basis of a calculation regarding an incalculable future, a future that just might retroactively vindicate such calculated interventions[26]). Temporality is indeed a key component of the Badiouian concept of *forçage*,[27] with Badiou, apropos politics, insisting that, "the future anterior is the real political time."[28] The militant subject-of-an-event engaged in the faithful labor of forcing operates as if the present situation, with its corresponding state and encyclopedia, were already completely reworked from the standpoint of the event's truth. In other words, such forcing subjects act under the assumption that it will have been the case that evental truths, presently indiscernible and undecidable as to their veridicality in the here-and-now situation's encyclopedic knowledge-regime, eventually turn out to be exhaustively verified as veridical.[29] Badiou explains:

> [...] *every subject generates nominations*. Empirically, this point is manifest. What is most explicitly attached to the proper names which designate a subjectivization is an arsenal of words which make up the deployed matrix of faithful marking-out. Think of "faith," "charity," "sacrifice," "salvation" (Saint Paul); or of "party," "revolution," "politics" (Lenin); or of "sets," "ordinals," "cardinals" (Cantor), and of everything which then articulates, stratifies and ramifies these terms. What is the exact function of these terms? Do they solely designate elements presented in the situation? They would then be redundant with regard to the established language of the situation. Besides, one can distinguish an ideological enclosure from the generic procedure of a truth insofar as the terms of the former, via displacements devoid of any signification, do no more than substitute for those already declared appropriate by the

[25] Alain Badiou, "On a Finally Objectless Subject" (trans. Bruce Fink), *Who Comes After the Subject?* (ed. Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy), New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 31. Cf. Alain Badiou, "*La vérité: forçage et innommable*," *Conditions*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992, p. 206–207.

[26] Alain Badiou, *Peut-on penser la politique?*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985, p. 107.

[27] Jason Barker, *Alain Badiou: A Critical Introduction*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 109.

[28] Badiou, *Peut-on penser la politique?*, p. 107.

[29] Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 135, 136–137. Cf. also Ray Brassier, "Nihil Unbound: Remarks on Subtractive Ontology and Thinking Capitalism," *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy* (ed. Peter Hallward), London: Continuum, 2004, p. 54. Andrew Gibson, *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 60, 84, 136.

> situation. In contrast, the names used by a subject – who supports the local configuration of a generic truth – *do not, in general, have a referent in the situation*. Therefore, they do not double the established language. But then what use are they? These are words which do designate terms, but terms which "will have been" presented in a *new* situation: the one which results from the addition to the situation of a truth (an indiscernible) of that situation.[30]

He continues:

> With the resources of the situation, with its multiples, its language, the subject generates names whose referent is in the future anterior: this is what supports belief. Such names "will have been" assigned a referent, or a signification, when the situation will have appeared in which the indiscernible – which is only represented (or included) – is finally presented as a truth in the first situation.[31]

These 1988 delineations of forcing are foreshadowed three years earlier in a two-part article (entitled "Six Properties of Truth") whose lines of argumentation clearly anticipate certain theses central to *Being and Event*. In 1985, Badiou speaks of "the excessive signifier of what comes to happen,"[32] namely, those names (mentioned in the passages from *Being and Event* quoted immediately above) that will have taken on a recognized reference/significance in the hypothesized new situation (with its altered encyclopedia) resulting from event-wrought alterations carried out by those subjects faithfully toiling on behalf of their chosen evental truth-cause. In this same two-part article, he also links forcing to an anticipated future situation in which those strange signifiers (including an event's name as well as nominations of certain powerfully pertinent consequences flowing from this event) presently employed by the subject-of-an-event – both an event and its signifiers are indiscernible/undecidable in the here-and-now (and, hence, not recognized as veridical by the *status quo* situation's encyclopedic knowledge-regime) – become veridical *qua* verified by a new situational encyclopedia (i.e., eventually get assigned acknowledged referents and significations).[33]

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[30] Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 397–398.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 398.

[32] Alain Badiou, "*Six propriétés de la vérité II*," *Ornicar?*, no. 33, April-June 1985, p. 123.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 141. Cf. also Fabien Tarby, *La philosophie d'Alain Badiou*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005, p. 116.

In short, as Badiou himself indicates, a subject-of-an-event employs the useful, effective fiction of a world-to-come. More precisely, such a subject, when engaged in forcing, "fictively" treats this world-to-come (i.e., the anticipated new situation as transformed on the basis of a given event and its truth[s]) as if it were already here in the present, as if the time of its future arrival is now. This "as if" serves as a lever or fulcrum for moving the not-yet-fully-transformed world of today toward and into the uncharted terrain of a new tomorrow. Badiou claims:

> [...] we can always *anticipate* the idea of a completed generic truth. The generic being of a truth is never presented. A truth is uncompletable. But what we can know, on a formal level, is that a truth will always have taken place as a generic infinity. This allows the possible fictioning of the effects of such a truth having-taken-place. That is, the subject can make the hypothesis of a Universe where this truth, of which the subject is a local point, will have completed its generic totalization. I call the anticipatory hypothesis of the generic being of a truth, a *forcing*. A forcing is the powerful fiction of a *completed* truth. Starting with such a fiction, I can *force* new bits of knowledge, without even *verifying* this knowledge.[34]

Part of what forcing involves is a confidence buttressed by an investment (perhaps of an affective sort) in the "anticipatory hypothesis" of a novel situation on the horizon, a different *monde-à-venir* (in his recent study of Badiou's philosophy, Fabien Tarby explicitly links the "it will have been true" mode of hypothesizing shared by all forms of forcing to confidence[35]). Badiou maintains, in the material from *Being and Event* quoted several paragraphs above, that a signifier forcefully deployed by a subject-of-an-event (i.e., a name tied to an event-truth trajectory) is "what supports belief." Hence, one of the values of *forçage* is its capacity, as a posited yet-to-come fiction anchoring confident belief in a specific conviction, to inspire courage in subjects, a courage the Badiou of 1982's *Theory of the Subject* describes as enabling further aleatory steps into the dark unknown (as what isn't counted and coded by any existent encyclopedic knowledge-regime) of that which is in "excess" of the domain already covered by "law"[36] (i.e., by what Badiou will come to call a

[34] Alain Badiou, "Philosophy and truth," *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return of Philosophy* (trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens), London: Continuum, 2003, p. 65.

[35] Tarby, *La philosophie d'Alain Badiou*, p. 17–18.

[36] Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, p. 310.

state-regulated re/presentational situation and/or a transcendentally-structured world). Peter Hallward describes this Badiouian courage as "the courage to wager on Pascal's model,"[37] namely, an affective fortitude enabling the subject-of-an-event to make choices whose calculability and outcomes aren't given in advance by the existent re/presentational order of the state-of-the-situation.

In this spirit, the conclusion of *Logics of Worlds* closes with an enthusiastic affirmation of heroism[38] (with Badiou responding to those who, for whatever reasons, purse their lips with disapproving discomfort at his impassioned invocations of courageous militancy in the service of universal truths[39]). Although, in line with a certain philosophical traditionalism coloring his corpus, Badiou seemingly is not a thinker for whom emotions or feelings are very important – if anything, one might suspect that these forces would be relegated to the denigrated status of crude, vulgar psychological elements of an all-too-human animality to be broken with in and through evental subjectification – affects are (as Lacan might phrase it) not without their place in his thought. As early as *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou appeals to specific affects as integrally involved in the dynamics of true transformations. And, starting in his 1993 pamphlet on ethics, the post-1988 Badiou continues to affirm the value of certain affective currents in the subjective sustenance of evental truth-trajectories.

One of the central tenets of Badiou's *Ethics* is the proposition that the fundamental ethical maxim of any and every "ethics of truths" (with "truth" defined in a Badiouian fashion as a post-evental production) is the injunction, bearing upon subjects-of-events, to "Keep going!," to "Continue!," along their aleatory paths of inquiring and forcing.[40] What's more, as indicated earlier, walking these uncertainly situated paths requires a measure of courage, a confidence (and, as per *Theory of the Subject*, a confidence in this confidence – or, as Badiou puts it in his *Ethics*, "*being faithful to a fidelity*"[41]) reinforced by

[37] Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 38.

[38] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 536–537.

[39] Alain Badiou, "On Evil: An Interview with Alain Badiou (with Christoph Cox and Molly Whalen)," *Cabinet*, no. 5, Winter 2001–2002, *www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/alainbadiou.php*. Cf. Alain Badiou, "The Contemporary Figure of the Soldier in Politics and Poetry" (University of California at Los Angeles, January 2007), http://www.lacan.com/badsold.htm.

[40] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (trans. Peter Hallward), London: Verso, 2001, p. 44, 47, 50, 90–91. Cf. Alain Badiou, *Circonstances, 1: Kosovo, 11 septembre, Chirac/Le Pen*, Paris: Éditions Léo Scheer, 2003, p. 11. Cf. Gibson, *Beckett and Badiou*, p. 72–73, 97.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

the signifier-names speculatively deployed in connection with the anticipatory hypotheses hazarded by forcing. However, there is an obvious question to ask at this juncture, a question posed earlier here and one which Badiou himself poses in a chapter on Beckett in the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*:

> Where does the courage of effort come from? I think this is a very important question, because it is in general the question of knowing where the courage of holding to any procedure of truth comes from. The question is ultimately the following: Where does the courage of truth come from?[42]

On the same page in which he raises this query regarding the origin of subjective fortitude in the face of the uncertain unknowns unfurling dizzyingly beyond the closed, comfortable confines of the predictable state-secured situation, Badiou responds by declaring that, "The courage of the continuation of effort is drawn from words themselves."[43] But, as seen, these aren't any old words – these are the signifier-names eagerly and impatiently heralding a new world-to-come, proudly and assertively announcing, through the mouths of faithful subjects, a not-yet-present situation as though it were already present in the here-and-now. Elsewhere, in another piece on Beckett, Badiou knots together forcing, naming, and courage. He states that, "to find the name of what happens demands an invention within language, a poetic forcing."[44] In a sense, all processes of forcing involve poetry *qua* the creation of new words, phrases, and ways of using language so as both to baptize a past event not generally recognized by the conventional linguistic-symbolic codes of one's situation (codes encoded in the form of an encyclopedia and situational state) as well as to announce a future situation-yet-to-come hypothesized and anticipated in the present. Immediately after invoking this notion of "poetic forcing," Badiou speaks of the language that names "what happens" (i.e., the past event and its forced future-anterior, top-to-bottom transformation of the world) as a source generating courage.[45] This tortured, "ill said" prose of subjects-of-events, a poorly situated and widely unrecognized prose torn out of select pages of the situational encyclopedia and forged into something new for the purposes of unlicensed forcing, provides

[42] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, p. 106.

[43] *Ibid*.

[44] Alain Badiou, "What Happens" (trans. Alberto Toscano; rev. Nina Power), *On Beckett* (ed. Nina Power and Alberto Toscano), Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003, p. 114.

[45] Badiou, "What Happens," p. 114–115.

"the courage to continue."[46] So, it would seem that the event of nomination comes first (a nomination that names both an appeared-and-disappeared prior event as well as a hypothetical situation/world *à venir* thoroughly transformed by this named prior event and its consequent implications), followed by the possibility of a subsequent subjective courage leaning on these names and what they anticipate.[47]

In *Logics of Worlds*, further evidence surfaces of Badiou tending (at least temporally) to prioritize names over affects in the process of forcing. Therein, he characterizes courage as a capacity to face "points."[48] One of the conceptual coordinates added to Badiouian philosophy by this 2006 sequel to *Being and Event* is this notion of the point. In several contexts, Badiou, avowedly influenced in his youth by both Sartre (proponent of a philosophy of freedom celebrating the powers of subjectivity as an autonomous negativity) and Althusser (advocate of a structuralist Marxism denigrating Sartrean-style subjectivity as an ideological illusion secreted by trans-individual socio-historical mechanisms), confesses that one of his deepest-seated philosophical ambitions has always been and continues to be to succeed at combining these two seemingly antithetical influences as indispensable parts of a single philosophical orientation.[49] According to *Logics of Worlds*, some worlds (although not all worlds), as onto-logical situations (i.e., domains/regions within which appearances appear in line with the particular governing framework of a given corresponding "transcendental regime"), contain within themselves points *qua* nodes which, when confronted, force an either/or choice between mutually-exclusive alternatives (some other worlds, designated as "atonal," lack points – these flat, grey reality-systems are devoid of immanently embedded internal catalysts for choices not already covered by these same systems[50]). The concept of the point is one example of Badiou's efforts to think both senses of the term "subject" (i.e., as simultaneously Sartrean-style autonomous negativity and Althusserian-style structural subjection). In fact, Badiou explicitly mentions Sartre ("the theoretician of absolute liberty") by name in the portion of *Logics of Worlds* dealing with points (asserting there

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[47] Fabien Tarby, *Matérialismes d'aujourd'hui: De Deleuze à Badiou*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005, p. 107–108.

[48] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 96.

[49] Alain Badiou, *Beckett: L'increvable désir*, Paris: Hachette, 1995, p. 7. Cf. also : Alain Badiou, "Can Change be Thought?: A Dialogue with Alain Badiou (with Bruno Bosteels)," *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions* (ed. Gabriel Riera), Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 242.

[50] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 442–443, 601, 612.

that Sartre's plays involve a "theater of points" in their staging of scenarios in which "the infinite complexity of nuances" and "apparent chaos of the world" collapse into instances of pure one-or-the-other choices).[51] In a manner akin to his description of evental sites as rare intra-situational loci, Badiou proceeds to contrast the normal run of things in quotidian reality with those exceptional circumstances or occurrences irrupting in the form of intra-worldly points – "the world of ordinary action is not the world of Ideas, of 'yes or no,' of affirmations or of points. It is the variation of occasions, multiform impurity."[52] A point functions so as to concentrate and condense this "multiform impurity" (i.e., the varying degrees of existence and plethora of appearances distributed across a world by its structuring transcendental regime) into two sole possibilities; it polarizes a worldly Many into a dualistic Two.[53] As Badiou articulates it, "a point is essentially a binary dramatization of the nuances of appearance."[54] He goes on to add that, "to decide is always to filter the infinite through the Two."[55] Moreover, Badiou remarks that everyone is familiar with points from their life experience in the form of inescapable decisions and pressing dilemmas[56] (i.e., what the young Maoist Badiou straightforwardly describes as "simple, but fundamental, choices"[57]).

A Badiouian point is not just a node of polarizing concentration/condensation subsisting within a worldly network – the possibilities for either/or binary choices it harbors are possibilities irresolvable within the coordinates of the same worldly network within which it subsists. A point calls for a genuine decision in the strongest sense insofar as the act of choosing in the face of a confronted point cannot appeal automatically to any pre-given laws or rules in the already-there *status quo* situation of the world; habituated mechanical recurrence to established adjudicating procedures and principles fails to provide an authentic measure of the implications and stakes stretching beyond this node within structure, a node within structure where structure no longer exhaustively determines itself. Badiou maintains that subjects-of-events, in encountering and passing through points (i.e., in facing and making decisions when confronted by these either/or forks in the, as it were, road

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 426.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 427.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 438–439, 461, 614.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 459.
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] Alain Badiou, "Matters of Appearance: An Interview with Alain Badiou (with Lauren Sedofsky)," *Artforum International*, vol. 45, no. 3, November 2006, p. 322.
[57] Alain Badiou, "*Projet d'intervention d'Alain Badiou au 6e Congres du P.S.U.*," *Contribution au problème de la construction d'un parti marxiste–léniniste de type nouveau*, Paris: François Maspero, 1970, p. 38.

to Damascus), construct post-evental "bodies" of truth (with "body" being another conceptual innovation of *Logics of Worlds*) – "guarantee of connection between subjective time and eternity, the choice, if it is energetic and without condition, localizes the subject in the element of truth."[58] In line with the general theme of the immanence of the eternal (as evental truths) to time running throughout *Logics of Worlds*,[59] Badiou ties together two related assertions here: One, decisions taken with respect to points unfold as a diachronic-temporal sequence of particular choices in a world; Two, the event-linked truths-separate-from-knowledge informing and being formed by these decisions, decisions taken without advance coverage or guarantee by a pre-existent worldly order, are timeless *qua* resistant to being situated with respect to the diachronic-temporal matrices of standard versions of historical time. Hence, points, as potential loci in which the out-of-historical-time event-subject-truth axis confronts the chrono-logic of the situated world and its history, conjoin the eternal and the temporal. But, what is a Badiouian body, and how is this concept linked to that of the point?

In the "Dictionary of Concepts" at the back of *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou defines a body in his sense as a "multiple-being that, under condition of an event, carries a subjective formalism and hence makes this subjective formalism appear in a world"[60] (with "subjective formalism" being defined as "the different combinations by which a body enters into a relation with a present"[61]). That is to say, a Badiouian body (as conceptualized in "Book VII" of *Logics of Worlds*, entitled "What is a body?") is an "agent" operating within a world on behalf of an evental truth.[62] If a Badiouian subject is a finite, local instance of an infinite, non-local truth,[63] then a body is that which concretely materializes within the world the post-evental subject-truth trajectory bisecting this same world. A body bears this trajectory and deploys it in contact with worldly situations.[64] Badiou describes the body as the "materiality of a subject of truth."[65] Obviously, this is a definition of "body" that has no necessary relation with the common meaning of this word (although

[58] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 454.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 17–18, 21–22, 42, 46, 76, 593. Cf. also: Badiou, "Matters of Appearance," p. 249.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 606.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 609.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 473, 475.

[63] Badiou, "On a Finally Objectless Subject," p. 25. Cf. also: Tarby, *La philosophie d'Alain Badiou*, p. 17; Tarby, *Matérialismes d'aujourd'hui*, p. 106.

[64] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 53, 55. Cf. also: Badiou, "Matters of Appearance," p. 252.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 505.

Badiou might allow that the physical bodies of individuals, insofar as they give themselves over to appropriation by more-than-physical event-subject-truth sequences, can be transubstantiated from bodies as mere organic entities to bodies as material bearers of trans-world truths made immanent to worlds).

Logics of Worlds stipulates that, relative to a given world in which degrees of existence (running from the inexistent as an invisible absence of appearing in a world to the maximally existent as the most intensely visible appearing in a world) are distributed in a certain fashion by that world's transcendental regime, an event revolutionarily renders that which was invisibly inexistent before its happening brilliantly visible as the most palpably existent worldly constituent in the wake of its post-evental aftermath.[66] In this vein, Badiou claims that, "the elements of a body [...] are those whose identity with the becoming existent of the inexistent are measured by the intensity of their own existence."[67] He then stipulates that, "a post-evental body is composed of all the elements of a site that invest the totality of their existence in their identity with the trace of the event,"[68] adding that, "if one employs a military metaphor for it: the body is the ensemble of everything mobilized by the trace of the event"[69] (and, in his April 2006 radio interview given in connection with the publication of *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou speaks of parties as political bodies, arguing that there is a contemporary crisis affecting these bodies' capacities for action and, hence, testifying to the need for a new, yet-to-be-specified form of political organization[70]). A few pages later, Badiou elaborates further:

> A body, in its totality, is that which gathers the terms of a site maximally engaged in a sort of ontological allegiance to the new appearing of an inexistent which makes a trace of the event. That which is tapped and mobilized by the post-evental sublimation of the inexistent is a body. Its coherence is that of the internal compatibility of its elements, guaranteed by their shared ideal subordination to the primordial trace. But the efficacy of a body, oriented toward the consequences (and therefore toward the subjective formalism, which is the art of consequences as

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 397–398, 400, 416, 417–418, 600–601. Cf. also: Alain Badiou, "The Paris Commune: A Political Declaration on Politics," *Polemics* (trans. Steve Corcoran), London: Verso, 2006, p. 286–287; Badiou, "Matters of Appearance," p. 251.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Alain Badiou, "*La logique des mondes: Audio-Lecture – France Culture*," http://www.lacan.com/badiouone.htm.

> the constitution of a new present), plays itself out locally, point by point. The test of a body is always that of an alternative. A point is that which returns the constituents of a body to the challenge of Two.[71]

Badiou then proceeds to mention what he terms the "organs" of such a body, these being the sub-component parts of a subject-bearing body fashioned so as to address specific challenges raised by particular points encountered along the way of a truth-trajectory. Organs are "the immanent synthesis of the regional efficacy of a body."[72] One could say that a Badiouian body evolves, sprouting new organs and becoming endowed with greater virulent vitality, through aleatory collisions with various points cropping up along its path[73] (as the cliché saying goes, that which doesn't kill it only makes it stronger) – "The efficacy of the subjective becoming of a body is [...] a tributary of the points of a world that it encounters."[74]

What does this detour through the inter-connected concepts of points and bodies (as formulated in *Logics of Worlds*) have to do with the prior guiding thread of discussion, namely, the apparent prioritization of names over affects in Badiou's accounts of forcing? The answer resides in "Section 2" of "Book VII" of *Logics of Worlds*, a section simply entitled "Lacan." Therein, Badiou alleges that the Lacanian notion of corporeality is one according to which the body is ultimately just "the receptacle for the struck blow of the Other"[75] (i.e., the bodily being of the individual is an existence overwritten by the signifiers of the symbolic order). Affect, according to Badiou's version of Lacan's perspective on these matters, is therefore nothing more than a quasi-corporeal registration of "blows" coming from the big Other, an embodied effect of the impressions made on corporeal materiality by signifying being(s)[76] – "the body is subordinated to the signifier. On this account, it is, for the subject, exposition to the Other; there is no action of the body, but only its investment by structure, and the sign of this investment is affect."[77] The Badiouian reading of the Lacanian body obviously brings the latter conception of the corporeal into line with treating the body as a concrete bearer of and material support for an event-subject-truth configuration – "we are able to grant to Lacan that the body is the place of the Other, since for us it

[71] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 492.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 493.
[73] *Ibid.,* p. 525.
[74] *Ibid.,* p. 476.
[75] *Ibid.,* p. 499.
[76] *Ibid.,* p. 500.
[77] *Ibid.*

is nothing but the evental becoming-Other of the site which commands the possibility of a body of truth."[78] On the next page, Badiou expands upon this link with Lacan:

> [...] there is the effect of truth only through incorporation. To what? To the new body that electrifies the struck blow of the trace. If [...] it is precisely through its affect that the human animal recognizes that he participates, as an incorporated body, in some subject of truth, one will say, like Lacan, that "it is as incorporated that structure produces affect" [...] I interconnect without hesitation with Lacan's construction, which incorporates the natural body as a stigmata of the Other.[79]

Succinctly stated, Badiou, ventriloquizing through Lacan, posits that names (as signifier-like "traces" emitted by the alterity of events) precede affects (as tangible "electrifications" of these evental names effectuated through such marks being registered and assimilated by subject-bearing bodies) – in short, the latter (i.e., affects) are the subsequent effects of the former (i.e., names). Returning to the example of courage, an affect crucial to the strong beliefs and convinced confidence essential to the subjective labor of forcing, the implication here would be that the courage of post-evental subjectivity comes from elsewhere, more specifically, from the signifier-like traces arising out of events.

And yet, despite a tendency to treat affects as after-effects of event-related processes, Badiou, in his *Ethics*, doesn't exactly maintain that the names mobilized by the forcing procedures engaged in by subjects-of-events generate affects (whether courage or any other affects) *ex nihilo*, conjuring into existence emotions and feelings that were utterly absent in the individual prior to his/her transubstantiation into a subject. Instead, ethical perseverance is described there as harnessing the already-there affective resources of the human animal:

> The "technique" of consistency is singular in each case, depending on the "animal" traits of some-one. To the consistency of the subject that he is in part become, having been convoked [*requis*] and seized by a truth-process, this particular "some-one" will contribute his anguish and agitation, this other his tall stature and cool composure, this other his voracious taste for domination, and these others their melancholy, or timidity [...] All the ma-

[78] *Ibid.,* p. 501.
[79] *Ibid.,* p. 502.

terial of human multiplicity can be fashioned, linked, by a "consistency" – while at the same time, of course, it opposes to this fashioning the worst kinds of inertia, and exposes the "some-one" to the permanent temptation of giving up, of returning to the mere belonging to the "ordinary" situation, of erasing the effects of the not-known.[80]

Badiou adds:

> The place of ethics is indicated by the chronic conflict between two functions of the multiple material that makes up the whole being of a "some-one": on the one hand, its simple deployment, his belonging to the situation, or what we might call the *principle of interest*; on the other, consistency, the linking of the known by the not-known, or what we might call the *subjective principle*.[81]

In the first of these two quotations immediately above, Badiou describes affects (and, more generally, the varying capacities and dispositions of particular human animals) as pre-existent aspects of individuals and not as after-the-fact effects produced by animal individuality being transformed into a form of post-evental subjectivity with its supporting more-than-biological body. This already-there "material of human multiplicity" (including, as he indicates, the emotions, feelings, and passions of pre-evental individuals) can be harnessed by "the consistency of the subject" (in the terms of *Logics of Worlds*, by the subjective formalism borne by an eventally charged body). However, as Badiou also observes, affective animality is a double-edged sword capable of slicing both ways: Although essential to the enduring coherence of event-subject-truth constellations, these volatile features of human individuals inherently entail the risk of betrayals of or reactions against such constellations (through a de-subjectifying return to non-evental "business as usual" in the interests of psychological and/or physiological comfort). As Badiou puts it later in his *Ethics*, "The Immortal exists only in and by the mortal animal"[82] (similarly, in *Theory of the Subject*, he asserts that there is always a body where there is a subject, but not vice versa[83]). In other words, the characteristics of "the mortal animal" (such as the spectrum of this creature's affects) simultaneously shelter the twin potentials to both enable and disrupt evental subjectification (i.e., the "Immortal"). Furthermore,

[80] Badiou, *Ethics*, p. 48.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[83] Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, p. 306.

subjects-of-events cannot come into effective existence without enabling affects buttressing their attachments to events and these events' respective truths. In *Ethics*, Badiou, following his distinction between "principles of interest" (affects as gluing individual human animals to known situations, these being the affective interests shaken up and disturbed by the impact of an event[84]) and "subjective principles" (affects as reinforcing the positions of subjects within post-evental truth-trajectories) invoked in the second of the two block quotations above, refers to subjectively harnessed affects (i.e., subjective principles) as "disinterested interests"; when the feelings and passions of individuals are decoupled from animal-level self-concern and reorganized through the deployed discipline of a persevering fidelity to a post-evental truth-process, these affective forces are transubstantiated from principles of interest into subjective principles or disinterested interests.[85]

Badiou is well aware that his ethical glosses on the distinction between the all-too-human individual and the "immortal" subject of truth sound, at least initially, quite similar to very traditional intellectualist injunctions to renounce the impure affects often preached by philosophy from Plato onward. But, through his conception of "affects of truth," he sees himself as rejecting this doctrine of renunciation:

> Let us call "renunciation" the belief that we must cut back on the pursuit of our interests – the pursuit which, outside truth, constitutes the whole of our multiple-being. Is there renunciation when a truth seizes me? Certainly not, since this seizure manifests itself by unequalled intensities of existence. We can name them: in love, there is happiness; in science, there is joy (in Spinoza's sense: intellectual beatitude); in politics, there is enthusiasm; and in art, there is pleasure. These "affects of truth," at the same moment that they signal the entry of some-one into a subjective composition, render empty all considerations of renunciation. Experience amply demonstrates the point, more than amply.[86]

Corresponding to the four "conditions" generating the truths handled by philosophy (i.e., love, science, politics, and art), Badiou enumerates four affects: happiness (corresponding to love), joy (corresponding to science), enthusiasm (corresponding to politics), and pleasure (corresponding to art). In relation to these four conditions, the four affects of truth arguably function as both catalysts and by-products at the same time, carrying subjects

[84] Tarby, *La philosophie d'Alain Badiou*, p. 146.
[85] Badiou, *Ethics*, p. 48–49.
[86] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

along in amorous, scientific, political, and artistic truth-procedures as well as being generated in and through these same truth-procedures. Perhaps such affects signal the establishment of a self-reinforcing virtuous circle, a positive feedback-loop, for the subjects of these truth-procedures (for example, enthusiasm draws a political subject further into a more committed engagement with the procedures of a genuine politics, and this further engagement generates further commitment-enhancing enthusiasm).

In "Book I" of *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou, describing specific affects as "local anthropological signs" of "new intra-worldly relations" ushered into existence through subjective fidelities to event-disclosed truths, reiterates these pairings of politics-enthusiasm, art-pleasure, love-happiness, and science-joy.[87] Elsewhere in this work, he lists four different affects that "signal the incorporation of a human animal into the subjective process of a truth": terror, anxiety, courage, and justice[88] (it should be noted that, in 1982, Badiou says of such affects that they aren't to be viewed as "states of consciousness," but, rather, as "categories of the subject-effect"[89]). And, whereas happiness, joy, enthusiasm, and pleasure are affects tied to specific generic procedures of truth-production (i.e., love, science, politics, and art respectively), Badiou doesn't tie terror, anxiety, courage, and justice to particular types of truths in the same way, instead associating the latter four affects with any and every event-generated truth. That is to say, happiness, joy, enthusiasm, and pleasure reinforce amorous, scientific, political, and artistic truth-procedures respectively; terror, anxiety, courage, and justice are involved in the trajectory of every truth (be it amorous, scientific, political, or artistic). Despite this distinction between, as it were, procedure-specific versus procedure-general affects, these are all "affects of truth." And, insofar as Badiou is willing to grant that these affective phenomena play an indispensable part as enabling conditions facilitating processes unfolding along event-subject-truth lines,[90] he is, as he indicates, far from preaching a standard philosophical doctrine of renunciation (as per, for instance, an ethics of pure practical reason purportedly transcending the volatile phenomenal turbulence of human being).

However, in both the *Handbook of Inaesthetics* as well as select portions of *Logics of Worlds*, there are subtle but noticeable indications that Badiou feels less than completely comfortable with the topic of affect despite his above-summarized concessions regarding the crucial contributions affects

[87] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 85, 86.
[88] *Ibid.,* p. 96–97.
[89] Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, p. 307.
[90] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 98–99.

make to evental phenomena. In the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, he insists that a vanished event's residual traces can function as names (i.e., as signifying coordinates for post-evental labors of forcing) only if a decision is made to treat these traces as such.[91] One must recall here that every Badiouian event involves, in fact, at least two events: $event_1$ as a first happening (i.e., an initial event appearing-and-disappearing) followed, after-the-fact, by $event_2$ as a second happening (i.e., a subsequent event in which it is decided that the past first happening is, in hindsight, to be recognized and baptized as an event per se).[92] Additionally, Badiou repeatedly describes event-truth ensembles as "un-decidable" or "indiscernible" in relation to the established order of what is acknowledged as existing.[93] More specifically apropos the present discussion, his account of events stipulates that nothing within existent states-of-situations or knowledge-encyclopedias legitimates and underwrites the groundless decision-without-guarantee (as a second event in relation to a first event) to elevate a prior occurrence to an evental status. In fact, insofar as an event involves constituents not counted as existing by the established order of things, there isn't even anything to be decided upon to begin with from the perspective of a state-of-the-situation and/or the transcendental regime of a world. But, for those affected in such a way as to feel themselves interpellated from beyond the ordinary reality of their worldly situation by a transpired "x," this "x" and its traces form, in the terminology of *Logics of Worlds*, points for which yes-or-no decisions are called: Is this "x" an event? If the answer is "yes," is this or that given trace to be treated as a name intimately connected with this event? Such yes-or-no questions cannot be answered through an appeal to already-there situational/worldly frameworks of classification and understanding. Unlicensed answers are the sole option here in the absence of any licensed means of discerning and deciding.

The *Handbook of Inaesthetics* speaks of a decision to appropriate traces as names (a decision following closely on the heels of $event_2$ as itself a self-legitimating decision to recognize $event_1$ as an event per se). And, *Logics of Worlds* speaks of such decisions to appropriate traces as names (decisions made in response to intra-worldly points) as "without condition."[94] As seen, some of these conditions that point-prompted decisions are "without" have

[91] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, p. 130.

[92] Badiou, "*L'entretien de Bruxelles*," p. 9. Cf. also: Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 206, 209–210; Badiou, *Peut–on penser la politique?*, p. 101; Tarby, *La philosophie d'Alain Badiou*, p. 87.

[93] Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 201–202, 512, 525; Tarby, *Matérialismes d'aujourd'hui*, p. 29.

[94] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 454.

to do with onto-logical structures – in particular, the extant languages and epistemologies of given situations and/or worlds as conditioning decisions with regard to points (i.e., points that, if decided upon in certain fashions, become events and their respective associated signifier-names). Decisions to treat a past happening as an event and to identify specific traces of said happening as signifier-names of this event are not and cannot be conditioned by a state-of-the-situation and/or the transcendental regime of a world because, in relation to the specificity of the very material at stake in such decisions (as per *Being and Event*, this material being singular, abnormal multiples[95]), these states/regimes offer neither recognition nor rules (as Monique David-Ménard clarifies, there are, in fact, two intermingled varieties of indeterminacy and undecidability at play in the Badiouian theory of the event: that pertaining to the event itself [$event_1$] with respect to its surrounding situation/world plus that pertaining to the decision to name this past happening an event [$event_2$][96]). However, an interesting question to raise here is: According to Badiou, are affects (especially as already-there features of the pre-evental individual human animal) among the conditions from which these decisions-without-condition subtract themselves?

Near the end of the seventh and final book of *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou enumerates five conditions necessary for the genesis of a subjectified post-evental body arising in the wake of an event, a body willing and able to confront the salient-but-thorny junctures of various pressing points. In the absence of such a body, an "x" that could have been an event (with "event" defined in *Logics of Worlds* as a maximally existent singularity whose ensuing situational/worldly consequences are maximal as well[97]) fails actually to become an event given that there is no material support (i.e., body) to bring to bear upon the existent situation/world the potentially maximal consequences of this appeared-and-disappeared "x." Evental openings do not necessarily generate bodies; these openings can be "without consequence."[98] A world in which the genesis of a truth-bearing body is possible must not be atonal, stable, inconsequent, inactive, or inorganic.[99] In other words, there

[95] Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 173–174, 175; Tarby, *Matérialismes d'aujourd'hui*, p. 99–100.

[96] Monique David–Ménard, "*Être et existence dans la pensée d'Alain Badiou*," *Alain Badiou: Penser le multiple – Actes du Colloque de Bordeaux, 21–23 octobre 1999* (ed. Charles Ramond), Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002, p. 36–37.

[97] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 397–398, 400, 416, 417–418, 600–601. Cf. also: Badiou, "The Paris Commune," p. 283, 286–287, 288–289; Badiou, "Matters of Appearance," p. 251.

[98] *Ibid.,* p. 512.

[99] *Ibid.,* p. 514.

are five conditions of possibility for a body coming to be in a world: One, the transcendental regime of the world must allow for and create the existence of points[100] (i.e., tonality); Two, there must have been an event in the world[101] (i.e., instability); Three, there must be a sufficient number of elements appropriated by an event and its site for the formation of a coherent body capable of post-eventally sustaining the implications of the event[102] (i.e., consequentiality); Four, there must be a sufficient number of elements within each constituted body for the efficacious treatment of the post-evental points that surface in connection with the event[103] (i.e., activity); Five, each constituted body must contain appropriate "organs" for engagement with the post-evental points it encounters[104] (i.e., organicity). In light of the query posed at the end of the previous paragraph, what strikes the eye here is the absence of any explicit reference whatsoever to affects (*à la* the "affects of truth" spoken of in *Ethics*, among other places).

One might argue that concepts of affectivity are implicit in Badiou's five listed conditions of possibility for the genesis of a subjectified post-evental body. In "Section 2" of "Book VII" of *Logics of Worlds* (the section entitled "Lacan" glossed previously), doesn't Badiou explicitly address the topic of affect via a reading of the position of corporeality in Lacanian theory? Yes – but, as seen, he indicates there that affects are after-the-fact phenomena produced by (rather than preceding as pre-existent) the prior impact of an event's alterity (as per Badiou's translation of Lacan's Other into the evental "x" alien to the human individual) – and this contrary to earlier indications in his 1993 *Ethics* to the effect that affects are pre-existent enabling factors for the forging and perpetuation of a subject's forceful post-evental truth-pursuits. Hence, at least for Badiou *circa* 2006, it seems that affects are not to be considered already-there, pre-evental conditions for the auto-authorizing gestures erecting the scaffolding of event-subject-truth frameworks. They are, rather, subsequent effects generated exclusively in the aftermath of a past event.

As with so much else in Badiou's thinking, the affects that come to be entangled in event-driven truth-trajectories are, more often than not, conceived of solely as post-evental. First there is $event_1$. Then, there is $event_2$. $Event_2$ is the decision to acknowledge $event_1$ as an event strictly speaking. Once this has happened (i.e., following the second event of baptism in which the

[100] *Ibid.,* p. 512–513.
[101] *Ibid.,* p. 513.
[102] *Ibid.,* p. 513–514.
[103] *Ibid.,* p. 514.
[104] *Ibid.*

first event is christened an event per se), there are subsequent occurrences of decisions-without-condition (as described by Badiou in both the *Handbook of Inaesthetics* and *Logics of Worlds*) taken with regard to points ("points" in the Badiouian sense) at which traces present themselves, traces calling for decisions as to whether or not they are associated with the event in question. Those traces decided to be associated with the event thereby become names (i.e., signifier-like marks of the past event mobilized in the course of the evental subject's post-evental labors of forcing). And, in many contexts, Badiou proposes that affects (especially those affects, like courage, fortifying the ethical consistency of persevering evental subjectivity) are conditioned, stirred into existence and thereafter nourished, by those post-evental traces-become-names fashioned as a result of unconditioned subjective decisions.[105]

However, in "Book IV" of *Logics of Worlds* (entitled "Theory of Points"), Badiou asserts that, "the declaration of the atonality of a world cannot but be ideological."[106] States-of-situations and transcendental regimes of worlds proclaim that their present is without points (i.e., atonal) – they attempt to mask the latent presence of intra-systemic nodes of volatile tension – so as to buttress their appearance of possessing an enduring monolithic solidity invulnerable to disruption and subversion. This appearance is generally just apparent; the statist big Other usually isn't nearly as "big" as it struggles to seem. In the face of this ideological masquerade, this motivated denial of the existence of situation/world-immanent loci of potential event-level change, Badiou encourages those confronting this alleged atonality to have the courage to affirm the existence of at least one point (contrary to the statist declaration of the, as it were, point-less nature of the *status quo*) within the world through which it is possible to become an "anonymous hero"[107] (i.e., a subject-of-an-event faithful to evental truth[s]). So, perhaps this particular variety of courage could be described as the affective confidence or fortitude of pre-evental human individuals, individuals (as opposed to post-evental more-than-human subjects) stuck in worlds ostensibly still awaiting the arrival of the "*il y a*" of an event, to risk treating coordinates of the current worldly situation as if these coordinates are points of evental potentials – and to do so before the tangible promise of an event-level happening becomes visible.

Slavoj Žižek also takes up the Badiouian concept of the point. In his recent text "Badiou: Notes from an Ongoing Debate," he argues that, "The

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[105] *Ibid.,* p. 97.
[106] *Ibid.,* p. 445.
[107] *Ibid.*

first task of the emancipatory politics is [...] to distinguish between 'false' and 'true' points, 'false' and 'true' choices."[108] As just observed, Badiou identifies one tactic of statist ideology as the gesture of representing contemporary circumstances as atonal (i.e., lacking points, point-less). Žižek supplements this by identifying another ideological tactic with the same end (i.e., the prevention of serious challenges to the established order of things arising): disguising as genuine choices, as point-like "yes-or-no" crossroads of decision, alternatives that offer no real alternative to reigning systems (Badiou and Žižek undoubtedly would concur that the "for us or against us" choices insisted upon by both Bush and Bin Laden are perfect examples of false points). Whether by throwing a discouraging wet blanket over the terrain of the present so as to cover and smother any immanent kernels of possible radical transformation of this same present (Badiou) or by creating misleading distractions that confuse and obscure the distinction between authentic points and their inauthentic semblances (Žižek), statist ideologies strive to forestall in advance the arrival of any destabilizing revolutionary changes, to nip the pre-conditions of potentially momentous upheavals in the bud. Since this tactically nimble and savvy enemy wisely already begins its preemptory offensive during pre-evental time, the fight against it must occur within this time too. Waiting around for the saving grace an event to fall out of the sky isn't always a promising option. In certain times, the only real option is to make efforts (in Badiou's own terms) to force an event, to precipitate "prematurely" the genesis of genuine change.

In his *Ethics*, Badiou, momentarily deviating from his penchant for casting the human animal in a somewhat unflattering light, is willing to grant that certain emotions and feelings forming part of this animal's make-up (i.e., aspects of the individual's pre-evental being) are able to play an important part in cementing in place the conviction and consistency of a subject-of-an-event. But, generally, Badiou tends to maintain that these "affects of truth" reinforcing post-evental processes come into effective operation only once decisions-without-condition have been made that create an event-subject-truth configuration. And yet, taking into consideration what was said in the immediately prior paragraphs, are there not ample reasons for thinking through differently the status and role of pre-evental affects? More specifically, as regards those affects justifiably focused on by Badiou in discussions concerning the sorts of movements of change that interest him most, one could contend that, whether faced with ideological declarations of worldly

[108] Slavoj Žižek, "Badiou: Notes from an Ongoing Debate," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2007.

atonality or ideological representations of false points as true ones, what is required of those desiring transformations yielding political emancipations is courage and conviction before (and not merely after) evental occurrences transpire.

Logics of Worlds contains an appendix-like section entitled "Enquiries, comments, and digressions." Therein, Badiou mentions the two-volume project of the "young philosopher" Mehdi Belhaj Kacem (the two volumes being *Event and Repetition*, with a foreword by Badiou, and *Affect*, both published in 2004).[109] He notes that Kacem's work, drawing on Lacanian and Deleuzian concepts in the course of its engagement with Badiouian philosophy, seeks to highlight "the importance of affect in the evental constitution of a subject."[110] So, it might sound as though this endeavor here risks reduplicating the philosophical efforts of Kacem. However, despite some overlap with Kacem's labors at select intersecting points of agreement apropos Badiou's treatment of affects, there are certain key moves Kacem doesn't make – indeed, he refuses and rejects such moves – that are central to this present project.

Before spelling out the crucial differences between this project and that pursued by Kacem, it would be appropriate briefly to take note of the specific propositions advanced in Kacem's approach to Badiouian thought affirmed here as compelling and valid. To begin with, Kacem rightly emphasizes the importance of the potent affects of a more-than-merely-sexual *jouissance* in any and every evental phenomenon. He justifiably dismisses the interpretive restriction of the semantic scope of this Lacanian term to the domain of sexuality as too narrow, pleading instead for a "subtractive" (in Badiou's sense) understanding of this notion as an unconditional thrust manifested as the affects of truth associated with each of the four domains of subject-driven truth-production identified by Badiou and already discussed here previously.[111] Similarly, he insists that affects defy standard Lacanian and/or Badiouian schemas of theoretical categorization[112] (for instance, with respect to Badiou's distinction between "democratic materialism" [positing that, "There are only bodies and languages"] and the "materialist dialectic" [countering that, "There are only bodies and languages, except that there are also truths"] as delineated in the opening pages of *Logics of Worlds*,[113]

[109] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 550.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 550.
[111] Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, Paris: Éditions Tristram, 2004, p. 230–231.
[112] Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *L'affect*, Paris: Éditions Tristram, 2004, p. 172–173.
[113] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 9–10, 12–13, 15.

Kacemian affects would constitute a fourth category irreducible to bodies, languages, and/or truths).

Kacem defines affect as the intrusion of *jouissance* into the realms of representation[114] (in Badiouian parlance, this would be to say simply that affective forces disrupt the state-of-the-situation). And, he correlatively speaks of the *jouissance* of the event[115] (in an essay on the topic of structural change as addressed in the works of Lacan and Badiou, Oliver Feltham expresses skepticism about whether "Badiou's philosophy can account for the role of jouissance in such change"[116] – dovetailing with this doubt, it should be observed that Kacem's notion of affective *jouissance* as subtractive is nowhere to be found in Badiou's own texts). In *Event and Repetition*, Kacem, referring to the title of Badiou's 1988 *magnum opus*, contends that, "Affect is *the being of the event* for the speaking animal"[117] (early on in the sequel text *Affect*, he reiterates this contention,[118] and, later in this same text, adds a clarifying reminder that these affects lending a degree of ontological heft to evanescent events are irruptive upsurges of a *jouissance* "beyond the sexual"[119]). For Kacem, "the event is the place of major affects" and it "has as its index affects."[120] Minus an appropriate accompanying affective charge, an event is doomed to vanish as an inconsequential transient transgression of the laws of ontology, of being *qua* being as what is (with Badiou defining the event as an "illegal" multiple whose property of functioning as a set that counts itself as one of its own elements violates the basic set theoretic rules of *l'être en tant qu'être*[121]). Put differently, if an event fails to stir up a sufficient amount of energy in terms of affects, it will fail to leave lasting transformative marks on the world in which it suddenly flashes and then abruptly vanishes.

Additionally, Kacem claims that human beings alone enjoy the capacity to inscribe the affects of a more-than-sexual *jouissance* (as subtracted from representational states-of-situations) into forms and structures permitting iterations and repetitions.[122] In other words, individuals struck by the momentary affective impact of a fleeting event are able to draw out and re-instanti-

[114] Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, p. 171.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 198. Cf. also : Kacem, *L'affect*, p. 92–93.
[116] Oliver Feltham, "Enjoy Your Stay: Structural Change in *Seminar XVII*," in: *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflections on Seminar XVII* (ed. Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg), Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, p. 192.
[117] Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, p. 199.
[118] Kacem, *L'affect*, p. 16.
[119] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[121] Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 179, 180–181, 184, 189–190.
[122] Kacem, *L'affect*, p. 163, 169.

ate the affects thus aroused. Such a *jouissance*-fueled extenuation of events is what paves the way both for the linking of Badiou's first event (i.e., $event_1$) to the second event of the first event's retroactive recognition by a subject-of-that-specific-event (i.e., $event_2$) as well as for the struggle to bring the implications of evental currents to bear on the "normality" of the *status quo* (insofar as the affect-sustained power of repetition keeps events alive so that they can continue to change subsequent situations).[123] Obviously, Badiou's conception of fidelity is at stake here. Kacem convincingly describes this faithfulness as a compulsive *jouissance* overwhelming the event-interpellated person for whom undergoing submission to this experience is akin to the ordeal of falling in love. This subjective fidelity is certainly not a stance endorsed by the individual in a calm and reflective manner through cold cognitive deliberation. If an affective investment in an event and its associated elements truly has occurred, it is as though, at least according to Kacem, the subject-of-the-event has no choice but to remain faithfully committed to its chosen event-truth trajectory.[124] Along these lines, the affects associated with fidelity create and reinforce varieties of heroism.[125]

This project endorses all of the above-summarized facets of Kacem's treatment of Badiou's philosophy. However, apart from two inter-related assertions made by Kacem that are quite dubious from a psychoanalytic perspective – he insists both that the affective involves a sort of "absolute presence"[126] as well as that affects are fundamentally honest and incapable of succumbing to repression[127] – there is, from this standpoint here, one major problem with his position: Kacem, concurring with Badiou, denies the possibility of pre-evental prophecies able to anticipate the potential arrivals of events.[128] Coupled with this, his references to Badiou's four affects of truth seem to indicate that he accepts the characterization of these affective forces as strictly post-evental.[129] Thus, the pre-evental is again problematically neglected and left shrouded in darkness – and this despite the fact that Kacem's previously mentioned theses about the uniquely human ability to entwine the affective with the representational indicates some sort of awareness of the need philosophically to examine the faculties of pre-evental individuality preceding the genesis of post-evental subjectivity (with the former

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 163–164.
[124] Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, p. 153.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 242.
[126] Kacem, *L'affect*, p. 165, 174, 177–178, 182.
[127] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[128] Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, p. 203.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 218–219.

arguably having somehow to contain certain conditions for the possibility of the latter).

Near the end of *Event and Repetition*, Kacem alludes to Badiou's discussion of the link between anxiety and courage in *Theory of the Subject* (more specifically, the idea of courage being the inverse or reverse side of anxiety).[130] In that 1982 text, Badiou characterizes courage as a putting-to-work of anxiety, with the latter depicted (using Lacan's vocabulary) as an effect of the disruption of the Symbolic by the Real[131] (Kacem's above-cited definition of affect as the intrusion of more-than-merely-sexual *jouissance* into the realms of representation echoes this Badiouian depiction of anxiety). Translated into the terminology of Badiou's later work – *Logics of Worlds* indeed speaks of "terror" and "anxiety" as the first two affects registering respectively the initial disturbance of an event and the facing up to the yes-or-no points connected with it, affects through which each subject-of-an-event necessarily must pass in the dynamics of evental subjectification[132] – courage is the affective fortitude able to turn the anxiety-inducing shock of an unexpected rupture (as an unsettling interruption of a state-of-the-situation and/or transcendental regime of a world) into a deployable program of sustained inquiring and forcing (i.e., an enduring event-subject-truth constellation).

In the Badiouian fashion of pairing anxiety and courage, anxiety is associated with the instability of an event and courage with both the strength to endure this anxiety as well as the ability to respond to this upsetting affect in ways that entail faithfully tarrying with the evental cause of anxiety (through the militant fidelity of post-evental subjective labors on behalf of the given event-cause). And yet, what about stable situations and atonal worlds as contexts unruffled by the buffeting blows of events? Badiou's cataloguing of affects arguably ignores another variety of anxiety, one which palpably hangs in the air today: not the anxiety of evental instability, but the anxiety of non-evental claustrophobia, the agitated, nervous feeling of being trapped in the stasis of a system that seems to be highly resistant to extreme and extensive modifications. Stable situations and atonal worlds generate a particular type of anxious negative affect different from that provoked by the upheavals of events. If courage should be linked to anxiety, then, if there is non-evental in addition to evental anxiety, shouldn't another conception of courage, a non-evental one, be forged too? In a January 2007 piece entitled "The Contemporary Figure of the Soldier in Politics and Poetry," Badiou

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[130] *Ibid.*, p. 224.
[131] Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, p. 176–177.
[132] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 96–97, 98–99.

asks, "Is there a place, in a disoriented world, for a new style of heroism?"[133] A similarly structured question should be posed here: Is there a place, in an apparently established world, for a new kind of bravery? *Theory of the Subject* contains a remark about courage that can be read as gesturing in this direction – "All courage returns to passing there where before it hadn't been foreseeable that anyone could find a passage."[134] In situations and worlds where it appears that nothing on the order of the evental is to be found (i.e., contexts seemingly devoid of passages), certain pre-evental human beings might nonetheless be brave enough to wager investing their faith in incredibly uncertain prospects for potential change that have yet actually to transpire. Sometimes, this is the only source of a hope that sustains those who are neither pre-evental individuals wholly entangled in the relational matrices of the *status quo* situation/world nor post-evental subjects fully subtracted from such relational matrices.

As is well known, starting in the seventh seminar, Lacan develops the notion of a state "between-two-deaths" (*entre-deux-morts*).[135] Badiouian philosophy ought to be supplemented with a notion of a state "between-two-lives," namely, a space within which a human being struggles to exceed his/her status as an all-too-human individual (along with the entire surrounding environment connected with this identity) while not (at least not yet) being clearly identifiable as a proper subject *vis-à-vis* a distinct event-level happening. There must be something between what Badiou sharply and starkly contrasts as the living death of non-evental individuality versus the immortal life of evental subjectivity. In a 2006 lecture on "The Truth Procedure in Politics," Badiou speaks of an "arithmetic war" between the Two of democratic materialism (i.e., bodies and languages) and the Three of the materialist dialectic (i.e., bodies and languages, plus truths).[136] But, with, on the one hand, the bodies and languages of democratic materialism, and, on the other opposed hand, the additional excess of the trans-corporeal, trans-linguistic truths of the materialist dialectic, this opposition itself arguably constitutes a Badiouian Two restrictively allowing only for either non-evental corporeal-linguistic individuality or subjectivity as bound up with a more-than-corporeal, more-than-linguistic event and its respective truth(s). At the risk of

[133] Badiou, "The Contemporary Figure of the Soldier in Politics and Poetry".

[134] Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, p. 310.

[135] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, p. 320. Cf. also: Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre VIII: Le transfert, 1960–1961* (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller), Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001 (seconde édition corrigée), p. 122.

[136] Alain Badiou, "The Truth Procedure in Politics" (Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York City, November 18th, 2006), http://www.lacan.com/blog/files/archive–1.html.

igniting another separate arithmetic war between the Two and the Three, this author would like to suggest the viability of a third materialist position, drawing upon the theoretical resources of psychoanalysis in particular (including those resources proffered by Freud, Lacan, Laplanche, Žižek, and Kacem, among others), focused on an "x" situated in-between democratic materialist life and the life of the materialist dialectic. Badiou seems to have no confidence in such a Third, avoiding any mention or acknowledgment of it. What is being called for here is a metapsychological investigation into the affective, libidinal, and identificatory features of the pre-evental human psyche with an eye to discerning what, within these features partly tied to what could be designated as a sort of "constitution" or "nature," harbors the possibility for a readiness or responsiveness to the transformative effects of evental interpellations (this would involve a Badiou-inspired reassessment of psychoanalytic metapsychology and its accompanying theory of subjectivity, a reassessment with real political stakes). Perhaps this third position should be labeled "transcendental materialism," a materialism striving to account for how more-than-corporeal structures of subjectivity immanently surface out of the odd materiality of human corporeality (as a "corpo-Real" to be distinguished from the two bodies either of democratic materialism's biopolitics or Badiou's materialist dialectic).[137]

As observed, Badiou, in some of his recent interventions, invokes the themes of war and the soldier, with military metaphors abounding throughout his corpus. In this vein, it's worth dwelling for a moment on the notion of the "military-industrial complex." This phrase, made popular in American political discourse thanks to U.S. President Eisenhower's 1961 "Farewell Address to the Nation" (with his words of warning having proven to be powerfully prophetic), tends to connote the sense of a perverse reversal in the supposed proper order of things with respect to the fighting of wars. Instead of the defense establishment remaining strictly defensive (i.e., waging war solely in response to the provocation of external threats to the nation-state), a military-industrial complex is assumed actively to precipitate wars due to its

[137] Adrian Johnston, "Revulsion is not without its subject: Kant, Lacan, Žižek, and the Symptom of Subjectivity," *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, no. 15, Spring 2004, p. 228. Cf. Adrian Johnston, "Against Embodiment: The Material Ground of the Immaterial Subject," *Journal for Lacanian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, December 2004, p. 250–251; Adrian Johnston, *Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005, p. 266, 340–341; Adrian Johnston, "Ghosts of Substance Past: Schelling, Lacan, and the Denaturalization of Nature," *Lacan: The Silent Partners* (ed. Slavoj Žižek), London: Verso, 2006, p. 36–37, 46–47, 51, 52–53; Adrian Johnston, *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008.

institutional and financial interests. When a defense establishment becomes a military-industrial complex, it ceases to be defensive, dishonestly remaining so in name only. Apropos Badiou and the problem of the pre-evental, maybe what is required in contexts apparently lacking and resistant to possibly momentous changes is a militant theoretical collective – this would be the emancipatory inverted double of the figure of the oppressive military-industrial complex – as a war-machine in search of its war. Rather than, as it were, defensively waiting for an extra-philosophical event to spark conflicts and contradictions shaking up the *status quo*, a pre-evental militant theoretical collective (as a set of philosophical insurgents instead of the court of a Platonic philosopher-king, although both of these figural images reflect the wager of a faith in philosophy's political potentials) should aggressively go on the offensive, struggling to destabilize the seemingly stable through the minimal-yet-massive powers of thought.

For this sort of work, one must, at a gut level, believe that true points exist in one's seemingly point-less pre-evental world and that what one selects as promising true points really are true. That is to say, one must have the confidence to disbelieve ideological depictions of the times (especially times tied to potential and/or actual transformations). This confidence isn't just a fanciful story, a useful fiction for intervening actors to tell themselves so as to avoid getting dragged down into a cynical, quietist pessimism – this inspiring conviction is fully justified from a descriptive theoretical perspective. By contrast, those who manage to convince themselves that the order of the Other is here to stay, that the statist power of the present is firmly grounded and basically secure, are the ones clinging to a shaky arrangement with quiet desperation. Those who roll the dice betting on act/event-level transformations are, contrary to senseless common sense and vulgar popular opinion, sober realists – today's self-declared "realists" (i.e., those individuals banking on the indefinitely enduring continuity of current circumstances) are the ideologically intoxicated idealists enthralled by dreams of a non-existent, unattainable stability. In 1946, Mao unflinchingly declares that, as he puts it with elegant succinctness, "All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful."[138] Departing from this declaration, he subsequently pleads for a distinction between "tactical" and "strategic" outlooks, for a simultaneous dual-vision political perspective on the part of those engaged in struggling toward revolutionary change: The various short-term tactics

[138] Mao, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*, p. 39.

mobilized from battle to battle require viewing, with deadly seriousness, the foes fought against as "real tigers," while, at the same time, unshakable faith in eventual victory is sustained by a long-term strategy predicated upon the belief, supported by the "scientific" philosophical theory of Marxist historical materialism, in the ultimate weakness of the enemy as a "paper tiger."[139] These statements should not be allowed to fall away as verbal cadavers into the dusty domain of mere textbook-style historical records.

For processes of pre-evental forcing, one must be brave enough to risk being wrong. One's struggle to force an event can fail in various ways, perhaps even catastrophically. There are no extant guarantees given in advance that one's world isn't atonal or that discerned choices are indeed the real ones to be made. One's gestures aimed at system-interrupting change might very well fall flat – or, much worse and more discouraging, be appropriated by one's conservative adversaries, co-opted so as to become additional supports for the *status quo*. During a 1977 public lecture delivered on the occasion of his assumption to the Chair of Literary Semiology at the Collège de France, Roland Barthes quotes Pasolini, a quotation worth reciting at this point – "I believe that *before* action we must never in any case fear annexation by power and its culture. We must behave as if this dangerous eventuality did not exist [...] But I also believe that *afterward* we must be able to realize how much we may have been used by power. And then, if our sincerity has been controlled or manipulated, I believe we must have the courage to abjure."[140] This groundless bravery prior to acting is something other than the justified courage sustaining fidelity to a past event already registered as a decisive break with the powers-that-be.

Due to the inherent margin of incalculability necessarily obscuring from view the future repercussions and reverberations of interventions targeted at transformation, nothing promises absolutely that such interventions will succeed in bringing about anything other than more of the same business as usual. But, coupled with the theoretical legitimacy of presupposing that Badiouian states aren't as solid as they often appear to be and that Žižekian big Others are actually quite fragile and insubstantial virtualities, this same margin of incalculability, rather than spurring doubt or hopelessness, should be seen as cause for optimism. Although nobody knows for sure what will happen in each instance of each battle waged in wars (however hot or cold)

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[139] *Ibid.*, p. 40, 42–43.

[140] Roland Barthes, "Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France" (trans. Richard Howard), *A Barthes Reader* (ed. Susan Sontag), New York: Hill and Wang, 1982, p. 468.

for change, one thing is certain: From the patient perspective of philosophy, time never sides with those who bet on the smooth stasis of any purported "end of history."

FROM THE ANTINOMIES OF RADICAL PHILOSOPHY TO RADICAL ANTIPHILOSOPHY

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AD HOMINEM: ANTINOMIES OF RADICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Ubi Lenin, ibi Jerusalem.
Ernst Bloch

There are probably few entries in our political lexicon more unstable and ambivalent than 'radicalism'. Frequently associated with extremism, and with the supposed affinities between the termini of the political spectrum, it emerged in the wake of the modern revolutions and was often used to qualify a now faded or corrupted term, 'reform'. In recent memory, it was even enlisted to sublate the deflation of political ideologies under neoliberalism, in the guise of Giddens's 'radical centre'. Throughout, its relationship to the idea of 'revolution', especially with the recoding of the latter by Marx and his epigones, has been uncertain. Is radicalism a premise, a prelude or a diversion from a totalising transformation of human affairs? Or is it a sign of debility or defeat, when the objective possibilities of change either vanish or are fundamentally curtailed? Immature premonition or impotent passion, the disabused realist might regard radicalism pejoratively as a 'philosophical' (i.e. ideological) supplement or surrogate for the political. Radical philosophy would thus come onto the scene when, for whatever reason, revolutionary politics has been shunted into the background. Vice versa, radical philosophy would be made obsolescent by the upsurge of real politics. Something of this relationship is invoked, with a characteristic blend of melancholy and intransigence, by Adorno's well-known declaration: 'Philosophy, which once seemed outmoded, remains alive because the moment of its realisation was missed. The summary judgment that it had merely interpreted the world is

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itself crippled by resignation before reality, and becomes a defeatism of reason after the transformation of the world failed'.[1]

The advantages of backwardness?

The decisive inquiry into the volatile link between philosophy, revolution (as philosophy's simultaneous realisation and termination) and the 'radical' is arguably Marx's 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: An Introduction', written in 1843 and published in 1844 in the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*. It is there that we encounter – as the answer to the riddle of German backwardness – the proletariat, not as a given reality, but as a tendency and project ('the formation of a class with radical chains').[2] It also in that famous – and thus often hastily read – text that, in a much-quoted passage, the crucial link between philosophical radicalism and revolutionary political 'humanism' makes itself manifest:

> The weapon of criticism certainly cannot replace the criticism of weapons; material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory, too, becomes a material force once it seizes the masses. Theory is capable of seizing the masses once it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* once it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp matters at the root. But for man the root is man himself.[3]

As countless of Marx's writings attest to, from *The Holy Family* to *Herr Vogt*, from *The German Ideology* to *Capital* itself (whose footnotes are gems of the genre), the *ad hominem* in the guise of blistering polemic, satire and 'character assassination' was part and parcel of Marx's mode of thought.

[1] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E.B. Ashton, Routledge, London 1990, p. 3. See also the stimulating reflections on the syntagm 'radical philosophy' in Peter Osborne, 'Radicalism and Philosophy', *Radical Philosophy* 103, 2000, pp. 6-11. Though Osborne's attempt, after Rancière, to discern the dialectic of (re) politicisation and depoliticisation (or realisation) within radicalism is instructive, his contention that radicalism 'is the political correlate of the temporal logic of modernity, the logic of the new' (p. 8) is underdetermined, and does not do justice to the specific temporality of Marxian radicalism, which cannot be reduced in this respect to 'romantic naturalism' (p. 7).

[2] Karl Marx, 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: An Introduction', in *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, edited by Joseph O'Malley, translated by Annete Jolin and Joseph O'Malley, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1970, p. 141.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Inverting Althusser's formulation, one might even say that it was the *practical* anti-humanism required by his theoretical humanism.[4] But though the 1843 Introduction is not devoid of dark wit and invective, the stakes lie elsewhere. It is temporality, in the multiple and interacting dimensions of religious secularisation, socio-economic development and revolutionary timing, which illuminates the articulation between philosophy and radicality, and which might provide us with some orientation as to the current fortunes of 'radical philosophy'.

Marx's plea for radicalisation is insistently contextualised in terms of German *backwardness*. What is perhaps most arresting about this text is precisely how the most generic of programmes, universal social emancipation ('the total redemption of humanity'), is meticulously and strategically situated in a very singular political predicament. Having lyrically encapsulated the results of the critique of religion ('the prerequisite of every critique'), which he regards as having been 'essentially completed' for Germany, Marx is faced with the obstacle that prevents the prolongation of the unmasking of religious abstraction into the unmasking of social abstraction, of 'the critique of heaven [...] into the critique of earth, the critique of religion into the critique of law, the critique of theology into the critique of politics'. The retrograde character of the German state and the underdevelopment of its civil society obviate the role of critique as a productive, immanent negativity. In Marx's biting words: 'For even the negation of our political present is already a dusty fact in the historical junkroom of modern nations. If I negate powdered wigs, I still have unpowdered wigs'.[5] Only the *ad hominem* in its most violent and undialectical guise is called for, criticism as the 'brain of passion', organising the destruction of an enemy which it is not even worth refuting, because 'the spirit of these conditions is already refuted'. When faced with an anachronistic regime that 'only imagines that it believes in itself', a laughable 'German ghost', criticism can only play the role of a particularly brutal and unflattering mirror: 'Every sphere of German society must be described as the *partie honteuse* of German society, and these petrified conditions must be made to dance by singing to them their own melody'.[6]

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[4] Perhaps only Guy Debord, with a brilliance that was often wasted on desultory targets, tried to follow Marx in marrying these two senses of the *ad hominem*. See especially *"Cette mauvaise réputation..."*, Gallimard, Paris 1993, and the texts in Situationist International, *The Real Split in the International*, translated by John McHale, Pluto, London 2003, where he and Sanguinetti write: 'We want to bring a radical critique to bear – a critique *ad hominem*' (p. 171).

[5] Marx, p. 132.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

But the German anachronism is double: on the one hand, the farce of restoration without revolution in practice ('the *oeuvres incomplètes* of our actual history'); on the other, the anticipation of the future in theory ('the *oeuvres posthumes* of our ideal history, philosophy').[7] It is the latter which alone is worthy of the kind of immanent critique that would be capable of extracting, from the productive negation of the purely speculative image of 'future history', the weapons for a genuine overturning of the status quo. In other words, the radicalism of (the critique of) philosophy is dictated by the paradoxical coexistence of practical backwardness and theoretical advance. More specifically, the fact that the German 'thought-version [*Gedankenbild*]' of the modern state is an abstraction which is adequate to its real correlate outside of Germany ('just across the Rhine') makes the 'criticism of the speculative philosophy of right' into one which, though enunciated from a position of backward specificity, is capable of attaining a real universality, and thus opening onto a practical horizon of transformation. In order to be properly radicalised, the situation surveyed by Marx is thus compelled to pass through philosophy. Neither a practical repudiation of philosophy nor a philosophical overcoming of practice are possible: 'you cannot transcend philosophy without actualising it', nor can you 'actualise philosophy without transcending it'.[8]

Again, it is important to stress that though these may appear as universally-binding statements – and they certainly are concerned with the universal, with man as 'the world of man, the state, society' – they are strictly singularised by Germany's temporal anomaly, its disjunctive synthesis of political retardation and philosophical anticipation. This anomaly even permits Marx to hint at Germany's comparative revolutionary advantage, when he asks: 'can Germany attain a praxis *à la hauteur des principes*, that is to say, a revolution that will raise it not only to the official level of the modern na-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 136. See also the important interpretation of Marx's radicalism, as crystallised in the 1843 Introduction, in Stathis Kouvelakis, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Kant to Marx*, translated by G.M. Goshgarian, Verso, London 2003. Kouvelakis makes the following germane comment about the link between criticism, radicalism and politics: 'How to make criticism radical and how to make it practical are henceforth inseparably linked questions, each of which presupposes the other. Solving them requires going beyond the philosophical form of criticism, which also means going beyond the unreflected character of practice' (p. 325). I am indebted to Kouvelakis's book for its elucidations and suggestions regarding the link between radicalism and time.

tions, but to the human level which will be the immediate future of these nations?'[9]

But, notwithstanding Marx's faith in theoretical emancipation and his conviction that theory is not a mere collection of ideas but 'an *active* principle, a set of *practices*',[10] its practical conversion appears thwarted by the absence of the 'passive element' or 'material basis' for revolutionary praxis. This basis would ordinarily be found in the domain of civil society, in the sphere of needs: 'A radical revolution can only be a revolution of radical needs, whose preconditions and birthplaces appear to be lacking'. In other words, the 'theoretical needs' that emerge from the immanent critique of philosophy do not translate into 'practical needs'. Furthermore, whilst in other (economically and politically advanced) societies, political revolutions take place where a class of civil society lays claim to 'universal dominance [...] in the name of the universal rights of society', the slackness and amorphousness of German civil society means that it possesses neither a distinct class of liberation – a momentary 'soul of the people' – nor a class of oppression, a 'negative representative of society'.[11] This further symptom of backwardness, though initially appearing to quash the latter's virtues, reveals itself as the supreme, if in many respects supremely aleatory or even desperate, opportunity for revolutionary change. The sheer disaggregation of the German polity means that the 'classical' model of partial and political revolution is inoperative: 'In France it is the actuality, in Germany the impossibility, of gradual emancipation which must give birth to full freedom'.[12] But, notwithstanding his allegedly enduring Feuerbachianism,[13] Marx could not countenance a praxis simply determined at the level of essence or of philosophy. As he unequivocally put it: 'It is not enough that thought strive to actualise itself; actuality must itself strive toward thought'.[14] This embryonic version of Marx's later 'method of the tendency'[15] dictates that radical emancipation find its objective or 'positive possibility' in 'the formation of a class with radi-

[9] Marx, p. 138.

[10] Kouvelakis, p. 324.

[11] Marx, p. 140.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 141. The concluding paragraph puts this both boldly and ironically: 'Germany, enamoured of fundamentals, can have nothing less than a fundamental revolution' (p. 142).

[13] Louis Althusser, 'Marxism and Humanism', in *For Marx*, translated by Ben Brewster, Verso, London 1996, pp. 225-7.

[14] Marx, p. 138.

[15] 'Freedom and subordination, whether in theory or in practice, are only given within the tendency, within the movement, within the specificity of the class struggle that materially prepares the destruction of the existing order'. Antonio Negri,

cal chains', the proletariat. And it is here that the radicality of philosophy is matched by the radicality of a social and political subject: 'Just as philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy'.[16]

The theology of revolution, from the standpoint of the proletariat

The singular constellation of concepts that emerges in the young Marx's confrontation with the predicament of Germany in the early 1840s – binding together the results of the critique of religion, the analysis of economic backwardness, the function of philosophy and the dislocated and dislocating character of historical time – has arguably beset radical philosophy ever since. And it is the themes of the 1843 Introduction that we can still find at work 80 years later in an emblematic and instructive confrontation between two intimately related but conflicting ways of thinking philosophy's radicalism, a confrontation that might even allow us to delineate some of the antinomies of radical philosophy that persist into the present. Toward the conclusion of his seminal 1923 essay 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', the theoretical core of *History and Class Consciousness*, Georg Lukács directly addresses the 'theology of revolution' that Ernst Bloch had examined and dramatised in his 1921 book on the sixteenth-century radical reformer and leader of the German Peasants' War Thomas Müntzer.

From around 1910 through World War I, but especially in the years 1912–14, Bloch and Lukács – both of whom were associated with Georg Simmel and participated in Max Weber's Sunday seminars in Heidelberg – had entered into an intense theoretical dialogue, even a symbiosis. As Bloch put it, reminiscing in his final years on his relationship with Lukács: 'We were like communicating vessels; the water was always at the same level in both. [...] I was as much Lukács' disciple as he was mine. There were no differences between us.'.[17] But while Bloch, even once he 'reconciled' himself

'Crisis of the Planner-State', in *Books for Burning*, edited by Timothy S. Murphy, Verso, London 2005, p. 15.

[16] Marx, p. 142.

[17] Michael Löwy, 'Interview with Ernst Bloch', *New German Critique* 9, 1976, p. 37, 40. The entire interview is devoted to this matter. On the relationship between Bloch and Lukács, see also Löwy's *Georg Lukács – From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, translated by Patrick Camiller, NLB, London 1979, pp. 52-6.

with Stalinism,[18] maintained alive his 'anarcho-Bolshevik' leanings,[19] Lukács – first with his properly Leninist 'turn' in 1922 and far more intensely in his later repudiation of *History of Class Consciousness* and turn to a realist, 'neo-classical' Marxism[20] – broke drastically with his tragic, utopian and messianic inclinations of the 1910s. The 'Reification' essay is a remarkable document in this respect. Not only does its theory of the proletariat as subject-object of history effectively expunge Lukács's tragic dualism of an ethical subject with no worldly effect; the dialectical and epistemological claims made on behalf of the proletariat[21] are also intended to serve as a critique of any (pseudo-) revolutionary or radical thought which abides within the 'antinomies of bourgeois thought' – that is, any thinking that cannot critically grasp and practically terminate the pernicious effects of reification and the contemplative attitude the latter induces.

In keeping with our discussion of Marx in the first section, it should be noted that the entirety of Lukács's essay can be regarded as an excavation of Marx's dictum from the 1843 Introduction, which serves as its epigraph: 'To be radical is to go to the root of the matter. For man, however, the root is man himself'. One angle into Lukács's 1923 essay involves considering how the thesis of reification, which critically combines the Marxian analysis of commodity fetishism with the insights on rationalisation and calculation of his erstwhile mentors Simmel and Weber, permits Lukács to separate true, Marxist radicalism from those political philosophies which – incapable of identifying the sole subject that can break the spell of contemplative capitalism – only simulate radicalism while remaining within the confines of bourgeois thought. Such philosophies ignore at their own peril the lapidary in-

[18] See his remarkable 1937 attack on those who broke with the USSR over the Moscow trials, which is entirely organised around the comparison between the divergent reactions to the French revolutionary Terror by German writers (Klopstock, Schiller, Goethe) and philosophers (Kant, Hegel), with the latter striking the proper attitude of comprehension, rather than facile moralism. See Ernst Bloch, 'A Jubilee for Renegades', *New German Critique* 4, 1975, and the article by Negt in the same issue.

[19] I borrow the term from Michael Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe – A Study in Elective Affinity*, translated by Hope Heaney, Athlone Press, London 1992. This excellent and captivating work deals at length with Bloch and Lukács under this rubric.

[20] For a compelling periodisation of Lukács's political and theoretical trajectory, see Löwy's *Georg Lukács*.

[21] 'The self-understanding of the proletariat is therefore simultaneously the objective understanding of the nature of society'. Georg Lukács, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', in *History and Class Consciousness*, translated by Rodney Livingstone, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1971, p. 149.

junction that governs 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat': 'there is no solution that [cannot] be found in the solution to the riddle of commodity-*structure*'.[22] In this regard, Bloch's *Thomas Müntzer* seems a natural target, inasmuch as, despite its fervent allegiance to the Bolshevik revolution, it strives to identify a supra-historical, meta-political and meta-religious *Ubique*, a utopian directionality that cannot be exhausted or contained by socio-economic dialectic or political strategy. I will consider Lukács's attack and then assess the extent to which it captures the thrust of Bloch's theology of revolution.

The critique of Bloch is situated in the midst of Lukács's treatment of the fate of humanism in Marxism, which is to say in the revolutionary theory that adopts and intensifies the political-epistemological 'standpoint of the proletariat'. Almost as if to correct what might have appeared as the prolongation within the analysis of reification of his own early romantic anti-capitalism – in the guise of the protest against capitalism as an engine of dehumanisation – Lukács tries to purge humanism of myth, which is to say of its debilitating compromise with reified bourgeois conceptuality. In keeping with Lukács's Hegelian fidelities (the antidote to his earlier Kantian leanings), if humanism is really to dislocate the structures of reification, its immediacy must be overcome. Accordingly: 'If the attempt is made to attribute an immediate form of existence to class consciousness, it is not possible to avoid lapsing into mythology: the result will be a mysterious species-consciousness [...] whose relation to and impact upon the individual consciousness is wholly incomprehensible'.[23]

The picture that emerges is that of a battle between two humanisms: the first, which founds itself on the results of what Lukács calls 'classical philosophy' (up to and including Hegel), identifies a transcendental and trans-historical kernel of humanity to be ethically and cognitively rescued from its capitalist dehumanisation (this also the most general matrix of romantic anti-capitalism); the second, a proletarian, revolutionary humanism, reinvents Protagoras's adage to argue that 'man has become the measure of all (societal) things', insofar as 'fetishistic objects' have been dissolved into 'processes that take place among men and are objectified in concrete relations between them'.[24] The articulation of this revolutionary humanism possibly constitutes Lukács's most unequivocal act of separation from his ethically rigorist and dualist past, and from any trans-historical opposition

[22] Lukács, p. 83.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

to the bourgeoisie. Capitalism can only be exploded from the inside, by an agent formed by the process of reification itself. Conversely, a revolutionary humanism can only emerge when social life is thoroughly subsumed under capitalist relations, when 'in this objectification, in this rationalisation and reification of all social forms [...] we see clearly for the first time how society is constructed from the relations of men with each other'.[25]

Lukács is accordingly opposed to any theory of 'communist invariants'[26] that would posit a trans-historical revolutionary drive. This is explicit where he canonically opposes slave revolts to proletarian revolutions, but adds a specifically dialectical and epistemological twist to the traditional Marxist differentiation. Unmediated by the objectivity of social form (the commodity), slave consciousness can never, for Lukács, attain to 'self-knowledge': 'Between a "thinking" slave and an "unconscious" slave there is no real distinction to be drawn in an objective social sense'. While it might be politically mobilising, the slave's awareness of his oppression has no true and lasting effect because it is not rooted in social objectivity. In other words, it is only because the worker is the 'self-consciousness of the commodity', and thus a subject-object (rather than a powerless alternation between these two poles), that 'his knowledge is practical. *That is to say, this knowledge brings about an objective structural change in the object of knowledge*'.[27] Moreover, it is only this 'privileged' position within the logic of the social totality that permits the worker – if and when he is able to politicise his consciousness – not to struggle against seemingly inert 'facts', but rather to grasp the *tendency* inscribed in his very exploitation. The epistemological *and* political specificity of Marxism is to be located in this relation to tendency, in its being a 'theory of reality which allots higher place to the prevailing trends of the total development than to the facts of the empirical world'.[28]

It is on the grounds of this dialectical and political epistemology, which radically distinguishes the proletariat's self-knowledge from that of any 'prehistorical' class, that Lukács examines Marx's humanism. Lukács refuses the idea that Marx ever hypostasised an abstract general man, arguing instead

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[26] On this concept, formulated by Alain Badiou, see Alain Badiou and François Balmès, *De l'idéologie*, Maspéro, Paris 1976 and my analysis in 'Communism as Separation', in: *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, Continuum, London 2004. Badiou has returned to this notion in his recent polemic on Sarkozy, see 'The Communist Hypothesis', *New Left Review* II/49, January-February 2008.

[27] Lukács, p. 169.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 183.

that the 'standpoint' of man is such only when, qua subject-object of the historical dialectic he is 'integrated in the concrete totality' (i.e. when he is singularised as proletarian...). The upshot of this is that man '*both is and at the same time is not*'.[29] It is the specificity lent by capitalism to this ontological uncertainty or intermittence of man which for Lukács – set on burning all of his bridges with utopianism, messianism and religiosity – separates Marxist humanism from all of those forms of anti-capitalism which begin with the human (essence) and treat in unmediated, non-dialectical terms the impossibility of attaining humanity under capitalism. By contrast, the very concept of reification is aimed at surpassing 'the dilemmas of empiricism and utopianism, of voluntarism and fatalism' that beset any (romantic) anti-capitalism which has yet to discover the materialist philosopher's stone: the commodity form. The understanding of reification allows Lukács to grasp the antinomies of anti-capitalist radicalism as derivative forms of the overall antinomies of bourgeois thought, stemming from the latter's incapacity to think tendency and to identify the subject-object capable of revolutionising the totality from within.

The harshness of Lukács's judgment of Bloch's Müntzer arises from the foregoing specification of a revolutionary Marxian humanism. As the foremost communist exemplar of that utopian strand which Lukács depicts as the historical counterpart of the Christian dualism that left the City of Man unscathed, deporting human wishes to the City of God, in Lukács's account Bloch-Müntzer is unable to extricate himself from a theology – however 'revolutionary' – which impotently juxtaposes a transcendent humanisation to a dehumanised world, the empirical to the utopian. Within this 'utopian counterpart' to a quietist and servile Christian ontology, Lukács isolates two strands (themselves forming a further antinomy, another blocked duality): on the one hand, a view of empirical reality for which the latter can only be transformed by an Apocalypse; on the other, a radical interiorisation, whereby humanity can only be attained in the figure of the saint. In either case, change is but a semblance. Giving short thrift to the 'intrinsically praxeological' character of Müntzer's vision,[30] Lukács intensifies Engels's judgement

[29] *Ibid*., pp. 189-90.

[30] See the critical comments on Lukács's treatment of Bloch's *Thomas Müntzer* in Tommaso La Rocca, *Es Ist Zeit. Apocalisse e Storia – studio su Thomas Müntzer (1490–1525)*, Cappelli, Bologna 1988, pp. 191–5. This is to my knowledge the only text that specifically deals with these revealing passages in *History and Class Consciousness.* It would be interesting to consider the manner in which this dissension of the 1920s is prolonged in the dispute over expressionism that pitted Bloch against Lukács in 1938. See *Aesthetics and Politics*, NLB, London 1977, pp. 9-59.

on the role of theology in the German Peasants' War, not treating merely as an anachronistic 'flag' and 'mask' for concrete social, but as an impediment and a diversion: 'Real actions then appear – precisely in their objective, revolutionary sense – wholly independent of the religious utopia: the latter can neither lead them in any real sense, nor can it offer concrete objectives or concrete proposals for their realisation'. What's more, the duality between man's inner being and his empirical conditions – joined but not mediated by a theology of history (predestination, chiliasm, etc.) – is viewed by Lukács, in a variation on Weber's thesis, as 'the basic ideological structure of capitalism', such that it was 'no accident that it was the revolutionary religiosity of the sects that supplied the ideology for capitalism in its purest forms (in England and America)'. Thus, whether we look at Bloch's attempt to supplement the 'merely economic' dimension of historical materialism with a utopian spark, or at 'the way in which the religious and utopian premises of the theory *concretely impinge* upon Müntzer's actions',[31] we encounter the same symptom of the incapacity to overcome bourgeois thought, the same *hiatus irrationalis* between principle and practice, the spirit and the letter, the spiritual and the economic. For Lukács, only the proletariat, 'as the Archimedean point from which the whole of reality can be overthrown', is capable of suturing this hiatus, and heralding a 'real social revolution' capable of 'restructuring [...] the real and concrete life of man', thus abolishing the reified duality between the utopian and the economic.[32]

In many respects, Lukács's harsh if exceedingly brief critique of Bloch's utopianism remains emblematic of dialectical arguments against transcendent, religious or messianic radicalisms, and it is mainly for this reason that I have presented it here. Needless to say, I cannot do justice to Bloch's own proposal in these remarks, but I think it is worth identifying those points of contrast between Lukács and Bloch that might shed some light on the persisting tensions, contradictions and antinomies within the contemporary understanding of philosophical radicalism. The clue lies perhaps in Bloch's 1924 review of *History and Class Consciousness*, 'Actuality and Utopia', which, though recognising Lukács's towering achievement, chastises him for carrying out 'an almost exclusively sociological homogenisation' of the processes of revolution, transformation and humanisation.[33] What does Lukács homogenise?

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[31] Lukács, p. 192.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 193. 'Already the mechanical separation between economics and politics precludes any really effective action encompassing society in its totality' (p. 195).

[33] Quoted in John Flores, 'Proletarian Meditations: Georg Lukács' Politics of Knowledge', *Diacritics* 2.3, 1972, p. 21. See also the reflections on Bloch's review in

Turning to Bloch's *Thomas Müntzer*, it is evident that Lukács's criticism, by aligning the theology of revolution on the antinomies of bourgeois thought – as a paroxystic transcendence of the world which is powerless to unhinge the latter's material constitution – papers over the specificity of Bloch's treatment of the religious and his conceptualisation of a utopian excess which, thought not simply transcendent, is both metapolitical and metahistorical. This much transpires from Bloch's own reflections on Weber's sociology of religion. In a crucial passage of the book, which also relies on Marx's account of the historical masks of revolution in the *18th Brumaire*, Bloch argues for the relative autonomy of 'moral and psychological complexes' without which it is impossible to comprehend the appearance of phenomena such as the German Peasants' War, but also to capture 'the deepest *contents* of this of this tumultuous human history, this lucid dream of the anti-wolf, of a finally fraternal kingdom' – which is an indispensable stimulus to collective revolutionary action. To quote Jameson's perspicacious commentary on Bloch: 'in Müntzer's theology, the very truth-coefficient of a theological doctrine is measured by collective need, by the belief and recognition of the multitudes themselves. Hence a theological idea, in contrast to a philosophical one, already implies in its very structure a church or group of believers around it, and exists therefore on a protopolitical, rather than a purely theoretical level'.[34] Recalling, after a fashion, Marx's own treatment of Germany's potentially revolutionary anachronism in the 1840s, as discussed above, Bloch – unlike Engels, Kautsky, and even more intensely Lukács himself – does not see the theological impetus of the 'revolution of the common man' of 1525 as the mere index of socio-economic immaturity. On the contrary, he views it as one of those situations that bears witness to the fact that 'the superstructure is often in advance of an [...] economy that will only later attain its maturity'.[35] Once again, we see how the configuration of the relationship between social transformation and historical time is among the foremost sources of divergence in how the very project of a radical philosophy may be understood. The positive use of anachronism suggested by Marx, and given an extreme

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Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism*, Pluto Press, London 1979, pp. 184-6, and Anson Rabinbach, 'Unclaimed Heritage: Bloch's *Heritage of Our Times* and the Theory of Fascism', *New German Critique* 11, 1977, pp. 17-19.

[34] Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1971, pp. 156-7.

[35] Ernst Bloch, *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution*, 2nd ed, Reclam, Leipzig 1989 [1962], p. 51. I have relied on the French translation by Maurice de Gandillac: *Thomas Münzer. Théologien de la revolution*, Julliard, Paris 1964.

form by Bloch – as a recovery and repetition of Müntzer for a revolutionary present – is denied by Lukács, for whom the revolutionary utopianism of the German Peasants' War was simply a by-product of a situation wherein a real restructuring of life was 'objectively impossible'.[36] In effect, as the tone of the several references to the Russian Revolution suggests, Bloch saw a link between the theological-utopian impulse and a certain socially determinate backward and peripheral place within capitalism as a possible revolutionary advantage. Some of the comments on the social base of the Peasants' War likewise echo the critique of a linear and developmental philosophy of history that transpires from one of the drafts of Marx's famous letter on the Russian *mir*, where he approvingly quotes the following line from an American writer: 'the new system to which the modern society is tending will be a revival in superior form of an archaic social type'.[37]

The rejection of what Bloch perceives in Lukács and in aspects of the Marxist tradition as an excessive homogenisation of the historical dialectic, as the purging of all non- or anti-social contents, carries over into his treatment of the dualities of inner and outer, heavenly and worldly, theological and political, utopian and empirical – the very dualities that Lukács perceived as the antinomies that ultimately reduced pre-proletarian politics to impotence. Rather than a historically-determined contradiction or an irrational hiatus between theological semblance and political weakness, Bloch sees in Müntzer – as the very emblem of the tensions and potentialities of the peasants' revolt – the short-circuit or disjunctive synthesis between the poles of these supposed disjunctions. Joining the 'absolute natural right' of a millenarian Christianity (theocracy qua equality) to a very strategic grasp of social forces and political forms (the alliance with the miners and the formation of the league of the Just), Bloch's Müntzer combines '*the most efficacious at the real level and the most efficacious at the surreal level* and puts them both at the summit of the same revolution'.[38] Perhaps more than any other, this formulation captures Bloch's ideal of a revolutionary (and therefore realist) inscription of utopian content into the course of history. It also governs his reading of Marx.

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[36] Lukács, p. 193. For Bloch, on the contrary, Müntzer's tragic defeat should never be hypostasized into a historical inevitability, and he should never be treated as a mere 'Don Quixote'.

[37] Karl Marx, 'The "First" Draft', in Teodor Shanin (ed.), *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1983, p. 107.

[38] Bloch, pp. 93-4. For a historical treatment of how 'millenarian revolutions' may synthesize political realism with theological surrealism, see Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*, Verso, London 2001, pp. 177-209.

Rather than the undertaker of utopian illusions, Marx is for Bloch the real heir to a subterranean lineage of chiliastic communism, whose pivotal contribution lies in soberly identifying the immanent means for the realisation of a supra-historical drive to 'mystical democracy'. 'His aim', writes Bloch, 'is to impose on the world through a hard-fought struggle, waged according to the wisdom of this very world, the edenic order required by rational socialism, which is profoundly millenarian, but which had been conceived hitherto in a far too arcadian manner, as a kind of beyond'.[39] Or, as Bloch puts it in a remarkable image in *Spirit of Utopia*, Marx is only homogeneous with capitalism in the same sense that the detective must somehow mimic the criminal. Bloch's view of socialist revolution and planning, which Lukács dismisses in *History and Class Consciousness* as a misunderstanding of the economy, separating it from the political, also stems from this attempt to think through a kind of rational millenarianism. It also echoes Bloch's captivating treatment of the relationship between interiority and political action in Müntzer.

Sharing with Lukács an interest in the antinomic relationship between theological transcendence and political immanence, Bloch spends much of *Thomas Müntzer* dissecting and castigating Luther's capitulation to earthly authority and denial of mystical interiority. Luther's ultimate Manicheanism 'remains static, it does not entail any demand to suppress the tension, to re-establish, at least in the heavenly Kingdom, the very unity of this Kingdom'.[40] In a sense then, Bloch discerns in Müntzer not an overcoming of the antinomy of the empirical and utopian, which is perhaps ultimately irreducible, but another way of articulating it, which would simultaneously do justice to social needs and spiritual drives. More strikingly, Bloch's Müntzer approaches the stringent demands and risks of collective revolutionary action in order to free up the religious subject from the burden and the distraction of an exploitative order. In a remarkable twist, rather than a humanist effort to merely alleviate suffering, Müntzer's theologically-driven revolt is aimed at freeing up subjects from vulgar economic suffering, *so that they may*

[39] *Ibid*., p. 89. See also 'Karl Marx, Death, and the Apocalypse: Or, the Ways in This World by Which the Inward Can Become Outward and the Outward Like the Inward', in *Spirit of Utopia*, translated by Anthony A. Nassar, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, where Bloch writes that 'Marx thoroughly purified Socialist planning of every simple, false, disengaged and abstract enthusiasm, of mere Jacobinism' (p. 236). For Bloch's provocative treatment of Marx's alleged 'secularisation' of Christian and utopian contents, see 'Karl Marx and Humanity: Stuff of Hope', in *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 3, translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

[40] Bloch, p. 136.

finally be free for Christian suffering (and redemption). As Bloch writes, when Müntzer 'straightens up the bent backs, it is in order to allow them to bear a real burden. If the people has fallen low enough so that, having itself become creature, it has more to fear from the creature than from God, it is entirely mistaken when it imagines that its masters are still established and commanded by God'.[41] This vision of communism as a freeing up of radical and economically irreducible utopian drives is also evident in Bloch's treatment of the state in the same period. In *Spirit of Utopia* he writes of the state as 'a great instrumental organisation for the control of the *inessential*', armed with a 'purely administrative Esperanto', and whose only 'justification [...] is the simplifying, frictionless functioning of its organisational method, placed in the middle of illogical life, its only, entirely instrumental logic, the logic of a state of emergency'.[42] Thus, correcting Lukács's negative estimation, it is not the demarcation of politics from the economy that is at stake in Bloch, but the excess (though not the outright separation) of the utopian over the empirical. Radical political struggle and violence – the 'categorical imperative with a revolver in hand', as Bloch has it – are necessary not for their own sake, but as the stepping-stones for an incommensurable and metapolitical aim. Or, to borrow Bloch's effective allegory, 'the Messiah can only come when all the guests have sat down at the table'.[43] Likewise, Bloch is not merely juxtaposing millenarian immediacy to economic mediation, but thinking through the kind of immediacy that could be produced on the basis of a rigorous traversal of worldly determinations (class struggles, planning, material needs, etc.). Adorno captured this aspect of Bloch's thinking well: 'For just as, in the words of Bloch's master, there is nothing immediate between heaven and earth which is not mediated, so too there can be nothing mediated without the concept of mediation involving a moment of the immediate. Bloch's pathos is indefatigably directed to that moment'.[44]

Whither radical philosophy?

This all-too-brief exploration of Bloch's and Lukács's divergent responses to the injunctions of Marx's early radicalism has merely sought to make

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[42] Bloch, *Spirit of Utopia*, p. 240.
[43] *Ibid.,* p. 244.
[44] Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Handle, the Pot and Early Experience', in: *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, ed. R. Tiedemann, trans. S. Weber Nicholsen, Columbia University Press, New York 1992, p. 219.

manifest some of the principal directions within the volatile force-field of radical philosophy. In particular, I think that this communist differend from the early twenties reveals that, at least within a Marxist ambit, the relation between the concrete situation and its horizon of transformation can be seen to split according to two conceptually differentiated but intertwined axes. First, in temporal terms: while Lukács's position stresses the articulation between capitalist tendency, the critical present and the revolutionary *kairos* which is to be seized by the organised proletariat, he appears to dismiss the benefits of anachronism mooted in Marx's 1843 Introduction. Inversely, it is by exacerbating this element of anachronism, by locating radicality in the anticipation of the superstructure over the base, that Bloch can dismiss the canonical view of Müntzer's theology as an obstacle or an appendage, and instead give it pride of place as the bearer of revolutionary and utopian content. Second, this divergent appreciation of the temporal coordinates of revolutionary change is bound up with two incompatible views of historical and political agency. Where Lukács presents the proletariat as the practical and epistemological 'Archimedean point' capable of unhinging the capitalist totality, Bloch reveals in a subjective metahistory of a utopian kernel whose drive and directionality – despite all of the changes in instruments, organisations and motivating ideologies – remains invariant from the Taborites to the Bolsheviks. To borrow Lukács's formulation, we are thus confronted with two potent, and alternative ways, to politically and conceptually grasp the statement that man '*both is and at the same time is not*', or, in Blochian terms, both is and is not-yet. Whether the antinomy signified by the names and texts of Lukács and Bloch is resolvable or not, or whether we should indeed treat it as a constitutive tension that maintains 'radical philosophy' in a perennial state of incompletion and unrest, is an open question. What is clear is that the insistence of contemporary radical thought on the enigmas of philosophical anthropology (in the writings of Virno and Agamben on human nature and bare life),[45] the political repercussions of messianism (from Derrida's *Specters of Marx* to the various strands of the Paul 'revival') and the possibility of a rational and partisan subjectivity (Badiou, Žižek)[46]

[45] The entire debate over the 'biopolitical' can be conceived in many respects as a way of folding the singularity of the capitalist present (conceived in post-workerist thought under the Marxian aegis of 'real subsumption') onto a metahistorical and metapolitical anthropological content. See my 'Always Already Only Now: Negri and the Biopolitical', in *The Philosophy of Antonio Negri, Vol. 2: Lessons on Constitutive Power,* edited by T. Murphy and A.-K. Mustapha, Pluto Press, London 2007.

[46] I've investigated the contemporary legacy of Lenin's 'political epistemology' of partisanship in 'Partisan Thought', *Historical Materialism* 17.1, forthcoming 2009.

suggests that there are still rich seams to be mined in the problematic of radicalism inaugurated by Marx and so compellingly, if incompatibly, recast by Lukács and Bloch.

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RADICAL ANTIPHILOSOPHY

Bruno Bosteels*

1.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Alain Badiou's ongoing plea for the return or the continued possibility of philosophy today – over and against the common arguments for its end, exhaustion, or overcoming – is a forceful attempt to redefine the philosopher's adversaries or rivals. Among these, we obviously can find contemporary versions of the sophists, or those who make up the tradition of what Badiou, in his *Manifesto for Philosophy*, calls the "great modern sophistics."[1] In many ways this diatribe against the sophists of our time – including Friedrich Nietzsche or Ludwig Wittgenstein as the "major" figures and Richard Rorty or Gianni Vattimo as "minor" ones – is what we would come to expect from a self-proclaimed Platonist: "The young Plato knew that he had to go beyond the subtle wrangling of sophistry as well as be educated by it about the essence of the questions of his time. The same holds true for us."[2] Philosophy cannot reassert its systematic possibility without also drawing a line of demarcation between itself and that which is not philosophy but resembles it or competes with it on the marketplace of ideas. What is more, such a demarcation rarely involves a serene intellectual "exchange" or "debate" of the kind favored, no matter how hypocritically, in our current academic and political climate. Instead, there is an element of anger that is constitutive of philosophy in this regard, to the extent that,

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[1] Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Norman Madarasz, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1999, p. 98 (trans. modified). I translate *sophistique* as "sophistics" rather than as the more commonplace but also more strictly pejorative "sophistry," following extant translations of Barbara Cassin's now classical study, *L'Effet sophistique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995.

[2] *Ibid*.

as Badiou says in a talk on Jacques Lacan, "the antisophistic argumentative rage constitutes the 'tumos' of philosophy, i.e., its core of polemical anger, since its origin."[3] Badiou thus proposes that philosophy – which positively would be defined, since at least Descartes, by the configuration of being, truth, and subject – also reaffirm itself negatively, so to speak, by bringing Plato's canonical attacks against the sophists up to date with our own time: "Just as, for the major sophists, there have been a *Gorgias* and a *Protagoras*, so too must there be a *Nietzsche* and a *Witgenstein*. And, for the minor sophists, a *Vattimo* and a *Rorty*. Neither more nor any less polemical, neither more nor any less respectful."[4] In addition to the sophists, and partially overlapping with them, though, the adversaries of philosophy in the way Badiou seeks to reground it with one more step in the configuration of being, truth, and subject, also include a long and respectable series of so-called "antiphilosophers."

Badiou as a matter of fact spent four years of his seminar in Paris, between 1992 and 1996, which is to say shortly after the systematic reassertion of philosophy in *Being and Event* (1988) and the accompanying volumes *Manifesto for Philosophy* (1989) and *Conditions* (1992), to a sustained investigation into the formal criteria that might help us identify the protocols of antiphilosophy over and against the claims of philosophy itself. The guiding term and the immediate targets of this investigation obviously are borrowed from Lacan who in turn, in the mid-1970s, had called himself an antiphilosopher after the example of eighteenth-century *antiphilosophes*, a self-applied label that historically refers to the mostly religious and conservative, if not outright reactionary, thinkers who resist the arrival of rationalism, deism, or materialism on the part of French Enlightenment thinkers, the so-called *philosophes*, such as Diderot, Voltaire, or d'Holbach. It must be said that none of the original *antiphilosophes* are even remotely known today, let alone read, except by a handful of specialists.[5] From the point of view of the history of ideas but also for the purposes of France's intellectual self-image, we could say that the *philosophes* completely gained the upper hand, to the detriment of

[3] Alain Badiou, "Lacan et Platon: le mathème est–il une idée?" in : *Lacan avec les philosophes*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1991, p. 136. This article is published in a shorter and slightly modified version as "L'Antiphilosophie: Lacan et Platon," in *Conditions*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1992, pp. 306–26. The quoted fragment does not appear in this shorter version.

[4] Badiou, "Le (re)tour de la philosophie *elle–même*," *Conditions*, p. 77; English version as "The (Re)turn of Philosophy *Itself*," in *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 137.

[5] See, above all, Didier Masseau, *Les ennemis des philosophes: L'antiphilosophie au temps des Lumières*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2000.

figures such as the Abbé Chaudon (author of a *Dictionaire anti-philosophique*, 1767) or Augustin Barruel (author of the antirevolutionary *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme*, 1797-1799). Within the proud tradition of French thought, which basks in the self-proclaimed clarity of enlightened reason, there is thus something utterly scandalous in the mere reinvocation of the antiphilosophical label on the part of someone like Lacan.

Lacan himself, it must also be said, has only very few words to spare, and even then typically enigmatic or esoteric ones, to explain what he means with his recourse to the term "antiphilosophy" to define his own relation, or nonrelation, to philosophy.[6] In "Perhaps at Vincennes," in 1975, he briefly suggests to the analysts of his School that they train themselves not only in linguistics, logic, or topology but also in antiphilosophy: "Which is the title I would gladly give to the investigation of what the university discourse owes to its supposed 'educational' function. It is not the history of ideas, so sad, that will get to the end of this."[7] In the process, philosophy gets reduced, via its association with the university discourse, to the level of stupidity, or *bêtise*, from whose profound slumber only the discourse of the analyst, with its strict particularity, can awaken us: "A patient anthology of the stupidity that characterizes it will allow, I hope, to put it into relief with regard to its indestructible root, its eternal dream. From which there is no awakening except one that is particular."[8]

As late as in 1980, while in the midst of his School's dissolution (which Badiou for the case in question will consider a supreme – if not the only – example of the antiphilosophical act), Lacan still feels the need forcefully to reassert his antiphilosophical allegiance, albeit in terms that are no less enigmatic or sparse than five years earlier. "This Mister Aa is an antiphilosopher," Lacan says with a reference to a text by Tristan Tzara: "That is my case. *I rise up in revolt*, so to speak, against philosophy. What is sure is that it is something finite and done with. Even if I expect some rejects to grow out

[6] For three fairly different accounts of Lacan's antiphilosophy, all posterior to Badiou's talk at the conference *Lacan avec les philosophes*, see Jean–Claude Milner, "L'antiphilosophie," *L'Oeuvre claire: Lacan, la science, la philosophie*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1995, pp. 146–158; François Regnault, L'antiphilosophie selon Lacan," *Conférences d'esthétique lacanienne*, Paris, Agalma, 1997, pp. 57–80; and Colette Soler, "Lacan en antiphilosophe," *Filozofski Vestnik* 27, 2, 2006, pp. 121–144. See also Slavoj Žižek's remarks, openly influenced by François Regnault, in *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London and New York, Verso, 1999, pp. 250–251.

[7] Jacques Lacan, "Peut–être à Vincennes," *Autres écrits*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2001, p. 314.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

of it. Such regrowths are common enough with finite things."[9] Yet aside from these instances, as François Regnault points out, it seems that no further explicit mentions of the term are to be found in Lacan's published work.

Given this sparseness, Badiou's purpose in returning to Lacan's suggestions therefore also carries with it a task of formal explicitation and systematization. For a while, he even seems to have toyed with the idea of composing an entire book on the topic, but this project has not come to fruition, at least not or not yet in French. Instead, we are left with a small number of brief references scattered throughout Badiou's *Manifesto for Philosophy*, *Conditions* and *Logics of Worlds* as well as more substantial essays on Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Lacan himself as the three great modern antiphilosophers. To each of these three, as I hinted at above, a year-long seminar was devoted from which some unofficial notes and transcriptions are now also available on-line. Finally, Badiou's well-known book on Saint Paul, based as it is on a seminar from the same series, should be considered as part of this project as well: "Paul is a major figure of antiphilosophy."[10] Indeed, the Apostle's perceived "folly" during his visit to Athens, which according to the Acts seems to have provoked only laughter on the part of the philosophers in the Aeropagus (mostly Stoics and Epicureans who look upon the idea of the resurrection of the dead with utter disbelief), stands out as one of antiphilosophy's most vivid ancient models and explains why Badiou feels the urge to compare Paul throughout his book to the likes of Pascal, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Lacan.

2.

Badiou's understanding of antiphilosophy, in other words, is not limited to the otherwise already quite difficult, if not impossible reconstruction of Lacan's usage of the term. Instead, the category emerges as the name for a longstanding tradition of thinkers who, with regard to the dominant philosophical trends of their time, situate themselves in the strange topological position of an "outside with," or of an "internal exteriority" – what Lacanians might prefer to designate with the term "extimacy" – in an attitude that typically oscillates between distance and proximity, admiration and blame, seduction and scorn.

[9] Lacan, "Monsieur A," *Ornicar?*, 21–22, summer 1980, p. 17.

[10] Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2003, p. 17.

A minimal list of antiphilosophical thinkers thus includes not only Saint Paul ("Basically, what gets him into difficulty in Athens is his antiphilosophy"[11]), Nietzsche ("Nietzsche assigns to philosophy the singular task of having to reestablish the question of truth in its work of rupture from meaning. Which is why I would call him a 'prince' of contemporary antiphilosophy"[12]), the early Wittgenstein ("The later work – which moreover is not a work since Wittgenstein had to good taste of not publishing anything from it – slides from antiphilosophy into sophistics"[13]), or Lacan ("I call a contemporary philosopher one who has the unfaltering courage to go through Lacan's antiphilosophy"[14]) but also Pascal ("Pascal, that other great figure of antiphilosophy, [...] he who explicitly opposes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the God of the philosophers and scientists"[15]), if not already Heraclitus ("I would say from Heraclitus, who is as much the antiphilosopher to Parmenides as Pascal is to Descartes"[16]), Rousseau ("Rousseau communicates with our time (let's say, after Nietzsche) by way of his inflexible antiphilosophy"[17]), Kierkegaard ("The exemplary antiphilosopher that Pascal is for/against Descartes, and Rousseau for/against Voltaire and Hume, Kierkegaard, we know, is for/against Hegel"[18]), and perhaps Marx, Freud, and Althusser ("Here we observe that the antiphilosophical act comes down to tracing a line of demarcation, as Althusser would have said following Lenin. And it is very well possible that Althusser's project, under the name of 'materialist philosophy,' came close to twentieth-century antiphilosophy"[19]). For my part, I would add to this list the name of Slavoj

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[11] *Ibid*., p. 27.

[12] Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?*, Paris, Le Perroquet, 1992, p. 24. This talk, together with Badiou's texts on Wittgenstein and Lacan, will be collected and translated into English in a single volume under the title *What Is Antiphilosophy?*, ed. and trans. Bruno Bosteels, Durham, Duke University Press, forthcoming. A shorter version of Badiou's talk on Nietzsche also appeared as "Who Is Nietzsche?," trans. Alberto Toscano, *PLI: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 11, 2001, pp. 1–11.

[13] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes,* Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 2006, p. 566.

[14] Badiou, *Conditions*, p. 196. See also the following remark in *Logiques des mondes*, where Lacan is credited for upholding the notion of the subject against its Heideggerian critics, without lapsing into humanism: "This is why the traversing of Lacan's antiphilosophy remains even today an obligatory exercise for those who seek to tear themselves free from the reactive convergences of religion and scientism" (p. 548).

[15] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 47.

[16] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté: L'antiphilosophie de Wittgenstein," *BARCA! Poésie, Politique, Psychanalyse*, 3, 1994, p. 14.

[17] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 575.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 447.

[19] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 17.

Žižek ("Monsieur Zz antiphilosophe," if I were to parody Tzara's dadaist gesture), probably the greatest living antiphilosopher of our times (in the words of Fredric Jameson: "Clearly, the parallax position is an anti-philosophical one, for it not only eludes philosophical systemisation, but takes as its central thesis the latter's impossibility"[20]). Finally, in France, there is the example of Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, who combines antiphilosophy and pop philosophy in a mixture of antiacademic slang, pornography, and speculative theory comparable only to Žižek ("One could also say that he attempts a juncture between the structuralist (and Maoist) generation of the late sixties and his own generation, brought up – as he affirms – on pornography, wandering, and unworking"[21]). The case of Heidegger, on the other hand, presents a harder nut to crack, as Badiou does not consider him an antiphilosopher (in spite of which Peter Hallward asserts that "Heidegger himself, of course, is most easily read as an antiphilosophical thinker"[22]), for reasons that will become clearer in what follows.

What Badiou's engagement with antiphilosophy is certainly *not* meant to be, even though his lists sometimes may give this impression, is a mere contribution to the history of philosophy – as though it were a matter of seeking out the antiphilosopher that accompanies each of the great philosophers as their shadowy double: Heraclitus to Parmenides, Saint Paul to the Athenians, Pascal to Descartes, Kierkegaard to Hegel, Žižek to Badiou himself, and so on. Rather, I would say that its usefulness lies, on one hand, in the specific readings the angle of antiphilosophy allows us to offer in the case of individual thinkers and, on the other, in the efficacy of these insights when they are put to work beyond the frame of reference in which they are first developed. In many cases, this may take one into areas of thought that we would not automatically associate with the question of where to draw the line of demarcation between philosophy and antiphilosophy. Thus, not only am I convinced that someone like Jorge Luis Borges can be read fruitfully as an antiphilosopher, but in my eyes this is even the only way to account

[20] Fredric Jameson, "First Impressions" (review of *The Parallax View* by Slavoj Žižek), *London Review of Books*, 28.17, 2006.

[21] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, p. 550. See, in particular, Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, Auch, Tristram, 2004, which is a good example of an antiphilosophical treatment of a single book of philosophy, Badiou's own *Being and Event*, in terms of its effects on the listening and reading subject; and with Philippe Nassif, *Pop philosophie: entretiens*, Paris, Denoël, 2005.

[22] Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 20. The entire section "Anti–antiphilosophy," like everything else in Hallward's book, provides an essential and systematic reference point, even though I do not agree with some of my dear friend's interpretations.

for the tension between Borges's undeniable philosophical interests and his otherwise no less intense mockery of philosophy's systematic ambitions.[23]

I would go one step further so as to formulate the hypothesis that today the dominant philosophical attitude is in fact thoroughly antiphilosophical in nature, even if the label itself is not always used or accepted. To be more precise, if philosophy today can pretend to be radical then this is in no small part due to its antiphilosophical tendencies. Whence the interest, but also the difficulty, of Badiou's attempt to disentangle the two. In fact, in times of near-global reaction, it is not surprising that there should be such a strong push for an antiphilosophical act that claims to be less illusory yet also more radical than the philosophical pursuit of truth. Antiphilosophy, in this sense, contributes to an ever more powerful political maximalism (even Wittgenstein, after all, is capable of proclaiming himself a communist), which actually fills in for a missing emancipatory articulation.[24]

3.

What are then some of the fundamental characteristics that would make antiphilosophy into a relatively coherent tradition in its own right? Based on his detailed readings of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Lacan, as well as the occasional references to Pascal, Kierkegaard, or Rousseau, Badiou distinguishes a small number of basic features as the invariant core of any antiphilosophy. At least for the modern period, these invariant traits include the following: the assumption that the question of being, or that of the world, is coextensive with the question of language; consequently, the reduction of truth to being nothing more than a linguistic or rhetorical effect, the outcome of historically and culturally specific language games or tropes which therefore must be judged and, better yet, mocked in light of a critical-linguistic, discursive, or genealogical analysis; an appeal to what lies just beyond language, or rather at the upper limit of the sayable, as a domain of meaning, sense, or knowledge, irreducible to any form of truth as defined in philosophy; and, finally, in order to gain access to this domain, the search for a radical act such as the religious leap of faith or the revolutionary breaking in

[23] See my essay "Borges as Antiphilosopher," *Borges escritor del siglo XXI*, ed. Silvia N. Barei and Christina Karageourgou-Bastea, special issue of *Vanderbilt e-Journal of Luso-Hispanic Studies*, 3, 2006, pp. 23–31, from where I will freely draw in what follows.

[24] The present study in this sense continues and expands my argument from "The Speculative Left," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 104.4, 2005, pp. 751–767.

two of the history of the world, the sheer intensity of which would discredit in advance any systematic theoretical or conceptual elaboration.

These features of thought (or of intellection, since in the eyes of some to speak of "thought" with regard to the operations in question might be to grant too much to philosophy) tend to push the antiphilosopher, respectively, in the directions of nominalism or constructivism, sophistics, mysticism, and various forms of (political, religious, artistic, or even scientific and amorous) radicalism. Of course, not all antiphilosophers share these features in their totality, or not to the same extent. Thus, for example, whereas Nietzsche's filiation with the sophists is quite open and explicit in his work, there are certainly many theses in Lacan's conception of truth and meaning that bring him closer to an antisophistic stance which every contemporary philosopher for Badiou would have to traverse – just as even the early Wittgenstein does not deny the existence of propositional truths, for example scientific ones, in the way sophists would, even if his ultimate aim is to move beyond mere propositional sense.

Similar caveats no doubt would have to be introduced specific to each antiphilosopher in terms of which traits are given primacy to the detriment of others. In fact, beyond the varying degrees of proximity to the sophists, the tension between the first two of the features just enumerated and the last two produces a characteristic vacillation that, even within the work of a single antiphilosophical thinker, can range from a purely constructivist viewpoint, which reduces truth to what can be discerned in the existing language systems, all the way to the yearning for a quasi-mystical beyond, which would point toward the other side of language.

The key point, however, is to understand how these features both hang together and contradict each other, providing various narratives or thought-scenarios for moving back and forth amongst them:

1. Antiphilosophers, particularly those modern ones who think in the wake of the linguistic turn after Wittgenstein or Ferdinand de Saussure, first of all tend to reduce the limits of our world to the limits of our language. This is their constructivist or nominalist side, which resolutely submits the question of being to the sovereignty of language: "For it is still not saying enough to say that the concept is the thing itself, which a child can demonstrate against the Scholastics. It is the world of words that creates the world of things."[25] All descriptions of the world, far from being truthful propositions that would correspond to a given state of things, thus turn out to be

[25] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink, New York, Norton, 2001, p. 229.

purely linguistic classifications that are as arbitrary and conjectural as they are unavoidable.

We might rephrase this first major premise behind contemporary antiphilosophy by asserting that nominalism from this point of view is the untranscendable horizon of our time. This means that we cannot even imagine anymore what it means to be a realist, in the sense of the Scholastic debates: "Now, like the spontaneous and bewildered prose-speaker of comedy, we all do nominalism *sans le savoir*, as if it were a general premise of our thought, an acquired axiom. Useless, therefore, to comment on it."[26] For the purposes of antiphilosophy, specifically, nominalism is above all a source of critical and polemical leverage. It is what gives antiphilosophers the necessary impetus, each in his own way, to go against the great cornerstones of Western metaphysics: time, the self or ego, the universe, God. Once these notions are submitted to the razor-sharp edge of a nominalist critique, they turn out to be little more than linguistic constructs: the effects of a grammatical slippage, an unfounded backward inference, or a fortunate or ill-conceived rhetorical turn of phrase. As a result, philosophy is considered to be not just refuted or mistaken but put on display as a threatening monstrosity: an illness for Nietzsche, chatter and nonsensical verbiage exhibiting itself as sense for Wittgenstein, stupidity and rascalness for Lacan.

The diagnostic of philosophy as illness, though, proceeds by way of a painstaking linguistic and discursive analysis of the statements and truth-claims of the philosopher. From this, we can easily see why there exists such a close proximity between the antiphilosopher and the sophist. For example, in the case of Nietzsche's genealogical work:

> Its principle is common knowledge: to bring back every statement to the type that sustains its stating. This is a distribution that in my eyes is typically sophistic between the philological examination of the statements, on one hand, and the register of power, on the other. The method consists in determining with the greatest rigor the corpus of discursive figures, in such a way so as to link them genealogically to the power-type that sustains them. Nietzsche, in this work, shows a great virtue which is the combination of a kind of grammarian's probity on one hand and a powerful doctrine of forces on the other. With, as its fundamental target, the category of truth.[27]

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[26] Jorge Luis Borges, "A History of Eternity," *Selected Non–Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, New York, Penguin, 2000, p. 135.

[27] Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde?*, p. 17.

It is not enough, however, to submit all the major philosophical categories to a type of discourse analysis; the very enterprise of the pursuit of truth as such must also be put down, discredited, and gotten rid of: "Henceforth, it is no longer even possible to discuss philosophy; one must declare its *effective* expiration, along with that of every figure of mastery."[28]

2. The sovereign grasp of language on being or substance, indeed, leads above all to an unforgiving destitution of truth as the central category of philosophy. If there is no escape from the prison-house of language, then truth can only be a linguistic or rhetorical effect – the felicitous or infelicitous outcome of certain language games. No doubt more familiar to readers of the early Nietzsche from the so-called *Philosopher's Book*, particularly as seen through the lens of Paul de Man, this reduction of logic to rhetoric is the side of antiphilosophers that makes them nearly indistinguishable from ancient or modern sophists. We could sum this up by referring to the way in which Borges, after rightly attributing to Nietzsche the thesis that "the important consideration is the change an idea can cause in us, not the mere formulation of it," in a footnote offers one of the more striking summaries of the sophistic premise behind antiphilosophy, whose echoes can be heard in the rumble of deconstruction many decades later:

> Reason and conviction differ so much that the gravest objections to any philosophical doctrine usually pre-exist in the work that declares it. In the *Parmenides* Plato anticipates the argument of the third man which Aristotle will use to oppose him; Berkeley (*Dialogues*, 3) anticipates the refutations of Hume.[29]

To be sure, logic and rhetoric are not equated in this footnote; on the contrary, their radical difference is affirmed. However, one of the consequences of this affirmation of difference is nonetheless a devaluation of pure logic, or reason, in favor of the persuasive force of conviction of an argument. In fact, so much weight is given to the effects of language and the change they can produce in a subject that the principle of non-contradiction, cornerstone of classical logic if ever there was one, no longer applies even within some of

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[28] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 58.

[29] Borges, "Note on Walt Whitman," *Other Inquisitions*, trans. Ruth L.C. Simms, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1964, p. 71. See also Badiou's comment in his contribution to the conference *Lacan avec les philosophes*: "We could certainly ask ourselves if the infinite referral which Lacan talks about is not indicated by Plato himself in the anticipation he presents of the argument of the third man," in "Lacan et Platon: le mathème est–il une idée?" p. 143.

the most canonical of philosophical works, which consequently contain the seeds for their very own refutation or auto-deconstruction.

3. When taken to an extreme, this privileging of rhetoric over logic, of the saying over the said, can easily lend the argument a miraculous or quasi-mystical overtone. Indeed, if what really matters is the subjective (existential or therapeutic or revolutionary) change an idea can produce in us, and if this effect is beyond the scope of mere logical (philosophical or conceptual) formulation, then it is hard to resist the temptation to find alternative modes of access to this domain of meaningfulness or sense. Or, to put this differently, no sooner do we posit the coincidence of the limits of my world and the limits of my language than the question arises of knowing what lies beyond or beneath these limits, which alone is what really matters. This is the question that paradoxically opens a path in antiphilosophy from constructivism toward mysticism, at once contradicting the principle according to which reality is a verbal, linguistic, or discursive construct. There then seems to be a dimension of reality, or perhaps it would be better to say a dimension of the real, that forever remains beyond the scope of language or conceptual knowledge and, as such, resists symbolization absolutely.

Thus arises the notion, common to all antiphilosophers, of an essential leftover or remainder, which breaks with the coextensiveness of language and the world:

> This idea of the "remainder" can be found in every antiphilosophy, which builds very subtle networks of relations only so as to track down the incompleteness in them, and to expose the remainder to its seizing in the act. This is precisely where antiphilosophy destitutes philosophy: by *showing* that which its poor theoretical pretension has missed, and which is nothing less, in the end, than the real. Thus for Nietzsche, life is that which appears as a remainder of every protocol of evaluation. Just as for Pascal Grace is entirely subtracted from the order of reasons, for Rousseau, the voice of conscience from the preachings of the Enlightenment, for Kierkegaard existence from the Hegelian synthesis. And for Lacan, we know that the philosopher neither can nor wants to know anything of enjoyment and the Thing to which it is yoked.[30]

Incidentally, Badiou adds a long remark to this logic of the real qua

[30] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 23. The last line, of course, also may serve to account for Žižek's rapport to Badiou.

remainder in order to question the misogynist terms in which it is almost always couched:

> What remains to be seen, though, is whether of this real the antiphilosopher offers us anything else than a shattering vanishing act, or whether this act is not, like woman for Claudel, a promise that cannot be kept. Unless it is a question of woman all along in this story, precisely woman about whom we will immediately agree that philosophy has no ambition whatsoever to speak, but about whom we can also wonder whether to this day, displayed as she is in the series of nouns (faith, anxiety, life, silence, enjoyment…) with which antiphilosophy – with the exception of Lacan – has pinned her down, she has done any better than to disappear. The antiphilosopher would wave the specter of the feminine in front of the eyes of the philosopher who, loyally, forecloses this specter from his thinking manoeuvre, educated on this point by science. This goes a long way toward explaining something of the striking misogyny of all antiphilosophers: the unconscious woman serves them only to pin some banderillas on the thick neck of the philosopher. Which is, after all, an explanation "among men." Have we ever seen more detestable people, in their explicit declarations about women, than Pascal (did he ever observe one, other than his sister?), Rousseau (*Emile*'s Sophie!), Kierkegaard (the neurosis of marriage!), Nietzsche (let's not even go there) or Wittgenstein (with the half-frankness of a half-homosexuality)? Supposing that from the point of view of desire the real remainder of philosophical theories must be sought after on the side of the feminine, the *fate* reserved for this remainder is certainly more enviable when one is called Plato, Descartes or Hegel. To the point where we could make of the relationship to women a distinctive criterion: the more flagrant the misogyny, the more we are in the vicinity of antiphilosophy.[31]

We could thus affirm that misogyny, without forming a separate invari-

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 23–24. This allows Badiou to define Kant's place in the philosophy/antiphilosophy debate: "This would also shed an intense light on the case of Kant, whose declarations about women are hairraising, and whose tortuous goal can easily be summarized as follows: to give a philosophical form to antiphilosophy itself. To show philosophically that the philosophical pretension can only stir up air. To sublimate the moral act, which is undoubtedly a-philosophical, with regard to the phenomenal miseries of knowledge. From which we can infer, since for him the remainder bears the name 'noumenon,' that a Kantian desire always addresses a noumenal object. This is, strongly conceptualized, the old certitude of the 'mystery' of the feminine. In Wittgensteinian language, 'woman' is that of which we cannot speak, and which we must therefore pass over in silence" (*ibid.*, p. 24).

ant trait, nonetheless constitutes a derivatory feature that follows in particular from the antiphilosophical logic of the remainder, or of the not-all.

The narrative potential of this tension between linguistic constructivism and the notion of the indivisible remainder can easily be illustrated. Some of Borges's most canonical fictions, for example, revolve around the gap between language and its incommunicable, obscene, or simply eternal other side. "A Yellow Rose," a short prose piece from *Dreamtigers* (*El hacedor*) thus tells of the revelation that befalls Giambattista Marino on the eve of his death, in an illumination that Homer and Dante may have achieved as well:

> Then the revelation occurred: Marino *saw* the rose as Adam might have seen it in Paradise, and he thought that the rose was to be found in its own eternity and not in his words; and that we may mention or allude to a thing, but not express it; and that the tall, proud volumes casting a golden shadow in a corner were not – as his vanity had dreamed – a mirror of the world, but rather one thing more added to the world.[32]

This fragment, furthermore, names some of the basic operations that are involved in dealing with the purely worldly realm and that which for the antiphilosopher lies beyond the worldly, or at its outer edges. As if to follow in the footsteps of Wittgenstein, perhaps by way of Mallarmé, Borges thus draws a sharp line of demarcation between expression and allusion, or between saying and showing: "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical."[33] In the final instance, however, what is at stake in this revelation or manifestation is not the process of a laborious and ongoing operation but rather a punctual, evanescent, and well-nigh atemporal act.

4. This notion of the act is without a doubt the most important element in the formal characterization of any antiphilosophy, namely, the reliance on a radical gesture that alone has the force of destituting, and occasionally overtaking, the philosophical category of truth. It is precisely the absence of any such alternative to philosophical truth that constitutes one of the major obstacles to considering Heidegger an antiphilosopher, since even in the guise of "thinking," the destruction of metaphysics remains foreign to the vicious discrediting of truth as such. By contrast, beyond the horizon of mere language or propositional knowledge, antiphilosophers typically posit the

[32] Borges, "A Yellow Rose," *Dreamtigers*, trans. Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1964, p. 38.

[33] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico–philosophicus*, trans. David Pears and Brian McGuinness, New York, Routledge, 2001, 6.522.

possibility of some radical act such as Pascal's "wager," Kierkegaard's "leap of faith," Nietzsche's "breaking in two of history," or Lacan and Žižek's own notion of the "act," whether strictly analytical (as in the still unpublished book XV of Lacan's *Seminar*, from 1967-1968, precisely entitled *The Psychoanalytical Act* and appropriately interrupted by the events of May '68: "It is well-known that I introduced the psychoanalytical act, and I take it that it was not by accident that the upheaval of May should have prevented me from reaching its end"[34]) or ethical and political in a much broader sense (as in the case of Žižek's rapidly growing corpus of writings). Unlike in Badiou's treatment of the "event," with which it is sometimes conflated, what matters in this "act" is not its impersonal truth so much as its – cathartic of therapeutic – effect on the subject.

5. This decisive role of the listening and speaking subject constitutes another feature that is typical of antiphilosophy. Indeed, the experience of traversing a radical act not only gives precedence to the personal form and effectiveness over and above the impersonal truth content, but it also seems that this experience cannot be transmitted except in a near-autobiographical style that is inseparable from the subject of the enunciation. This is the experimental, writerly side of antiphilosophers, present in Nietzsche's aphorisms, Kierkegaard's diaries, Lacan's seminars, Saint Paul's epistles, or – why not? – Žižek's videos and unique performances as a speaker:

> From Pascal's *Mémorial* to the inclusion by Lacan, at the heart of his seminars, of his personal and institutional fate, from Rousseau's *Confessions* to "Why I am a Destiny" by Nietzsche, from Kierkegaard and Regina's tribulations to Wittgenstein's battles with sexual and suicidal temptation, the antiphilosopher climbs in person onto the public stage to expose his thought. Why? Because as opposed to the regulated anonymity of science, and against everything in philosophy that claims to speak in the name of the universal, the antiphilosophical act, which is without precedent or guarantee, has only itself and its effects to offer by way of attesting to its value.[35]

[34] Lacan, "Radiophonie," *Autres écrits*, p. 427.

[35] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 20. See also *Logiques des mondes*, p. 582 and *Saint Paul*, p. 17. Badiou's comments on Žižek go very much in the same direction: "The Lacanian who is the most inclined to invest notions of mastery into the most varied 'bodies' of contemporary appearing is certainly Slavoj Žižek, whose lack of affiliation to any one group of psychoanalysts gives him a freedom he gladly abuses with witticisms, repetitions, a delicious love for the kitchiest movies, an unbounded pornography, conceptual journalism, calculated histrionics, puns.... In the end he re-

As a result, the antiphilosopher rarely publishes an organic work but typically wavers between the esoteric fragment and the delights of incompleteness: "This format, in which the opportunity for action takes precedent over the preocuppation with making a name for oneself through publication ('poubellications,' as Lacan used to say), evinces one of the antiphilosopher's characteristic traits: he writes neither system nor treatise, nor even really a book. He propounds a speech of rupture, and writing ensues when necessary."[36] In order to produce such a speech of rupture, the antiphilosopher's declarations require the immediate presence of the speaking subject within his speech. Whence the somewhat frenetic, highly theatrical race to precede and often undercut what is said with references to the incomparable existential power of its saying:

> The antiphilosopher thus necessarily speaks *in his proper name*, and must show this "proper" as real proof of his saying. In effect, he has no validation, nor any compensation, for his act except immanent to this act itself, since he denies that this act can ever be justified in the order of theory. [...] The biographical impulse, the taste for confession, and even in the end a kind of infatuation which is clearly recognizable and which commands the "writerly" style of antiphilosophers (going back to the list, there is not a single one who is not a master of language): these are the necessary consequences of the most intimate antiphilosophical certainty, the one which consists, against millenia of philosophy, in having to announce and practise, in one's own name only, an active salvific break.[37]

Insofar as the antiphilosopher's diatribes against philosophy are supported only by the contrast with the radicality – not to say authenticity – of the declaration of the act as such, only the personal, even physical manifestation of the subject behind the declaration can give it credence and, so to speak, make it pass. For example, when Lacan affirms at the very end of his "Allocution on Teaching": "Truth may not be convincing, knowledge passes in the act."[38] But what is meant by the "act" of antiphilosophy?

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sembles Lacan with this perpetual theatricalization, animated by an assumed desire for bad taste," in *Logiques des mondes*, pp. 587–588.

[36] Badiou, *Saint Paul,* p. 31.

[37] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, saintete," p. 21.

[38] Lacan, "Allocution sur l'enseignement," *Autres écrits*, p. 305. Badiou, in his unpublished seminar, will thus define the Lacanian act as the "passing into knowledge" of the real, whereby the French *passe en savoir* should also be understood as the homonymous *pas sans savoir*, that is, "not without knowing." The typical antiphilosoph-

4.

Before returning to Badiou's favorite examples from Nietzsche or Wittgenstein, it might be useful, for purely didactic purposes if nothing more, to quote Borges's two definitions of the aesthetic act. The first of these concludes the opening essay in *Other Inquisitions*, "The Wall and the Books," where Borges seeks to understand the enigma behind the emperor Shi Huang Ti's simultaneous destruction of the library and the construction of the Chinese wall:

> Music, states of happiness, mythology, faces molded by time, certain twilights and certain places – all these are trying to tell us something, or have told us something we should not have missed, or are about to tell us something; that imminence of a revelation that is not yet produced is, perhaps, the aesthetic act.[39]

The second definition of the act is part of Borges's attempt, in the prologue to the 1964 edition of his *Obra poética* (Collected Poetry), to define what he calls "the aesthetics of Berkeley":

> The taste of the apple (states Berkeley) lies in the contact of the fruit with the palate, not in the fruit itself; analogously (I would say) poetry lies in the commerce of the poem with the reader, not in the series of symbols registered on the pages of a book. The essential aspect is the aesthetic act, the *thrill*, the physical modification provoked by each reading. Perhaps this is nothing new, but at my age novelties matter less than truth.[40]

In this last sentence, moreover, we can see how the search for a radical act – in this case an aesthetic or archi-aesthetic one – in fact allows the an-

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ical binary of truth and meaning thus becomes triangulated through knowledge. Technically, there would be no truth of the real – and hence, despite Žižek's claims to the contrary, no Lacanian politics of truth, at least not without quotation marks around the "truth" – but only a passage of the real into knowledge by way of an impasse of formalization, whose model is mathematical and whose mimicry in the act can therefore be called archi-scientific.

[39] Borges, "The Wall and the Books," *Other Inquisitions*, p. 5 (translation modified in order to render *el hecho estético* as "the aesthetic act" rather than as "the aesthetic fact," since behind *hecho* we should hear echoes of *hacer* and *hacedor*, as in Greek *poiein* and *poiètès*).

[40] Borges, *Obra poética 1923–1964*, Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1964, p. 11.

tiphilosopher to redefine "truth" itself, rather than to jettison it altogether. If this category is maintained at all, what matters is then above all the experiential content or the effect caused in the subject, particularly as speaking subject: "The relationship of the act to writing concerns, not *what* is said, but the effect of what is said, which implies a putting down of the said."[41]

Here, just as the logic of the remainder seems almost inevitably to invite misogynist language, the importance of the change that the act causes in the subject is what pushes almost every antiphilosopher in the direction of a profound tie – whether antagonistic or (more frequently) favorable – to Christianity. As Badiou writes about the act in Wittgenstein's case: "The effect of the archiaesthetic act must not concern thought or doctrine but the subject, which means life (or the world) seized from its limit. This is why the act is in its element in Christianity."[42] The author of the *Tractatus* himself, indeed, had written in the 1950s: "I think that one of the things that Christianity says is that all good doctrines are useless. That you must change your life."[43] Already in a posthumous note from 1883, Nietzsche had asserted something very similar, albeit this time *against* the sickness of Christianity: "It is not enough to transmit a doctrine; it is also necessary violently to transform the people so that they accept it. This is what Zarathustra finally understood."[44] This is also, we might add, what every antiphilosopher understands, against the doctrines that philosophy is able to transmit.

After the treatment of woman, the defining role of Christianity could thus be considered a second derivatory feature of antiphilosophy:

> The connection of Christianity to modern antiphilosophy has a long history. We can easily draw up the list of antiphilosophers of strong caliber: Pascal, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Lacan. What jumps to the eye is that four of these stand in an essential relation to Christianity: Pascal, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, and Wittgenstein; that the enraged hatred of Nietzsche is itself at least as strong a bond as love, which alone explains that the Nietzsche of the "Letters from madness" can sign indifferently as "Dionysos" or "the Crucified"; that Lacan, the only true rationalist of the group – but also the one who *completes* the cycle of modern antiphilosophy – nonetheless holds Christianity to be decisive for the constitution of the subject of science,

[41] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 49.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Nietzsche as quoted in Gianni Vattimo, *Il soggetto e la maschera: Nietzsche e il problema della liberazione*, Milan, Bompiani, 1974, p. 349.

> and that it is in vain that we hope to untie ourselves from the religious theme, which is structural.[45]

Either religion is the temptation of meaning present within all philosophy that antiphilosophy must fight off, or else the experience of conversion on the road to Damascus serves as the prime model, the exemplary matrix, for the antiphilosophical act. In both scenarios, though, the act draws much of its energy, if not its subject-matter, from religion, especially from Christianity.

5.

In the case of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and Lacan, Badiou qualifies their antiphilosophical act respectively as "archi-political," "archi-aesthetic," and "archi-scientific." Leaving Lacan's case for another time and place, let us take a closer look at Badiou's reading of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. What matters in this reading concerns not only the antiphilosopher but also the philosopher, since it is in dialogue with the latter's portrayal as part of the antiphilosophical diatribe that philosophy can and must redefine its own operations in relation to the truth of an event.

The crucial point lies in understanding the difference between act and event. The same historical or empirical "happenings" may be involved in both cases, such as an actual revolutionary uprising or an unique artistic performance, but antiphilosophy's treatment of such happenings as "acts" follows a series of protocols that are not to be confused with their treatment as "events" that function as the conditions of truth for philosophy.

Thus, Wittgenstein's act certainly has much to do with art, especially

[45] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 18–19. The fact that Lacan for Badiou *completes* the cycle of contemporary antiphilosophy may seem to present an obstacle to anyone who would claim the status of antiphilosopher for thinkers after Lacan such as Slavoj Žižek. Žižek's case, however, could very well be compared to Kant's, as described above (footnote 31). That is, Žižek's work, which never ceases to call itself philosophical (primarily over and against cultural studies in which willy-nilly it found itself inscribed in the Anglo-American world), could be said to reaccomodate antiphilosophy to philosophy, in particular under the orthodox authorization of Kant and Hegel. Friendships and appearances of theoretical convergence notwithstanding, this approach is the opposite of Badiou's, who proposes to differentiate the two, all the while drawing crucial lessons from antiphilosophy for the purposes of defining the operations of philosophy, whereas all genuine philosophy today always already would seem to be an antiphilosophy for Žižek.

music as the epitome of nonpropositional sense since at least Schopenhauer, but antiphilosophy also adds a radical and originary dimension to its view of art, by absorbing its energy back into its own discourse and appropriating it for its unique purposes alone. This added dimension explains the archi-aesthetic nature of the act in the case of Wittgenstein:

> The antiphilosophical act consists in letting what there is be manifested, insofar as "what there is" is precisely that which no true proposition can say. If Wittgenstein's antiphilosophical act can legitimately be declared archi-aesthetic, it is because this "letting-be" has the nonpropositional form of a pure showing, of *clarity*, and because such clarity happens to the unsayable only in the form of a work without thought (the paradigm for such donation is certainly music for Wittgenstein). I say *archi*-aesthetic because it is not a question of substituting art for philosophy either. It is a question of bringing into the scientific and propositional activity the principle of a clarity whose (mystical) element is beyond this activity, and the real paradigm of which is art. It is thus a question of firmly establishing the laws of the sayable (of the thinkable), in order for the unsayable (the unthinkable, which is ultimately given only in the form of art) to be *situated* as the "upper limit" of the sayable itself.[46]

Similarly, in Nietzsche's case, the idea of "grand politics" as the act of breaking in two the history of the world certainly is inspired by the political revolution, but again philosophy (as antiphilosophy) appropriates the revolutionary event for its own purposes, before relying on the explosive radicalism of the archi-political act that is thus formed as leverage to reject all actually existing politics, including revolutionary politics, as being inauthentic in comparison:

> Nietzsche adopts with regard to the revolutionary act a rapport of formal fascination and substantive repulsion. He proposes for himself to render formally equivalent the philosophical act as an act of thought and the apparent explosive power of the politico-historical revolution. In this sense, though it is difficult to perceive, I hold that there is a primordial suture to politics itself at work in the Nietzschean dispositif. The philosophical act is, I would say, *archi-political*, in that it proposes itself to revolutionize all of humanity on a more radical level than that of the calculations of politics. From this let us retain that archi-politics

[46] Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 17.

> does not designate the traditional philosophical purpose of finding a ground for politics. The logic, once again, is a logic of rivalry, and not one of founding oversight [surplomb fondateur]. It is the philosophical act itself that is archi-political, in the sense that its historical explosion will show, retroactively, that the political revolution properly speaking has not been truthful, or has not been authentic.[47]

If, through antiphilosophy's linkage onto politics, the revolutionary event is reabsorbed into the antiphilosopher's own discourse, then a circular argument becomes inevitable. Nietzsche must both and at the time declare that he *prepares* an event more radical than any effective politico-historical event and *guarantee* the authenticity of this break solely on this basis of this very declaration. Whence the difficulty of deciding whether Nietzsche, through Zarathustra, merely prepares the overman or whether he is already the first overman himself:

> I think that this circle, which manifests itself here in a subjective exposure whose sincerity is almost that of a certain saintliness, is in truth the circle of all archi-politics. Since it does not count the event as its condition, but rather detains it or pretends to detain it in the act of thought itself, it cannot discriminate its effectivity from its announcement. The entire persona of Zarathustra names this circle and gives the book its tone of strange undecidability on the question of whether Zarathustra is the figure of the act's effectivity or the figure of its prophecy pure and simple.[48]

This is why Nietzsche, even more so than any other antiphilosopher, must necessarily appear in person within his own speech. Badiou goes so far as to define Nietzsche's madness in terms of this very circle, in which the enunciating subject so to speak falls into his own enunciations, whereas all philosophy would precisely be able to do without the question of "Who speaks?":

> I would hold that the question "who?," whenever it insists or returns, suppresses the most originary gesture of philosophy, which, under the condition of mathematics, has precisely deployed the dialogical theme, that is to say, the theme of a statement that is possibly subtracted from the originariness of the question "who?". Philosophy has been possible

[47] Badiou, *Casser en deux l'histoire du monde*, p. 11.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

> only by admitting the possibility of an anonymous statement, that is to say, a statement whose examination and circulation do not depend immediately on the question of who formulates it.[49]

As we will see, Nietzsche's archi-political and Wittgenstein's archi-aesthetic act impose on us the task of clarifying, by way of contrast, the operations with which philosophy approaches the event. And yet, we will also see that antiphilosophy, aside from providing the philosopher with a series of respectable and perhaps indispensable interlocutors, presents a constant temptation within Badiou's own philosophy.

Before formulating a series of questions and lessons to be drawn from the rivalry between philosophy and antiphilosophy in Badiou's interpretation, however, I want to supplement the list of invariant traits with what is perhaps the quintessential phrase in the stylebook of the antiphilosopher, a quote which Borges by way of James Boswell attributes to William Henry Hudson, in his essay "About *The Purple Land*," from *Other Inquisitions*: "Improving the perfection of a phrase divulged by Boswell, Hudson says that many times in his life he undertook the study of metaphysics, but happiness always interrupted him."[50] Borges, like most antiphilosophers, thus typically discredits philosophy's claims by appealing to the intensity of a subjective or existential experience, the thrill of which is alone capable of producing actual happiness. In fact, already Wittgenstein had felt the need to rely on art, but also on religion, in particular Christianity, so as to allude to that unsayable sense of the world which makes life both "beautiful" and "happy," as he noted in his diary, talking about Nietzsche: "To tell the truth Christianity is the only path that leads with certainty to happiness," whereby happiness, as Badiou comments, "designates life with sense (the world practiced according to its sense, which is, as was the case for Pascal, absent from the world itself)."[51] This goal – which in addition to happiness often receives the connotation of a certain saintliness – is ultimately that for which philosophy, according to its antiphilosophical detractors or secret competitors, can only be an obstacle that must be removed but also ridiculed.

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[50] Borges, "About *The Purple Land*," *Other Inquisitions*, p. 144.

[51] Wittgenstein, quoted in Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, New York and London, Penguin, 1990, p. 122; Badiou, "Silence, solipsisme, sainteté," p. 19.

6.

As for the lessons to be drawn from this confrontation with antiphilosophy, we might say that the latter imposes important revisions on the two concepts of suture and disaster, as they are developed respectively in Badiou's *Manifesto for Philosophy* and *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*.

"Suture," in Badiou's *Manifesto*, names the operation whereby philosophy, instead of giving equal weight to each of its four conditions that are the truth procedures of art, science, politics, and love, cancels itself out and delegates its powers to a single one of these procedures, for example, to science during the positivist suture of philosophy, to politics during the Marxist-Leninist suture, to poetry with Heidegger, and potentially to love (or friendship) with Lévinas and Derrida. A suture happens, in other words, when "philosophy *delegates* its functions to one or other of its conditions, handing over the whole of thought to *one* generic procedure. Philosophy is then carried out in the element of its own suppression to the great benefit of that procedure."[52] Badiou's reading of Nietzsche's letters and notes from his final period of madness, however, presupposes a rather different understanding of the process of suture. Here, philosophy does not abdicate its own act in favor of grand politics or art so much as it appropriates the power of the revolutionary break – together with the formal resources of poetry to guarantee its prophetic transmission – for its own sake, with a paradoxical denigration of effective politics as its result. The logic is much more one of mimicry and rivalry than one of abdication and self-effacement. The lesson is thus that in order to avoid falling in the traps of antiphilosophy, philosophy would have to develop a relation to its conditions that, thanks to a measure of restraint, circumvents the temptations of suture in this other sense as well. Even despite a long justificatory note in *Logics of Worlds* about the compatibility of Badiou's function as a philosopher who by definition thinks in terms of eternal truths and his role as a militant engaged in a time-bound historical mode of politics, however, this relation of philosophy to its conditions and the operations with which it treats them – that is, the philosophical rather than the antiphilosophical understanding of its own act – receives little explanations beyond the play of "seizing" and "being seized by" already proposed in *Manifesto for Philosophy*, now translated in the dangerously idealist concept-metaphors of "sublimation," "formalization," and "(re)nomination."[53]

This relative silence perhaps explains why Badiou's philosophy does not

[52] Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 61.
[53] Badiou, *Logiques des mondes*, pp. 544–547.

always manage to stave off its own antiphilosophical tendencies. With this notion I am no longer referring only to the temptation against which Badiou himself, thanks to his dialogue with antiphilosophy, puts us on guard and which is nothing more than the religious temptation of sense or meaning: "Anti-philosophy puts philosophy on guard. It shows it the ruses of sense and the dogmatic danger if truth. It teaches it that the rupture with religion is never definitive. That one must take up the task again. That truth must, once again and always, be secularised."[54] But I would say that antiphilosophy teaches us that the real danger, including for Badiou's own philosophy, is not the religion of meaning but rather the radicalism of the pure event as absolute beginning, or the treatment of the event as some kind of archi-event, that is to say, in the end, the conflation of the event with the act.

The act, which otherwise could be considered simply the antiphilosophical name of the event, functions very differently in antiphilosophy from the event in philosophy. Politics, art, or science for the antiphilosopher serve not as conditions but as models to be imitated and absorbed into philosophy itself as though the latter, qua antiphilosophy, were capable of producing, or even of being, a grand event in its own right. This would mark a "disaster," but not in the sense of Badiou's *Ethics*, which defines the term as a complete forcing of a given situation, including the point that should remain unnameable, in the name of truth: "This is why I will call this figure of Evil a disaster, a disaster of truth induced by the absolutization of its power."[55] Instead, antiphilosophy presents us with a disaster that is closer to the way the term is used in the essays from *Conditions* appended to the English translation of the *Manifesto*, where philosophy is said to expose thought to disaster by imagining that its empty category of truth can be filled and legitimated with extreme, even criminal prescriptions:

> The key to this turnabout is that philosophy is worked from within by the chronic temptation of taking the operation of the empty category of Truth as identical to the multiple procedures of the production of truths. Or else: that philosophy, renouncing the operational singularity of the seizing of truths, is *itself* presented as being a truth procedure. Which also means that it is presented as an art, a science, a passion or a policy. Nietzsche's philosopher-poet; Husserl's wish of philosophy as a rigorous science; Pascal or Kierkegaard's wish of philosophy as intense

[54] Badiou, "Who is Nietzsche?," p. 10.

[55] Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, London and New York, Verso, 2001, p. 85.

experience; Plato's philosopher-king: as many intra-philosophical schemata of the permanent possibility of disaster.[56]

This leads me, in a final series of questions, to ask whether there are not also similarly disastrous antiphilosophical tendencies at work in Badiou's own thought. And if so, where?

7.

It is not just that philosophy, in its efforts to disentangle itself from its antiphilosophical opponents, must continue to sever its ties to religion. Badiou, in his unpublished seminar on Lacan's antiphilosophy, is certainly clear and adamant enough about this obligation, which constantly forces philosophy to perform an immanent scission from the religious element.[57] In this sense, though, and in spite of the crucial role played by Christianity, it is somewhat overhasty to equate antiphilosophy itself with religion's predilection for the ineffable, in the way Peter Hallward does in his otherwise exemplary study of Badiou's philosophy: "Antiphilosophy is religion in philosophical guise, argued on philosophical terrain," or again: "Antiphilosophy proclaims an ineffable, transcendent Meaning, grasped in the active refutation of philosophical pretensions to truth."[58] While this certainly holds true for the case of Wittgenstein or Pascal, to accept this equation as a general fact would be tantamount to ignoring Lacan's attack on philosophy proper as driven by a religious search for meaning, which is precisely the stupidity from which

[56] Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, pp. 128–129. Badiou's list of names should suffice to conclude that the temptation of disaster, understood in this sense, is not unique to antiphilosophers but applies to Husserl or Plato as well – and no doubt even to a Platonist such as Badiou, as I argue here.

[57] From Badiou's 1994–1995 seminar on *L'antiphilosophie lacanienne*, see in particular the session of January 18, 1995.

[58] Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 20. There might be good reasons to hold on to this equation: Hallward can thus claim that Badiou avoids the religious dimension of antiphilosophy only by radicalizing the purely subtractive, nonrelational, or antidialectical character of the event – to which Hallward can then oppose the demand for a relational philosophy, which would be sorely missing from Badiou's oeuvre. My ongoing polemic with this interpretation could be summarized by saying that Hallward's portrayal (like that of Daniel Bensaïd) actually depicts a one-sided image of Badiou as a complete antiphilosopher, or as someone who is more radically antiphilosophical than all known antiphilosophers, whereas in my eyes there are plenty of elements in this thinker's rebuttal against antiphilosophy that can serve the purpose of a more relational (even dialectical) understanding of the event.

antiphilosophy seeks to awaken us. Similarly, without having to invoke Nietzsche's Anti-Christ, even Badiou's book on Saint Paul underscores the extent to which this ancient antiphilosopher, while evidently central to all subsequent Christian doctrine, nevertheless keeps the mystical or obscurantist discourse at arm's length, to the point that "it cannot be denied that there is in him, and he is alone in this among the recognized apostles, an ethical dimension of antiobscurantism. For Paul will not permit the Christian declaration to justify itself through the ineffable."[59] Thus, not only would it be imprecise to equate antiphilosophy and religion but it is precisely one of antiphilosophy's negative lessons that religion continues to lie in wait behind philosophy's love of truth as meaning.

However, aside from the religious urge, there is also another way of defining the antiphilosophical temptation at work within Badiou's philosophy, for which the book on Saint Paul again can serve as a good case in point. Indeed, I would say that there is a profound oscillation that runs through this study between, on one hand, an effort to delimit Paul's antiphilosophy as a discourse to be traversed and yet kept at a distance, and, on the other, a deep fascination with the ultraradicalism of this discourse, whose traits – including stylistic ones – as a result come to transferred almost invisibly onto Badiou's own philosophy as well, both in this book and elsewhere. It thus becomes frequently impossible in *Saint Paul* to discern whether general statements regarding truth, the act, the subject, and so on, belong to the antiphilosophical aspect of the Apostle's doctrine, which therefore would have to be rejected, or whether they can in addition be attributed, as if written in a free indirect style, to Badiou's own theory of the event. This theory, in fact, is by no means impeded but thrives on such indiscernibility.

If we are to take Badiou's word for it, Paul's antiphilosophical tendency can be circumvented fairly easily by separating the invariant form of his proposal from the fable of its religious or mythical content. "It will be objected that, in the present case, for us 'truth' designates a mere fable. Granted, but what is important is the subjective gesture grasped in its founding power with respect to the generic conditions of universality, Badiou writes: "That the content of the fable must be abandoned leaves as its remainder the form of these conditions and, in particular, the ruin of every attempt to assign the discourse of truth to preconstituted historical aggregates."[60] But I would ar-

[59] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 52.

[60] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 6. See also the conclusion: "In reality, the Pauline break has a bearing upon the formal conditions and the inevitable consequences of a consciousness-of-truth rooted in a pure event, detached from every objectivist assignation to

gue that there is also something about the form itself – the form of the pure event – that is radically antiphilosophical, as Badiou himself shows more clearly in the case of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. Consider, for example, the following statements (many more could be quoted), in which the attributed speech is quickly followed by a free indirect style that makes it impossible to decide whether the position being described is Paul's or Badiou's, or both.

For Paul, the emergence of the instance of the son is essentially tied to the conviction that "Christian discourse" is absolutely *new*. The formula according to which God sent us his Son signifies primarily an intervention within History, one through which it is, as Nietzsche will put it, "broken in two," rather than governed by a transcendent reckoning in conformity withy the laws of an epoch.[61] It is pure event, opening of an epoch, transformation of the relations between the possible and the impossible:[62]

> For Paul, the event has not come to prove something; it is pure beginning. Christ's resurrection is neither an argument nor an accomplishment. There is no proof of the event; nor is the event a proof.[63]

No wonder that Badiou, in most of these instances in *Saint Paul* where "the pure event" or "the naked event" is invoked as a radical beginning, tends immediately to turn to a comparison with Nietzsche's archi-political act of breaking the history of the world in two halves, even though elsewhere, for example in Badiou's *Ethics*, this act is called a disaster: "Nietzsche is Paul's rival far more than his opponent. Both share the same desire to initiate a new epoch in human history, the same conviction that man can and must be overcome, the same certainty that we must have done with guilt and law."[64] What emerges more clearly from Badiou's discussion of Nietzsche is the possibility that this desire for an absolute beginning is a deviation due to the influence of antiphilosophy, whose extremism the philosopher would therefore have the task of tempering, even if he allows its appeal to extend to the theory of the event. Even in *Saint Paul*, while discussing the rivaling proximity between Paul and Nietzsche, Badiou insists: "The truth is that both brought antiphilosophy to the point where it no longer consists in a 'critique,' however radical, of the whims and pettinesses of the metaphysician or

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the particular laws of a world or society yet concretely destined to become inscribed within a world and within a society" (pp. 107–108).

[61] *Ibid*., p. 43.

[62] *Ibid*., p. 45.

[63] *Ibid*., p. 49.

[64] *Ibid*., p. 72. Badiou discusses Nietzsche's disaster in *Ethics*, p. 84.

sage. A much more serious matter is at issue: that of bringing about through the event an unqualified affirmation of life against the reign of death and the negative."[65] Is this not also the case of Badiou's conception of the event, which as a consequence would have to be considered as carrying an irresistible element of antiphilosophy within it?

In political terms, we could call this element the speculative leftism, or ultraleftism, that is common to all antiphilosophers. "This imaginary wager upon an absolute novelty – 'to break in two the history of the world' – fails to recognize that the real of the conditions of possibility of intervention is always the circulation of an already decided event," Badiou writes in *Being and Event*: "What the doctrine of the event teaches us is rather that the entire effort lies in following the event's consequences, not in glorifying its occurrence. There is no more an angelic herald of the event than there is a hero. Being does not commence."[66] In most if not all cases, furthermore, this speculative leftism is nearly indistinguishable – in yet another characteristic vacillation – from its ideological opposite. Going over the list, there is not a single one among the antiphilosophers whose potential leftist leanings are not counterbalanced by suspicions of reactionary consequences, making their politics nearly impossible to pin down: "Antipolitics, one could say, parallel to antiphilosophy."[67] It is precisely such ultraradicalism that lurks behind the pure form of the event as defined on the basis of Christianity in Badiou's book on Paul. In other words, the crucial point to be grasped in this regard is not just the split between good form (the protocol of evental universalization) and objectionable content (the fable of Christianity and the Resurrection) but how antiphilosophy leads to a skewed understanding of the radical break of the event, including in its purely formal aspect, as some kind of archi-event (which is what I would call the antiphilosophical deviation of the event qua act).

8.

Let me rephrase this in the terms specific to Badiou's interpretation of Paul – an interpretation which, as a result of its very own antiphilosophi-

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham, London, Continuum, 2005, pp. 210–211. See also *Théorie du sujet*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1982: "The deviation on the left follows a perspective of flight. It is a radicalism of novelty. It breaks all mirrors" (p. 223).

[67] Milner, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

cal tendencies, will turn out to be far more ambivalent than appears at first sight. In the chapter "Texts and Contexts," Badiou discusses one of the most important "deviations" or "threatening divisions" from within Paul's doctrine, namely, "the upsurge of a heresy that one could call ultra-Pauline, that of Marcion, at the beginning of the second century," according to which the break between the Old and the New Testaments is so absolute as to leave no room whatsoever for mediation, and for which Paul would be the only genuine apostle: "By pushing a little, one could arrive at Marcion's conception: the new gospel is an absolute beginning."[68] Badiou for sure is clear about his conviction that this does in fact constitute a heresy, devoid of any real foundation in the Pauline corpus. "There is no text of Paul's from which one could draw anything resembling Marcion's doctrine," he says, adding: "That Paul emphasizes rupture rather than continuity with Judaism is not in doubt. But this is a militant, and not an ontological, thesis. Divine unicity bridges the two situations separated by the Christ-event, and at no moment is it cast into doubt."[69] And yet, as we already saw above, Badiou on numerous occasions seems to identify his own position with the doctrine of the event as a complete break, an absolute caesura, or a radical beginning: "It was a thunderbolt, a caesura, and not a dialectical reversal."[70] Thus, it is not difficult to sustain that this doctrine, under the alluring influence of the antiphilosophical act, shows traces that bely its own proximity to the heresy of ultra-Paulinism.

Another way of discussing this strong antiphilosophical temptation in the terms proper to Badiou's *Saint Paul* is through the questions of dialectical mediation, the relation of an event to its site, and the connection between subjectivation and the subjective process of fidelity. In fact, these are merely three perspectives from which to pose one and the same underlying problem, concerning the relation of any given truth to the state of affairs in which it first arises. In each case, the antiphilosopher's tendency will consist in stressing the unmediated, disconnected, and wholly subjective nature of the truth of an event. Badiou's own antiphilosophical temptation thus repeatedly leads to an overemphasis on the antidialectic of truth and actuality. Every antiphilosophy, in other words, at the same time propounds an antidialectic. "This de-dialectization of the Christ-event allows us to extract a formal, wholly secularized conception of grace from the mythological core," we read in

[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35. In *Théorie du sujet*, Badiou also compares the political "deviations" to religious "heresies," especially right–wing Arianism (for whom Christ is merely human) and left–wing Gnosticism (for whom Christ is purely divine).

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Saint Paul: "Grace, consequently, is not a 'moment' of the Absolute. It is affirmation without preliminary negation; it is what comes upon us in caesura of the law. It is pure and simple *encounter*."[71] Grace, caesura, encounter – so many antiphilosophical and antidialectical concept-metaphors for the event qua pure act.

This stress put on the event as radical novelty, absolute beginning, or clean slate ignores the extent to which an event is always tied to a specific situation by way of its site. Badiou himself thus forewarns us: "That the event is new should never let us forget that it is such only with respect to a determinate situation, wherein it mobilizes the elements of its site," which makes that an event is always an event *for* this or that situation and not just an event referring only to itself as sovereign self-belonging: "The evental site is that datum that is immanent to a situation and enters into the composition of the event itself, addressing it to *this* singular situation, rather than another."[72] In fact, much of *Saint Paul* revolves precisely around this question of the relation of the event of Christ's coming to its site, as defined by the discourses of Greek philosophy, Jewish religion, and Roman law. This is one way in which the book develops and expands a relatively understudied question from *Being and Event*: "What is the exact relation between the supposed universality of the postevental truth (that is, what is inferred from Christ's resurrection) and the evental site, which is, indubitably, the nation bound together by the Old Testament?"[73] A reading of *Saint Paul* that focuses on the pure, naked event, without including its linkage to the situation via its site, at best is unilateral and at worst misses the book's actual innovation. And yet, we are also seeing that there are good reasons to hold onto such a reading. Paul himself and the antiphilosopher who is always lurking in Badiou, in effect, typically downplay the dialectic between the old and the new, between truth and its site, or between saintliness and actuality, whose difficult matchup would be Paul's most daunting legacy to the philosopher.

Similarly, if all that matters is the brief intensity of the event's upsurge, then we might as well equate, in strict antiphilosophical fashion, subject and subjectivation: "In the guise of the event, the subject *is* subjectivation."[74] But, unless the event is reduced to a vanishing cause of hysterical subjectivation,

[71] *Ibid*., p. 66. If every antiphilosophy proposes an antidialectic, however, we are left wondering how Badiou can affirm that Pascal, Rousseau, Mallarmé, and Lacan, who are all antiphilosophers, stand before us as the four great French dialecticians. See Belhaj Kacem, *Événement et répétition*, p. 229.

[72] Badiou, *ibid*., p. 70.

[73] *Ibid*., p. 22.

[74] *Ibid*., p. 81.

which disappears no sooner than it appears, all truth in addition requires that a new consistency and even a new law be elaborated in the process of an ongoing fidelity: "The trajectory of a truth, which institutes its subject as detached from the statist law of the situation, is nonetheless consistent according to another law: the one that, addressing the truth to everyone, universalizes the subject."[75] Paul, in this sense, would actually have had an intuition that runs counter to an invariant trait of all antiphilosophy, which privileges the hysteric's instantaneous declaration over and above the philosopher's discourse of mastery: "Paul has the intuition that every subject is the articulation of a subjectivation and a consistency. This also means that there is no instantaneous salvation; grace itself is no more than the indication of a possibility. The subject has to be given in his labor, and not only in his sudden emergence."[76] More often than not, though, the emphasis falls heavily on the subjective upsurge as radically and completely subtracted from all processual and objectivist inscription: "For the event's sudden emergence never follows from the existence of an evental site. Although it requires conditions of immanence, that sudden emergence nevertheless remains of the order of grace."[77]

Finally, there is the question of style. Badiou's own writing, both in *Saint Paul* itself and elsewhere, could be described in terms of the characteristics attributed to the Apostle's letters. The event of Christ's coming reduced to a pure beginning, thus, can be transmitted only in the most lapidary of writing styles: "Only a concentrated style, shorn of the mannerisms of prophetic and thaumaturgical literature, can be appropriate to such a reduction. There is no doubt that Paul is a superlative writer: condensed, lapidary, knowing just when to unleash unusual and powerful images."[78] These attributes, without exception, are all applicable to Badiou's own writing, particularly in the classical transparency and concision of *Being and Event*. Even the role of mathematics is meant like a bulldozer to clear the ground of all obscure imagery, all veiled indecision, and all fake profundity, just as Paul stays clear of Jesus Christ's parables and miracles. "But ultimately, what matters so far as this prose is concerned is argumentation and delimitation, the forceful extraction of an essential core of thought," we read in *Saint Paul*: "There is in his prose, under the imperative of the event, something solid and timeless, something that, precisely because it is a question of orienting thought

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[76] *Ibid.,* pp. 91–92. Cf. earlier: "Fidelity to the declaration is crucial, for truth is a process, and not an illumination" (p. 15).

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

toward the universal *in its sudden emerging singularity*, but independently of all anecdote, is intelligible to us without having to resort to cumbersome historical mediations."[79] But is this not also what makes of Paul an antiphilosopher? Or, to put this the other way around, should we not say that the extraction of an essential core of thought – a doctrine of the pure event – shorn off from all historical mediations and actual occurrences contributes to, or stems from, the antiphilosophical trend in Badiou's own thinking?

9.

For sure, there is a price to be paid for this style of timeless singularity. We saw this most clearly in the case of Nietzsche, whose "grand politics" relates to effective historico-political events such as the French Revolution, not as conditions but as models to mimick and, if possible, to outperform. But something similar occurs, I would argue, with Badiou's philosophical treatment of certain events, say Mallarmé's poetry or Beckett's prose. The latter, thus, in the hands of the philosopher almost by necessity, if not because of some kind of professional deformation, tend to become self-contained exemplifications of the event qua event.[80] In fact, perhaps in no other instance is this tendency more palpable than in Badiou's relation to the radical acts declared by antiphilosophers, from Paul to Nietzsche to Lacan, whose references are typically not effective events – with the possible exception of Lacan who is capable of invoking Freud as a really existing prior act and who because of this completes the cycle of contemporary antiphilosophy – but fables or cases of pure folly and self-imploding prophecies: "That the event (or pure act) invoked by antiphilosophers is fictitious does not present a problem. It is equally so in Pascal (it is the same as Paul's), or in Nietzsche (Nietzsche's 'grand politics' did not break the history of the world in two; it was Nietzsche who was broken)."[81]

Badiou's relation to Paul or to Nietzsche, in other words, is similar to the relation of these two antiphilosophers themselves respectively to Christ's Resurrection and to the French Revolution. It is a relation of rivalry and mimicry, developed into an amplified mimetics of the act qua archi-event, whose radicalism cannot fail to seduce the philosopher for it suggests that

[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 33 and 36.

[80] I discuss the example of Mallarmé in "Art, Politics, History: Notes on Badiou and Rancière," *Inaesthetik*, 0, 2008.

[81] Badiou, *ibid.*, p. 108.

even philosophy, after all, may be able to produce or be an event in its own right. Which is something the philosopher, technically speaking, cannot proclaim without falling in the trap of a disastrous prescription that would at once put him in the camp of antiphilosophy: "Let's say, provisorily, that the antiphilosopher in this sense is *the event of philosophy*," as Medhi Belhaj Kacem writes in an open letter to Badiou: "*Only for the antiphilosopher can philosophy be an event*."[82] Whence, clearly, the seductive power of the antiphilosopher for Badiou as well. Even as a never-ending task, the supposed gap between philosophy and antiphilosophy allows the polemicist to have his cake (to define, by opposition to the act, the empty philosophical concept of the event, conditioned by effective truth procedures) and eat it too (to reabsorb the irrefutable radicality of the act as archi-political, archi-aesthetic, or archi-scientific break or absolute beginning, before discarding it as a mere act, also in the theatrical sense of the term). This is why the philosopher actually thrives on the endless sparring matches with the most illustrious antiphilosophers.

Where does all this leave readers like me, who are neither philosophers nor antiphilosophers and who look upon this polemic with the amused curiosity of someone watching a much publicized matchup in a sport utterly foreign to their own culture? For one thing, it leaves us with the option of finding a middle course – whose task I would call "theory" in close proximity to intermediary discourses that work on specific truth procedures such as psychonanalysis for love or inaesthetics for art – at an equal distance of philosophical discipleship and antiphilosophical revolt: neither blind obedience to the master nor hysterical contestation.[83]

For Badiou, of course, the task is more straight-forward. The philosopher, he will always state, must stay in the closest proximity to the antiphilosopher, who alone keeps him on guard against the temptations of religion, disaster, or the "service of goods" pure and simple. In the end, this would be the legacy that Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Lacan bequeath to those who seek to affirm the possibility of philosophy today:

> I think that all three – but Nietzsche's case is without doubt the most dramatic – in the last instance sacrificed themselves for philosophy. There is in antiphilosophy a movement of putting itself to death, or

[82] Belhaj Kacem, *ibid*, p. 217.

[83] See the conclusion of my "Thinking the Event: Alain Badiou's Philosophy and the Task of Critical Theory," *Emerging Trends in Continental Philosophy*, ed. Todd May, vol. 8 of *The History of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, London, Acumen, forthcoming.

of silencing itself, so that something imperative may be bequeathed to philosophy. Antiphilosophy is always what, at its very extremes, states the new duty of philosophy, or its new possibility in the figure of a new duty. I think of Nietzsche's madness, of Wittgenstein's strange labyrinth, of Lacan's final muteness. In all three cases antiphilosophy takes the form of a legacy. It bequeathes something beyond itself to the very thing that it is fighting against. Philosophy is always the heir to antiphilosophy.[84]

[84] Badiou, "Who Is Nietzsche?," p. 11.

RADICAL RADICALISMS

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GOD THE REVOLUTIONIST ON RADICAL VIOLENCE OVER THE FIRST ULTRA-LEFTIST

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Initially, to justify one more reading of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," I will immediately assume where the source of his reception comes from and the reasons behind the rich history of his reconstructions from Scholem and Löwenthal all the way to Honeth, Žižek, and Butler. The "deconstructive power" of this short and complex collage of numerous differing texts is not solely created by the author's striking montage; I think it also stems from the fantastic "misunderstanding" concealed by Benjamin's surprising analogy, found in the alternative title of my text: "Benjamin's 'Divine Violence' and the case of *Korah*." I would like to add to this "connection" between divine violence and the name *Korah* two annotations which should limit and complicate every further interpretation: (a) unlike Leo Löwenthal,[1] I agree to treat Benjamin's writing as a collection of messianic categories and figures, and analogous to this, (b) I follow Scholem's famous qualification of Benjamin's purely Jewish text [*ein rein jüdischer Text*], as a manifestation of "positive nihilism" or "noble and positive violent destruction" [*die edle und positive Gewalt der Zerstörung*].[2] These two elements (messianism and positive nihilism) could double the power of my "intervention" in Benjamin's text and perhaps negate the advantage the title of this text enjoys over his alternative subtitle ("The Rebellion against Moses as the First Scene of Messianism [Numbers, 16]"). In that case, the alternative title of this text, which refers

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[1] L. Löwenthal, "Gewalt und Recht in der Staats- und Rechtsphilosophie Rousseaus und der deutschen idealistischen Philosophie" (1926, Staatsexamensarbeit), *Philosophischen Frühschriften*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1990, p. 174.

[2] G. Scholem, "Im Gespräch über Walter Benjamin (1968)," *Sinn und Form*, 2007, no. 4, p. 501, 502.

to yet another of Benjamin's montages, concerning the connection between "divine violence" and the name *Korah*, would fall into the background and be dominated by Benjamin's amazing suggestion or intuition, and which I formulated in the alternative subtitle of this text: that the first great rebellion (or revolution) in the histories of justice (the final within myth[3] or right) evokes or provokes something messianic; that an important episode within the life of one nation, initiated by *Korah* and a handful of rebels, represents the beginning of the construction of the messianic theatre.

But, conversely, if we attempt to find signs of messianism within the rebellion as such[4] if, for example *Korah*, "contrary to" but always "together with" Benjamin, is the "first left oppositionist in the history of radical politics,"[5] then the final and divine violence carried out by God would, in fact, be Benjamin's pure revolutionary violence perpetrated precisely against this first revolutionary. The circulation of the alternative title of this text within the subtitle, and conversely, is an accurate description of the "misunderstanding" in connection to the understanding of revolution in Benjamin, because the one who carries out revolutionary violence is not found where we, all this time, had expected him to be. Is it precisely this betrayed expectation that constantly brings us back to Benjamin's "Critique of Violence"? But, before dealing with this, what exactly do we expect? Do we expect a final violence of catastrophic proportions negating every future violence and time of expectation? Do we expect the subject of this positive violence – the noble [*edle*] subject of the revolution? Do we expect justice?

Here now is Benjamin's famous fragment about the difference between mythic violence and divine violence that forms the culmination of this text.

This fragment is preceded by several sentences of double meaning in which, referring to Hermann Cohen, Benjamin speaks of rebellion as the main characteristic of the fight against the spirit of mythic legislation (thus reducing the importance of the "rebel" figure) and about our – perhaps most important – task. The harmful role the mythic demonstration of immediate violence (that is, the violence of right [*Rechtsgewalt*]) has in history re-

[3] Ernst Bloch writes about *Korah* after World War II. Contrary to Benjamin, *Korah*, as *die mythische Reflexe*, is opposite to what is in the hierarchy above [*oben*]. *Atheism in Christianity*, *Gesamtausgabe*, Band 14, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1959–1978, p. 108–109.

[4] Here I again follow Bloch, from his post-war book *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, where he writes of rebellion as a messianic idea *par excellence*. Within Moses' rebellion against the Egyptians is the foundation of the messianic idea. Cf. Chapter "Moses oder das Bewußtsein der Utopie in der Religion, der Religion in der Utopie," *Gesamtausgabe*, Band 5, p. 1453.

[5] M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, New York, Basic Books, 1985, p. 111.

quires its destruction [*deren Vernichtung damit zur Aufgabe wird*], according to Benjamin:

> This very task of destruction poses again, ultimately, the question of a pure immediate violence [*einer reinen unmittelbaren Gewalt*] that might be able to call a halt to mythic violence. Just as in all spheres God opposes myth, mythic violence is confronted by the divine. And the latter constitutes its antithesis in all respects. If mythic violence is law-making [rightmaking; *mythische Gewalt rechtsetzend*], divine violence is law-destroying [right-destroying; *die göttliche rechtsvernichtend*]; if the former sets boundaries, the latter boundlessly destroys them; if mythic violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine [*göttliche*] power only expiates; if the former threatens, the latter strikes; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood [*so diese auf unblutige Weise letal*]. The legend of Niobe may be contrasted with God's judgment on the company of *Korah* [*Gewalt Gottes Gericht an der Rotte Korah gegenübertreten*], as an example of such violence. God's judgment strikes privileged Levites [*Es trifft Bevorrechtete, Leviten*], strikes them without warning, without threat, and does not stop short of annihilation [*trifft sie unangekündikt, ohne Drohung, schlagend und macht nicht Halt vor der Vernichtung*]. But in annihilating it also expiates, and a profound connection between the lack of bloodshed and the expiatory character of this violence is unmistakable. For blood is the symbol of mere life [*das Symbol des blossen Lebens*]. The dissolution of legal violence [*Auslösung der Rechtsgewalt*] stems (as cannot be shown in detail here) from the guilt of more natural life, which consigns the living, innocent and unhappy, to a retribution that "expiates" the guilt of mere life – and doubtless also purifies the guilty, not of guilt, however, but of law. For with mere life, the rule of right over the living ceases [*die Herrschaft des Rechtes über den Lebendigen auf*]. Mythic violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake; divine violence is pure power over all life for the sake of living [*die göttliche reine Gewalt über alles Leben um des Lebendigen willen*]. The first demands sacrifice; the second accepts it [*Die erste fordert Opfer, die zweite nimmt sie an*].[6]

Therefore, Benjamin uncovers "divine violence" as a force possessed by

[6] W. Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," *Selected Writings*, Volume 1, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 249–250; "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band II-1, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1991, p. 199–200. In the first edition of Benjamin's text from 1921 (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik,* Band 47), this fragment is found on page 829.

God or as violence carried out by God while judging *Korah* and his band. That is his only example. This syntagma (frequent in theological texts and imprecise) already encompasses several of the alternative formulations with which Benjamin in his text opposes the violence of right, that is, violence created and kept by right. "Divine violence" is at once – "pure and immediate violence" – Sorel's "proletarian strike" [*grève prolétarienne*] which is in fact not violent but destroys – and "pedagogical violence" [*erzieherische Gewalt*] which is similarly apart from the law. "Divine violence," which according to Benjamin happened long ago, along with the crisis of mythic legal norms, together establish "a new historical epoch" [*ein neues geschichtliches Zeitalter*]. At the beginning, Benjamin announces the arrival of something "new," something that is no longer distant from us (this is certainly not a "new right"[7]). Afterwards he confirms that "revolutionary violence" is no longer impossible, and in the end, he proclaims a completely new and secretive violence that has yet to unfold and seems to possess all the messianic and sovereign characteristics.[8] "Divine violence" is, it seems, constantly present, as it can occur in every imaginable (war, capital punishment, etc.) and unimaginable form. At the end of his text Benjamin insists that this violence is completely unclear and incomprehensible to all of us.

It is well known that the second fragment, which I have just cited, is the most important and perhaps most original part of the "Critique of Violence." Benjamin attempts to formulate his argument by differentiating the kind of violence with which Niobe and *Korah* were punished. He differentiates the violence in order to mark and "institutionalize" a new kind of violence and in order to strongly oppose revolutionary and radical pacifism, as well as Kurt Hiller's Judaism and his understanding of life.[9] It seems to me that this frag-

[7] Franz Rosenzweig uses the phrase "new right" in an excerpt from the book *Der Stern der Erlösung* ("Coercion in the State"), published in the same year as Benjamin's text. "The point of all violence is to institute new law [right; *neues Recht gründe*]. It is not the denial of law as one might think under the spell of its cataclysmic behavior; on the contrary, it lays the basis for law. But a paradox lurks in the idea of new right. Right is essentially old right. And now it is clear that violence is: the renewer of old right [*die Erneuerin des alten Rechts*]. In the violent act [*gewaltsamen Tat*], the right constantly becomes new right." *The Star of Redemption*, New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970, p. 333; *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921), Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1996, p. 370.

[8] "Divine violence, which is the sign and seal but never the means of sacred dispatch, may be called 'sovereign' violence" [*Die göttliche Gewalt, welche Insignium und Siegel, niemals Mittel heiliger Vollstreckung ist, mag die waltende heißen*]. "Critique of Violence," p. 252; "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," p. 203.

[9] Hiller's text "Anti-Kain. Ein Nachwort zu dem Vorhergehenden," which Benjamin read in the journal *Das Ziel* (1919), is preceded by Rudolf Leonhard's short text

ment is especially complex because Benjamin is now reading and arranging all the elements of his text once more in light of this difference and the new violence he recognizes in the case of *Korah*.

I wish to quickly note these elements and perhaps mention several possible sources and reasons for Benjamin's introduction of *Korah* in his text. It is my intention to find the reason behind the fact that almost none of the readers of Benjamin's text have concerned themselves with this analogy[10] in the assumption that the "clues" which concern *Korah* and his band have been carefully removed and/or are still inaccessible to us.

These "elements" are in fact the texts that Benjamin uses during the composition of his text. It is relatively easy starting with the numerous texts that are referred to or not in our cited fragment, or indeed the whole "Critique of Violence," to reconstruct the histories of their receptions and readings.

The first group is comprised of texts Benjamin explicitly cites. Their authors are Kant, Erich Unger, Sorel, Cohen,[11] and Hiller.

Next is a group of books or texts or ideas which are known to have in-

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"Endkampf der Waffengegner Hillerovom!" dealing with the Spartacist strike. It ends with a call for a fight against arms (*Kampf gegen die Waffe!*, p. 23). Hiller's text attacks Bolshevism in the name of a revolution without arms and terror. He says, on page 27, that it is better to remain a slave than instigate an armed uprising [*gewalttätige Rotte*]. Benjamin mentions this when he cites Hiller on page 25. The sentence in its entirety is: "*Brutalisiere ich nicht, töte ich nicht, so errichte ich nimmermehr das Weltreich der Gerechtigkeit, des ewigen Friedens, der Freude – so denkt der geistige Terrorist, so denk der edelste Bolschewik, so dachten die von eberttreuen Millitars vorsätzlich und heimtückisch erschlagenen Spartacusführer. Wir aber bekennen, daß höher noch als Glück und Gerechtigkeit eines Daseins*" (p. 25).

[10] Kurt Anglet mentions *Korah* and his rebellion in the book *Messianität und Geschichte. Walter Benjamins Konstruktion der historischen Dialektik und deren Aufhebung ins Eschatologische durch Erik Peterson*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1995, p. 35. Jacques Derrida also mentions *Korah* only once in the Post-Scriptum of the book *Force la loi* (Paris, Galilée, 1994, p. 145). Eric L. Jacobson includes *Qorah* in his doctorate thesis concerning Benjamin and Scholem, presented in 1999 in Berlin (p. 234). The only text which has as its theme divine violence and has a short analysis of Benjamin's use of *Korah's rebellion* is Brian Britt "Divine Violence in Benjamin and Biblical Narrative," presented in October 2006 at the conference in Berlin and which will be published in German in "Suhrkamp Verlag." I am indebted to him for letting me have the manuscript of the text.

[11] I would like to draw attention to two exquisite texts by Günther Figal which deal with the problem of pure will and pure means in the example of the influence of Kant and Hermann Cohen on Walter Benjamin: "Recht und Moral als Handlungsspielräume," *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, 1982, no. 36, p. 361–377, and "Die Ethik Walter Benjamins als Philosophie der reinen Mittel," Günter Figal, Horst Folkers: *Zur Theorie der Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit bei Walter Benjamin*, Heidelberg, Texte und Materialien der FEST, 1979, p. 1–24.

fluenced Benjamin's writing in one way or another: this includes Hugo Ball's *Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* from 1919 (besides the identical use of the word "critique," it seems to me that Benjamin recalled Ball's analysis of Dante's *De Monarchia*, Chap. 1.1, very well); followed certainly by Ernst Bloch's *Geist der Utopie* from 1918 and *Thomas Münzer, als Theologe der Revolution* from 1921, and Baudelaire whom Benjamin read and translated before writing this text (the notions "*frappe*," "*choque*,"[12] or "*catastrophe*"[13] are found quite often in Benjamin).

A group of texts which is almost never mentioned, but which definitely played a significant part in the construction of Benjamin's own text consists in Rickert's 1920 book *Die Philosophie des Lebens*,[14] David Baumgardt's text from the same year concerning the problem and concept of the possible[15] (and impossible), and of course Hegel's writings without which Benjamin's text could not exist. In question is not Benjamin's repetition of some of Hegel's motifs and figures of violence, for example the violence of the hero or "pure violence,"[16] nor is Benjamin's copying and correction of some of Hegel's syntagma[17] in doubt, but rather Benjamin's entire thematization of the relations between right and violence is completely taken from Hegel, from the "mystic of violence" [*eines Mystikers der Gewalt*].[18]

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[12] Marcuse writes about shock in 1964, in an afterword to Benjamin's early texts. W.B., *Zur Kritik der Gewalt und andere Aufsätze*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1965, p. 105.

[13] "Catastrophe" is of course present in Scholem, but in Erlich Unger as well, at the very beginning of the text "Politik und Metaphysik" (*... jede unkatastrophale Politik ist unmetaphysisch nicht möglich*). Cf. *Politik und Metaphysik*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1989 (1921), p. 7 (3).

[14] H. Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens, Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modeströmungen unserer Zeit*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1920.

[15] Dr. D. Baumgardt, *Das Möglichkeitsproblem der Kritik der reinen Vernunft, der modernen Phänomenologie und der Gegenstandstheorie*, Berlin, Reuther & Reichard, 1920. This book was published as "Ergänzungshefte" in the journal *Kant-Studien*, no. 51. It could be very important in an imaginary theory of the (im)possible which would together with Faust and Hartman encompass the latter Jacques Derrida.

[16] *Die reine Gewalt*. Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenaer Schriften. 1801-1807*, Band 2, Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1970, p. 474–475.

[17] For example, in Benjamin's extraordinary differentiation of two kinds of violence: "The first demands sacrifice; the second accepts it" [*Die erste fordert Opfer, die zweite nimmt sie an*] we recognize in the addition § 70 *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*: "Hence if the state claims life, the individual must surrender it. But may a man take his own life?" [*Wenn der Staat daher das Leben fordert, so muß das Individuum es geben, aber darf der Mensch sich selbst das Leben nehmen?*]. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, Band 7, 1970, p. 152.

[18] Letter to Scholem from January 31, 1918. W. Benjamin, *Briefe I*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1978, p. 171. About right and violence in Hegel, see Add. § 432 and

Texts written by jurists and texts concerning jurisprudence represent a special source of Benjamin's inspiration. There is no reason to assume that Benjamin was unaware of Stammler's works, which concerned the theory of anarchism or the right of the stronger [*das Recht des Stärkeren*], nor that he was unaware of a series of studies on differing values published annually from 1909 in French, and concerning the relationship between right and force (some of the authors including Daniel Lesueur, Edgard Milhaud, Jacques Flach, Raoul Anthony). Conversely, it is clear that Benjamin could not, before writing his work, have read the most systematic book on the same theme, as it was published in the same year as the "Critique of Violence." Here I am referring to Erich Brodmann's *Recht und Gewalt*.[19] Nonetheless, the direct motive for writing his text could be the jurist Herbert Vorwerk's text "Das Recht zur Gewaltanwendung," published in September 1920.[20] I would assume that this text and the debate it stirred led Benjamin to quickly write a short text in response to the problem of right and the legitimacy of the use of violence. Benjamin's notes on Vorwerk's work might be a true sketch of the "Critique of Violence." Simultaneously, the "Critique" could perhaps represent the perfect *resumé* of several of Benjamin's contemporary lost texts, sketches, and projects concerning politics. If it is at this point that I must find the connection between these three "hands" (Vorwerk's one and Benjamin's two hands, because he writes notes and a text within the span of a few months), then I would choose, in Vorwerk's text, a moment which fundamentally distances Benjamin from right and the violence of the right (or state violence). On page 15 Vorwerk writes:

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§ 433 *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse III*, Band 10, 1970, p. 221, 223.

[19] E. Brodmann, *Recht und Gewalt*, Berlin und Leipzig, Walter de Grunter & Co., 1921. The considerable increase of books concerning this subject would cause, in the following years, a sharp reaction and negation that there was any connection between right and violence. In his *Vorlesungen über praktische Philosophie* (Erlangen, Verlag der philosophischen Akademie) from 1925, Paul Natorp maintains that right does not force [*zwingt nicht*] and that violence does not create right [*Gewalt schafft nicht Recht*] (§ 180 p. 457, 458). "There is the violence of law [*rechtliche Gewalt*] [*Gewalt, die selbst aus dem Rechte fliesst*], but there is no law of violence or right to violence; right which emerges from violence [*ein Recht der Gewalt*] [*Recht, das aus Gewalt fliesst*]. Violence does not shape right. Similarly power [*Macht*] does not shape right" (§ 197 p. 492, 493).

[20] At the request of the editor of the journal *Blätter für religiösen Sozialismus*, Carl Mennicke and his friend Paul Tillich, Vorwerk published the text in issue 4, from 1920. The work is quite short (1.5 pages) and is followed by the editor's comments, which are nearly a page in length. Mennicke completed the discussion in issue 6, from 1921.

> The "right to a revolution," as jurists have taught for hundreds of years, is conceptually impossible [*"Ein Recht auf Revolution", wie es noch die Staatsrechtslehrer vor hundert Jahren lehrten, ist begrifflich unmöglich*].

This "concept" does not exist, or to be more precise there is no right that leads to revolution or a revolution within the law is impossible. The syntagm "right to a revolution" is simply worthless. At the very end of the "Critique of Violence" Benjamin seems to find another space for violence and revolution:

> But if the existence of violence outside the right [*jenseits des Rechtes*], as pure immediate violence, is assured, this furnishes proof that revolutionary violence, the highest manifestation of unalloyed violence by man, is possible [*die revolutionäre Gewalt möglich ist*], and shows by what means.[21]

For Benjamin's answer to be possible, to make the conceptually impossible possible, a complete change of register is necessary, as is the complete separation of right and violence. Only violence which can be completely separated and isolated from right can be called revolutionary violence (divine, absolute, pure, sovereign, etc.). This strict separation is the precondition for discovering a completely new space (and time) outside of right. In his note and first reactions to Vorwerk's text, that is to say, several months before the "Critique," Benjamin opposes the coercion of right or "the intensive efforts of right to become real" [*intensive Verwirklichungstendenz des Rechts*]. His intention is to limit the urgency and impatience of right to occupy the "world." It seems that his reservations about right are an introduction to something completely different:

> What is at issue is violent rhythm of impatience [*Um den gewalttätigen Rhythmus der Ungeduld*], in which the right exists and has its temporal order, as opposed to the good <?> rhythm of expectation [*Rhythmus der Erwartung*] in which messianic event unfold [*in welchem das messianische Geschehen verläuft*].[22]

The question mark found after the adjective "good" [*guten*] is Benjamin's

[21] W. Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," p. 252; "Zur Kritik der Gewalt," p. 202.
[22] W. Benjamin, "The Right to Use Violence," *Selected Writings*, Volume 1, p. 231; *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band VI, p. 104.

own intervention, and is the subject of this sentence. What is in question is not a simply latent uncertainty, or Benjamin's delaying in the hope of finding a more precise adjective, but rather the same uncertainty and ignorance before an event announced as the final and divine. The question mark does and does not break the horizon of a predictable event which is already occurring[23] and which is, at the same time, consistently late [*die Verzögerung*]. A messianic event,[24] as an event which is supposed to break (and which breaks) the violence of right, as a final act of violence which ends any future violence, determines and structures expectation [*Erwartung*]. Only expectation will make real what is completely impossible.

Benjamin's reading of Vorwerk's text and the manifestation of his resistance to the violence of right leads us to the final and most important group of texts and observations "composing" the "Critique of Violence." This is the endless and complicated "text" of Benjamin's friendship with Scholem, which is still unable to be reconstructed. Here I am not only referring to the difficulty in classifying the influence Scholem and the "Benjamin-Scholem relationship" had on Benjamin's text,[25] but also to Scholem's secret and unclear archival strategies. I will delay and put aside several questions that cannot stop with Scholem or Adorno or Buber without opening up a far vaster issue regarding the "use" and "manipulation" of twentieth-century archives, in order to concentrate on Benjamin's text and "divine violence." It seems to

[23] This fragment becomes clear with one still unpublished text by Gershom Scholem: "Walter a dit une fois : Le royaume messianique est toujours là. Ce jugement [*Einsicht*] contient la plus grande vérité – mais seulement dans une sphère qui, à ma connaissance, personne après les prophètes n'a attaint" (1917). The citation is taken from a text by Michael Löwy, "Le messianisme hétérodoxe dans l'œuvre de jeunesse de Gershom Scholem," J.-C. Attias, P. Gisel, and L. Kennel (eds.), *Messianismes. Variations sur une figure juive*, Geneva, Labor et Fides, 2000.

[24] Cf. G. Bensussan, "Messianisme, messianicité, messianique. Pour quoi faire, pour quoi penser ?," Jocelyn Benoist and F. Merlini (eds.), *Une histoire de l'avenir*, Paris, Vrin, 2004, pp. 26–27.

[25] Apart from several letters without which an analysis of the "Critique of Violence" cannot begin (the most important being Benjamin's letter to Scholem written in January 1921), I also refer to Scholem's work on Jewish sources and his continual exchange with Benjamin; on Scholem's early studies of apocalyptical messianism and catastrophe; on his brilliant manuscript "Bolshevism" [*Der Bolschewismus*] which speaks about the Jewish revolution, messianic kingdom, blood, rebellion, and the famous "dictatorship of poverty" [*die Diktatur der Armut*], *Tagebücher 1913-1917*, Frankfurt am Main, Jüdischer Verlag, 1995, p. 556–558; on those unforgettable notes from 1915 concerning the revolution: "*Unser Grundzug: das ist die Revolution! Revolution überall!*", *ibid.*, p. 81; on Benjamin's "theses of concept of justice" which were published in Scholem's journals (classified in 1916), and on the capital difference between *mischpatah*, *Recht* and *zedek*, *Gerechtigkeit*, *ibid.*, p. 401–402.

me that Benjamin's mention of *Korah* and his band would be a lot more transparent if, for example, Scholem's letter, which Benjamin refers to on August 4, 1921 were "found."[26] It would be much simpler to thematize Benjamin's intentions if Scholem's "diaries" or his "letters" (from 1918 to 1922) were available to the public. The reception of Benjamin's text is a similar case. I hope that we can all agree on how different the "Critique of Violence" would be if we were to have before us the interpretation of the greatest thinker of violence of the past century – and Benjamin's good friend – Hannah Arendt?

Three texts or three of Benjamin's experiences in post-war Germany are at the root of Benjamin's analogy in the alternative title of this text:

a) Hermann Bahr's 1919 novel *Die Rotte Korahs,* which deals with the fate of an Austrian baron who suddenly discovers that he is the son and heir of a notorious Jew and war profiteer. Bahr's research on the confrontation of blood and environment, that is, the relationship between biology and culture, in the determination of one's race, followed by the relationship between law and money, morality and corruption, as well as his hysterical anti-Semitism, and, paradoxically, the belief in the regeneration of the Jews are elements which almost certainly caught Benjamin's attention[27];
b) In Kant, whom he devotedly read for several years, Benjamin could have found an important fragment in the book *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. In the second edition of the book (1794), Kant supplants his usual formulation: "a human being ought to leave behind [*herausgehen soll*] in order to enter (into a politico-civil state [*um in einen politisch-bürgerlichen zu treten*])."[28] In the first sentence, a pleonasm is supposed to increase the effort: "the natural human being ought to endeavor to leave behind" [*der natürliche Mensch* […] *herauszukommen sich befleissigen soll*]. The second sentence indicates urgency, "human being ought to endeavor to leave behind as soon as possible" [*so bald wie möglich herauszukom-*

[26] "Of course I was excited by everything that you wrote about the 'Critique of violence.' The text will be published in the coming days" (Heidelberg, 04. 08. 1921). W. Benjamin, *Briefe I*, p. 270.

[27] The novel was published in 1919 by the publisher p. Fisher (Berlin, Vienna). Benjamin closely followed the works of the fairly prolific Bahr and mentions him in many places in his texts. However, *Die Rotte Korahs* is not mentioned in the list of books Benjamin owned.

[28] I. Kant, "Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason," *Religion and Rational Theology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 132; *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, Walter de Grunter & Co., 1969, Band VI, p. 97.

men sich befleissigen soll]; the third indicates that "man cannot leave alone," because this task does not concern him alone but is the task of the human race as a whole [*eine Vereinigung derselben in ein Ganzes*], more precisely, this task "requires a union [*Vollkommenheit*] [...] a system of well-disposed human beings [*System wohlgesinnter Menschen*] [...] totality."[29]
The great *task* [*die Pflicht*] "of coming out" which differs from all others, presupposes two more conditions Kant immediately mentions: he "requests for assuming the idea of one moral superior being, that is, the idea of God" (which enables Kant to call the community which manages to emerge the "people of God") and the existence of one further idea which would oppose that first idea and community: "the idea of a band under the evil principle."
To such a *people* of God we can oppose the idea of a *band* under the evil principle [*die Idee einer Rotte des bösen Princips entgegensetzen*] a union [*Vereinigung*] of those who side with that principle for the propagation of evil [*zur Ausbreitung des Bösen*]. It is in the interest of evil to prevent the realization of the other union [*jene Vereinigung nicht zu Stande kommen zu lassen*], even though here too the principle battles [*anfechtende Princip*] the dispositions of virtue resides in our very self and is only figuratively represented as an external power [*in uns selbst liegt und nur bildlich als äußere Macht vorgestellt wird*][30];

c) Goldberg's seminar and Benjamin's encounters with people from Goldberg's surroundings (I have already mentioned Unger and Baumgardt), whom Scholem found particularly objectionable, could perhaps be the most important influences in Benjamin's thinking of sacrifice, blood, and violence carried out against *Korah*. The only argument for this assumption, for now, can be the relatively lengthy fragments from Goldberg's book, published in 1925.[31] Oskar Goldberg views *Korah*'s rebellion (he names it *Korah-Aufstand*, but also "an endeavor," "venture," *Korah-Unternehmen*), as a threat to the metaphysical core [*metaphysischen Zentrums*]. The reaction [*eine Reaktion*] to this rebellion, which is not understood from a "theological" standpoint, says Goldberg, is similar to

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 133; *ibid.*, p. 98.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 134; *ibid.*, p. 100. In the same year, in the text "The End of All Things" (*Religion and Rational Theology*, p. 225; *Kant-Werke*, Bd. VIII, p. 332), Kant reveals that the band he mentioned is in fact *Korah*'s band [*der Rotte Korah*].

[31] *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer. Einleitung in das System des Pentateuch*, Erster Band, Berlin, Verlag David, 1925. Goldberg works on the problems of holiness, destruction, sacrifice, blood (p. 98, 99, 160–163). He mentions "Unblutige Opfer" in the context of sacrifice to the Goddess Kali (p. 139).

> the reaction of a body [*Körper*] when one of its vital organs is attacked [*wenn ein lebenswichtiges Organ emfindlich angegriffen wird*].[32]

All three potential sources of Benjamin's analogy are of unequal value and belong to differing textual regimes. Nonetheless, if we put aside Hermann Bahr's obscure allegory, with both Kant and Goldberg the band of rebels is reduced to a small "part" which opposed the "whole." The evil "part" cannot constitute an entity or community that can successfully resist. In other words, the "part" cannot succeed as a part within a "whole," therefore the reaction of the whole is horrific and the destruction of the rebels becomes necessary. It is interesting that in both Kant and Goldberg this "evil principle" is internalized and figuratively presented – as a part of "ourselves" and within "us" in Kant, and as an attack on an organ of our organism or our "body" in Goldberg.

To repeat Benjamin one more time:

> This very task of destruction poses again, ultimately, the question of a pure immediate violence [*einer reinen unmittelbaren Gewalt*] that might be able to call a halt to mythic violence. Just as in all spheres God opposes myth, mythic violence is confronted by the divine. And the latter constitutes its antithesis in all respects. If mythic violence is lawmaking [rightmaking; *mythische Gewalt rechtsetzend*], divine violence is law-destroying [right-destroying; *die göttliche rechtsvernichtend*] [...] The legend of Niobe may be contrasted with God's judgment on the company of *Korah* [*Gewalt Gottes Gericht an der Rotte Korah gegenübertreten*], as an example of such violence. God's judgment strikes privileged Levites [*Es trifft Bevorrechtete, Leviten*], strikes them without warning, without threat, and does not stop short of annihilation [*trifft sie unangekündikt, ohne Drohung, schlagend und macht nicht Halt vor der Vernichtung*].

The harmony between Benjamin's intervention and Kant's and Goldberg's interpretation is confirmed through the idea that "divine violence" opposes "mythic violence" in everything, in all respects [*in allen Stücken*]; there is no "punishment" for this band, conversely, there is the judgment [*Gericht*] of God which protects the whole – God's action or "divine violence" destroys and saves at the same time (that is why this violence brings justice and not right[33]); God does not warn or threaten those whom he destroys in advance

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 194–195.

[33] Benjamin's use of the word "judgment" [*Gericht*] implies a differentiation between right [*mishpat*] and justice [*sedaqa*]. If God is the subject of an action that brings and

(he warns only those who hear him). But that is not enough, nor is it everything. It seems to me that Benjamin's ambitions are higher and that his use of *Korah* surpasses the three moments I have discussed, as well as the two I mentioned and kept aside. Namely, I initially insisted upon a surprise which appears in Benjamin's text, when someone who seems to be a leftist and revolutionary *par excellence* (the rebel *Korah* in Walzer's mind), and it is of revolution that Benjamin speaks of throughout his text, is himself, concurrently destroyed through "divine violence." Later, I will add another problem, one that deals with Benjamin's exchange with Scholem, and which supposes the influence holy texts and rabbinic analysis could have had on Benjamin's opinion of *Korah*. Therefore, in contrast to Goldberg or Kant, Walzer, and Scholem, Benjamin attempts to think together an incomprehensible "theological" point of view [*theologische Gesichtpunkte*] and a revolutionary gesture of rebellion. Only in this intersection of theology and revolution (not politics) is the impossible possible: the messianic event.

Korah is an extraordinary example of a pseudo-messiah and a false revolutionary, but also the first initiator of the messianic theatre and the world to come.

But why is *Korah* a false revolutionary?

The most precise answer is because *Korah* is not the Messiah. In the moment in which God destroys *Korah* and his followers Benjamin (this is another great surprise) defines them as privileged Levites. They are privileged, *die Bevorrechtete* (*"Es trifft Bevorrechtete"*; the adjective is *bevorrechtigt*). Despite the fact that this word points to them having been attacked and destroyed before they were judged, meaning, before judgment, threat, and warning, it seems that Benjamin's intention is completely different. Furthermore, how can those who oppose privilege and the "right to leadership" and the holiness of Moses and Aaron be privileged? How can only *Korah*, Moses' cousin, be privileged? How exactly is it that they are privileged? Benjamin does not use the common adjective *privilegiert*, rather he uses a word that has right, judgment, and judge (*Bevorrechtete*) in it. In doing so, Benjamin comes close to the "theological" interpretation in which they were destroyed because they were outside of the law. God protects the law and destroys all that is apart from it (the rebels or the "privileged"). Afterwards, Benjamin demonstrates that this rebellion is not a revolution but is rather a "product" of right or law. They were destroyed because they asked for privileges within already existing laws, and they were privileged because their position was already outside

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fulfils justice, then his actions are not punished, but protected. That is the fundamental characteristic of the root *sdq*.

of law (this dilemma is signified as the difference between their rebellion against Moses and Aaron and their rebellion against God). The most important reasons for *Korah* being a privileged false revolutionary are his wealth and the influence he enjoyed amongst the people before the rebellion. He is not poor,[34] and so he is a politician, not a revolutionary. Even if Benjamin was not aware of the source of *Korah*'s ambition (*Korah*'s wife plays an interesting role in his career[35]), the word *Bevorrechtete* is correctly used to show that the material privilege of this band is in question. Therefore, *Korah* and his band fight for leadership and acceding to Benjamin belong to the register of law and mythic violence which has nothing to do with revolution.[36] They must be attacked and destroyed because they cannot be constituted as an opposing community (Kant's "evil principle"), they cannot succeed as part of the whole or part of the community (like Shammai in his dispute with Hillel[37]), and can never destroy right (law) because their intention is to replace it with a new right (that is, new privilege).

But why does this "reformist" rebellion "lead to" God carrying out his destructive violence? The "work" of the analogy and counter-analogy (here we should recall that during this time Benjamin wrote an important frag-

[34] "Only the judgment of the poor has revolutionary power" [*Urteil des Armen hat allein revolutionäre Macht. Die Arme ist vielleicht nicht gerecht, aber er kann niemals ungerecht sein*]. G. Scholem, "Der Bolschewismus", *Tagebücher 1913-1917*, p. 556.

[35] Cf. *Sanhedrin*, 109b–110a; "He was jealous because Moses chose another [...]" Rashi (*Commentary of Bamidbar*). Philon speaks of the "incomprehensible" ambition and pride of the rebels [*alogou fronématos*]. *De Praemiis et Poenis*, 13.74.

[36] Cf. 16.2 *Numbers*, begins with "to rise up against Moses." The phrase "*vayacoumou lifnei (Moshé)*" has a completely legal background and is used during trials when the opponent is spoken to (Deuteronomy 19:15–16; Psalms 27:12).

[37] In the text "*Sitra achra*; Gut und Böse in der Kabbala" (*Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1973 (1962), p. 68–69, Scholem evokes *Korah*'s rebellion in the context of a disagreement between two great doctors, Hillel and Chamaï. He cites a fragment from *Zohar*, I, 17 b:

"[...] left merged in right [*die Linke wurde in die Rechte einbezogen*], and peace prevailed over all [*und es war Harmonie im All*]. Similarly the conflict between Korah and Aaron was left against right [...] He (Moïse) endeavored to reconcile them, but the left was unwilling, and Korah stiffened his resistance [*verstreifte sich im Übermass*]. He said [...] Hell must certainly join in the heat of the conflict of the left, since he does not want to join above [*Oberen*], merging in the right [*in die Rechte einbezogen werden*], he will certainly descend below by the intensity of his rage. Korah did not want this conflict to be harmonized by Moses because it was not for the sake of heaven [*um des Himmels willen*] [...] A conflict arrayed as above, ascending, not descending, established rightly, is the conflict of Shammai and Hillel. The blessed Holy One mediated between them, harmonizing them. This was the conflict for the sake of heaven, so Heaven mediated the conflict, and upon this conflict the world was established." *The Zohar*, Volume I, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, pp. 130–131.

ment on analogy) helps Benjamin come to a consequential conclusion: absolute violence (destructive, divine, and revolutionary) destroys mythic and political violence or rebellion within law (always for privilege and benefit), as a culmination of the absolute hypocrisy of capitalism. In spite of this, *Korah* and his band's rebellion is simultaneously the most important precondition for the manifestation of this new and incredible violence as destructive. The false revolutionary announces the arrival of the real one. There is no revolution without false rebellion (or false rebels) and mythic violence or war.[38] In this way the paradigm of revolutionary practice is found in the violent intervention of God, or rather in the expectation of the non-violent Messiah:

> The guiding principle [*der Grundsatz*] is here: authentic divine violence [*echte göttliche Gewalt*] can manifest itself other than destructively [*anders als zerstörend*] only in the world to come (the world of fulfillment) [*nur in der kommenden Welt* (*der Erfülltheit*)] (direct divine intervention [*unmittelbarer göttlicher Einwirkung*]). But where divine violence enters in the secular world, it breathes destruction [*atmet sie Zerstörung*] [...] In this world, divine violence [*göttliche Gewalt*] is higher [*ist höher*] than divine powerlessness [*göttliche Gewaltlosigkeit*]; in the world to come, divine powerlessness is higher than divine violence.[39]

But why is *Korah* a false Messiah? The most precise answer is because *Korah* is not a revolutionary. Despite the fact that his rebellion is, without a doubt, comprised of elements of a new, future justice and despite the fact that all the conditions for a messianic theatre are fulfilled, *Korah* himself is an *archconspirator*, a "deconstructor" and demolisher of an exiled community. He simultaneously begins four rebellions (the Levite against Aaron; Dathan and Abiram against Moses; the tribe leaders against Aaron; all together against Moses and Aaron[40]) by "taking"[41] and uniting 250 children of

[38] Cf. Scholem's differentiation of the bloody Bolshevik revolution, messianic empire, and the violence of World War I. "Der Bolschewismus," *Tagebücher 1913-1917*, p. 556.

[39] W. Benjamin, "World and Time," *Selected Writings*, Volume 1, pp. 226–227; W. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band VI, p. 99.

[40] *The JPS Torah Commentary Numbers (Bamidbar)*, commentary of J. Milgrom, Philadelphia – New York, The Jewish Publication Society, 5750 / 1990, p. 129. Milgrom corrects Abrabanel who thinks there are three rebellions (p. 415).

[41] "Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself [...]" The use of the past simple verb "to take," "betook" [*vayikach*] signifies that *Korah* has convinced and grouped some of the people's leaders, but that he has also separated from the community ("He has separated, separated from the community in order to instigate a conflict," Rachi).

Israel. At the onset of the rebellion *Korah* says the following to Moses and Aaron (16:3):

> You have gone too far! For all the community are holy [*kdschim*], all of them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise [*tinaseu*] yourselves above the Lord's congregation?[42]

Korah will not utter another word while still alive.[43] He thinks that not only the community is holy, but that both the community and every individual (part) in it is holy. This is a complete novelty, but also a serious blasphemy. It is the radical nature of this comment, bringing into question the devotion of the priest Aaron[44] and Moses as his first defender and intermediary between the people and God, that beginning horrors and great troubles. However, Benjamin's intervention (and intuition) opens the door to another interpretation of *Korah*'s appearance and his destruction which, as we know, leads to a true catastrophe of people suffering in the wildness (apart from the aforementioned 250, their women and children are also wiped out, and another 14,700 follow). God's revolutionary violence or the "divine violence" of a Messiah who destroys without blood, does not "judge" only in Moses' or Aaron's or the law's favor; rather, it gives guidance in the desert and announces a future non-violent Messiah and probably a completely peaceful revolution. It is for this reason that this dreadful episode should be (1) the measure of every future expectation and arrival of the Messiah [*mashiah*] (messianism); (2) the sign of a possible change in someone's status and an act of God which chooses, reinforces, and anoints [*mašah*]; (3) the measure of every future strike [*mšh*] and rebellion; (4) the measure of every future speech [*meshiah*] and every sacrifice; and, finally, (5) the measure [*mashahu*(*m*)] of every future measure.

But is this truly possible? Is Benjamin's differentiation between two kinds of violence and his call to consider "divine violence" in the context of *Korah*'s rebellion, gestures which lead to the thinking of a new and future world? Is Benjamin truly sketching the conditions for recognizing (the final) violence, for restrain from violence, for the expectation of violence or perhaps the unconditional conditions for the final act of violence? And is all of

[42] The Jewish Study Bible, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 316.

[43] After all, it is completely uncertain if *Korah* ended up like the others, if he also vanished without a trace (*Sanhedrin* 110 a), and if he said the words which can be heard if we carefully listen to the voice coming from *Gehinom* (*Gehenna*; *Sheol*): "Moses and his Torah are the truth, we are liars" (*Sanhedrin* 110 b; *Baba Bathra* 74 b).

[44] Aaron is the "anointed priest" [*hacohen hamoshiyach*], Lev. 4:3, 5.

this done in order for violence to finally be destroyed, for social injustice to be eliminated, and for the sovereignty of the world (or Israel, as Maïmonide thinks) to finally be revealed?

Benjamin uses two equally important registers to determine if a violent act has been carried out by God (or Messiah), if it is "divine violence" and if God and the future world are manifest through it. Paradoxically, both registers disrupt and prevent the construction and fantasy on the basis of which God only appears through violence and catastrophic destruction. Similarly, both registers prevent the possibility of terrible violence and wars being justified by and attributed to fictitious ideal authors. Within the first register, Benjamin hesitates and examines the characteristics of one kind of violence using different synonyms for "divine violence" and examining, in detail, the relationship between right and violence. For violence, which has already been carried out, to be attributed to the Messiah or God, it must be both revolutionary, clean, absolute, pedagogical, and, at the same time, without any attributes; this sort of violence does not create right or order, does not bring privilege, creating nothing; this sort of violence completely destroys, is measured in victims, but it leaves no blood or other remains and "it is as if it never occurred."

Afterwards, Benjamin recognizes this impossible violence and this impossible occurrence in a different scene and within a messianic register. As we have read, the false Messiah and pseudo revolutionary *Korah* was swallowed alive by the earth. This same earth opened its mouth to accept Abel's blood in an attempt to eliminate Cain's crime and delay Cain's guilt.[45] For violence which has been carried out to be attributed to either God or the Messiah, and this is probably what the consequence of Benjamin's suggestion is, it is necessary for the act of violence itself to simultaneously erase and protect (defend, hoard, keep in reserve) the revolutionary and negative moment of one community. The revolutionary removal of *Korah* and his band requires a reassessment of a community and a new measure. This measure is only possible in the shadow of a future world in which the Messiah awakens the entire community, including both the evil and rebellious,[46] from the earth. "For all the community are holy [*kdschim*], all of them, and in their midst is [...]"

[45] *Sanhedrin* 37 b.
[46] *Sanhedrin* 108 a.

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QUESTIONING THE PARADIGM OF RESISTANCE

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In the contemporary world we are witnessing today's growing contradictions and also various attempts to solve them. In the following years the situation will not improve, that is certain, especially because of the recent financial crisis; on the contrary, there is a high probability that we will witness a deepening of the crisis of democracy and a rise in populisms and extremisms of all kinds. If now it is clear to everybody that "the end of history" (Fukuyama) was just a dream, it seems that right now there is an opportunity and time to radically re-think our situation in a way that radically differs from previous attempts following appeals in the style of "something must be done right here, right now", which were on the contemporary agenda for many years. There are claims that the recent cycle of capitalist economy which lasted for over four decades was nothing but radical change incarnated. Within it one can find basically two major attempts to "radically" change, to "revolutionize" the contemporary situation without radically changing or revolutionizing it. The first of them was surely the neoliberal "revolution" lead by Reaganism and Thatcherism, which gained an additional infusion after the Fall of Berlin Wall and after September 11. But it was intertwined with the second attempt, which started in the 60s, usually we call it the events of May '68. If the first was accompanied in recent decades by semi-populist and extremist phenomena all over the world, the second influenced our world in the form of subversions, countercultures, and resistances of all kinds. Both these attempts were, and still are, in fact, "radical", yet not radical enough. By not radical enough, one can imagine many things, that is true. A recent theoretical attempt to account for this situation came from Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt. Their theoretical project, published in two books, *Empire*

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and *Multitude*,[1] presents a breakthrough in its open and unconditioned affirmation of Marxist and Communist thought. The success of these works has been enormous, and clearly shows that there exists massive support for and interest in radical (Left) thought. Since then many studies and critiques of their work have been published,[2] but perhaps one could address to them a critique concerning radicalism, in other words, a critique concerning the untheorized elements in their theoretical paradigm, which is nothing but a paradigm of resistance. This paradigm today presents a majority of the theory and practice on the Left, and there are many recent important theoretical contributions here, from David Couzens Hoy to Simon Critchley, etc. Here we will limit our critique to just one minor detail in the theories of Hardt and Negri.

Let us illustrate three basic problematical features of the paradigm of resistance with the help of three quite different theoreticians, Jacques Lacan, Fredric Jameson, and Brian Massumi. This resistance today is linked with a certain culture it gave rise to in the 60s, with many subcultures and with the specific understanding of counter-culture. One can only repeat the warnings of Lacan in his *Seminar XX* against untheorized elements in the paradigm of insurrection, resistance, and subversion:

> What remains at the center is the fine routine that is such that the signified retains the same meaning in the final analysis. That meaning is provided by the sense each of us has of being part of his world, that is, of his little family and of everything that revolves around it. Each of you – I am speaking even of the leftists – you are more attached to it than you care to know and would do well to sound the depths of your attachment. A certain number of biases are your daily fare and limit the import of your insurrections to the shortest term, quite precisely, that gives you no discomfort – they certainly don't change your world view, for that remains perfectly spherical. The signified finds its center wherever you take it. An, unless things change radically, it is not analytic discourse – which is so difficult to sustain in its decentering and has

[1] See: Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London 2000; Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Penguin Press, New York 2004.

[2] See: *Multitudes*, II, 9, Paris 2002; *Debating Empire*, edited by Gopal Balakrishnan, Verso, London & New York 2003; *Empire's New Clothes. Reading Hardt and Negri*, edited by Paul A. Passavant & Jodi Dean, Routledge, New York & London 2004; *Resistance in Practice. The Philosophy of Antonio Negri*, edited by Timothy S. Murphy and Abdul-Karim Mustapha, Pluto Press, London & Ann Arbor (MI) 2005.

> not yet made its entrance into common consciousness – that can in any way subvert anything whatsoever.[3]

Lacan's point concerning routine is a very general one, one can think of it in terms of the leading ideology, traditions, and attachments of various kinds, but from a Marxist point of view the routine is nothing other than the economic relations of production, it concerns the very dynamic of capitalism. In what sense? In the sense of culture, which in the dynamic of "late capitalism", as Fredric Jameson called it following the Trotskyist analyst Ernest Mandel, occupied the center. Many recent studies[4] have already shown the shifts and changes in the functioning of contemporary capitalism, but Jameson's initial diagnosis is still relevant today. Marx's demonstration, he writes, of the materialist dialectic, especially those passages in the *Manifesto*,

> teach the hard lesson of some more genuinely dialectical way to think historical development and change. The topic of the lesson is, of course, the historical development of capitalism itself and the deployment of a specific bourgeois culture. In a well-known passage Marx powerfully urges us to do the impossible, namely, to think this development positively *and* negatively all at once; to achieve, in other words, a type of thinking that would be capable of grasping the demonstrably baleful features of capitalism along with its extraordinary dynamism simultaneously within a single thought, and without attenuating any of the force of either judgment. We are somehow to lift our mind to a point at which it is possible to understand that capitalism is at one and the same time the best thing that has ever happened to the human race, and the worst. The lapse from this austere dialectical imperative into the more comfortable stance of the taking of moral positions is inveterate and all too human: still, the urgency of the subject demands that we make at

[3] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore: On feminine sexuality, the limits of love and knowledge*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Bruce Fink, Norton, New York & London 1998, p. 42.

[4] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott, Verso, London & New York 2006; Joseph Heath & Andrew Potter, *The Rebel-Sell: Why the Culture Can't Be Jammed*, Harper and Collins 2005 (known also as: *The Rebel Sell: How the Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*; US title: *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture*); Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool. Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London 1997.

> least some effort to think the cultural evolution of late capitalism dialectically, as catastrophe and progress all together.[5]

Capitalism in its recent or late state did not destroy culture as an autonomous sphere, but dissolved it in a kind of explosion in that we are witnessing a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm. This explosion is so pervasive that everything in our contemporary life, from the field of economics to politics, state, power, and the psyche, has become "cultural" in an original and yet untheorized sense. It is exactly this untheorized sense of the pervasiveness of culture that interests us here in a way that we will try to show in the following lines. This pervasiveness of culture linked with the search of modern individualism for an authentic experience, for the meaning of life, was very well appropriated and captured by capitalism's search for profit. And here we can add a third illustration from the Deleuzian point of view (and Deleuze is an important theoretical source for the paradigm of resistance, in spite of the severe critique he receives from Hardt and Negri). The problem or the dilemma, if one may say so, was recently clearly and distinctively described by Brian Massumi:

> The more varied, and even erratic, the better. Normalcy starts to lose its hold. The regularities start to loosen. This loosening of normalcy is part of capitalism's dynamic. It's not a simple liberation. It's capitalism's own form of power. It's no longer disciplinary institutional power that defines everything; it's capitalism's power to produce variety – because markets get saturated. Produce variety and you produce a niche market. The oddest of affective tendencies are okay – as long as they pay. Capitalism starts intensifying or diversifying affect, but only in order to extract surplus-value. It hijacks affect in order to intensify the profit potential. It literary valorizes affect. The capitalist logic of surplus-value production starts to take over the relational field that is also the domain of political ecology, the ethical field of resistance to identity and predictable paths. It's very troubling and confusing, because it seems to me that there's been a certain kind of convergence between the dynamic of capitalist power and the dynamic of resistance.[6]

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[5] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Duke University Press, Verso, London & New York 1991, p. 47. One can only note that the theme of catastrophe and progress was recently elaborated by Naomi Klein in *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Penguin Books, London & New York 2007.

[6] Brian Massumi, "Navigating Movements" in *Hope*, edited M. Zournazi, Routledge, New York 2003, p. 224.

This observation regarding the convergence between the dynamic of capitalist power and the dynamic of resistance is in a way crucial concerning the project of Negri and Hardt. Before we illustrate what the problem with it is, let us first present a very general presentation of what their project is all about.

We should first emphasize that the importance of the work *Empire* for us lies in its attempt to surpass the impasses of the contemporary theory and practice of the Left. Secondly, Hardt and Negri have succeed to again put on the academic agenda the legitimacy of speaking from a communist point of view, from the point of view of radical politics, of talking again about class struggle. For them the main political enemy today is called Empire. Empire is a new, global form of sovereignty. It differs from the old imperialism in that it does not reinstate the territorial center of power. It is a decentralized or rather deterritorialized apparatus of power which constantly expands its borders and boundaries: it has no limits; it presents a passage within the capitalist mode of production. As is true in spatial terms, this order is also not limited in temporal terms, it fixes the present time as eternal. It is therefore an eternal order. Its second novelty compared with the old forms of imperialism is that it not only controls and administers the territory, but it also creates its own world. Its aim is totality, the social life as a whole. It presents a new form of power, bio-power. A further feature of this new paradigm of bio-power is that it is consecrated to peace, but is simultaneously always at war or in a struggle. "From the beginning, then, Empire sets in motion an ethico-political dynamic that lies at the heart of its juridical concept. This juridical concept involves two fundamental tendencies: first, the notion of right that is affirmed in the construction of a new order that envelops the entire space of what considers civilization a boundless, universal space; and, second, a notion of right that encompasses all time within its ethical foundation, Empire exhausts historical time, suspends history, and summons the past and future within its own ethical order. In other words, Empire presents its order as permanent, eternal, and necessary."[7] On the other side of Empire stands multitude. What is the relationship between Empire and multitude? What is the relationship of multitude towards Empire? The answer is a very direct and also simple one: only multitude creates, produces, and gives. In other words, Empire only takes, it is nothing but an "empty, spectacular, parasitical machine". Multitude is the real productive force of our social world, whereas Empire is a mere apparatus of capture that lives only off the vitality of the

[7] *Empire,* p. 11.

multitude".[8] But since the theory of the constitution of Empire is at the same time "a theory of its decline",[9] the most natural question that arises is – what then? What is the aim? The aim is to free the creative power of the multitude and to construct the counter-Empire. But what is the counter-Empire? Is it an alternative political organization of global currents and exchanges? Is there a social revolution under way, are its radical politics necessary or not? Is the counter-Empire a New (Socialist/Communist) International or even a new form of communism? Is then multitude a new name for a modern proletariat? What kind of social struggle do the authors have in mind? They actually mention "multitude's refusal of exploitation",[10] and also new forms of social struggles which at the same time "destroy the traditional distinction between economic and political struggles. The struggles are at once economic, political, and cultural – and hence they are biopolitical struggles, struggles over the form of life".[11] The only problem with these struggles for Hardt and Negri is that they are firmly rooted in local conditions. The reason for that lies in the "absence of a recognition of a common enemy against which the struggles are directed". So, one has to find the enemy. And here it is: "The enemy, rather, is a specific regime of global relations that we call Empire".[12] One might wonder why the enemy is Empire? Because it is nothing but corruption embodied, "corruption is the form of government in Empire".[13] In other words: "In Empire, corruption is everywhere. It is the cornerstone and keystone of domination. It resides in different forms in the supreme government of Empire and its vassal administrations, the most refined and the most rotten administrative police forces, the lobbies of the ruling classes, the mafias of rising social groups, the churches and sects, the perpetrators and persecutors of scandal, the great financial conglomerates, and everyday economic transactions. Through corruption, imperial power extends a smoke screen across the world, and command over the multitude is exercised in this putrid cloud, in the absence of light and truth."[14] So, on one side there are forces of corruption, decay, rotting, passive parasailing, putridity, and on the other forces of generation, production, creation, desire, love, joy. The forces of darkness against the forces of "light and truth", then.

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[8] *Ibid.,* p. 62.
[9] *Ibid.,* p. 370.
[10] *Ibid.,* p. 54.
[11] *Ibid.,* p. 56.
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 45-46.
[13] Antonio Negri, *Du retour. Abécédaire biopolitique*, Calmann-Lévy, Pariz 2002, p. 80.
[14] *Empire,* p. 389.

There are many problematic theses here, many problematic features in the relationship between Empire and the multitude; as Jacques Rancière succinctly pointed out, we have here just another version of Marx's understanding of the relationship between productive forces and relations of production.[15] There are many other theses which would deserve a detailed critique, but for our purposes here, the passage on corruption suffices. It announces in a way an understanding of the idea of "the will to be against", which is presented at a very important strategical place within the work *Empire* itself, just before the explanation of what the counter-Empire is. Let's quote quite a long passage, which we will examine further:

> What does it mean to be republican today? We have already seen that the modern critical response of opening the dialectic between inside and outside is no longer possible. An effective notion of postmodern republicanism will have to be constructed *au milieu*, on the basis of the lived experience of the global multitude. One element we can put our finger on at the most basic and elemental level is *the will to be against*. In general, the will to be against does not seem to require much explanation. Disobedience to authority is one of the most natural and healthy acts. To us it seems completely obvious that those who are exploited will resist and – given the necessary conditions – rebel. Today, however, this may not be so obvious. A long tradition of political scientists had said the problem is not why people rebel but why they do not. Or rather, as Deleuze and Guattari say 'the fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly (and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered): 'Why do men fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?'' The first question of political philosophy today is not if or even why there will be resistance and rebellion, but rather how to determine the enemy against which to rebel. Indeed, often the inability to identify the enemy is what leads the will to resistance around in such paradoxical circles.[16]

So, if for Heidegger we are *beings-towards-death*, it seems that for Hardt and Negri we are *beings-against*. Everything we are – we, the humanity or the multitude? – is contained in this "against". But, against whom or what? Against the establishment? Authority, what kind of authority? The Law? Parents and teachers? Well, in exaggeration one could say that from this the-

[15] See Jacques Rancière, "Peuple ou multitudes", in: *Multitudes*, II, 9, Paris 2002, pp. 95-100.

[16] *Empire,* p. 210.

sis it follows that we are against everything and everybody that would limit or dare to pose any danger, limit, or restrictions on our freedom. Any outside determination of my will is suspicious as any adherent to the Spinozian motto *omnis determinatio est negation* might say. But no, is it really so difficult to understand the general idea? For Hardt and Negri there is no doubt whom or what we are against. We are *against* Empire, of course. But the above mentioned passage did not mention Empire. And the context is so loose, so undefined, that one could even go so far as to say that the "will to be against" can also mean something which is clearly not meant by Hardt and Negri, i.e. that everybody is against everybody, which would bring us back to today's ruling ideology of the competitive market of *Alle gegen Alle* as Laibach and Hobbes would put it. The proximity to the liberalist credo of competition and rivalry is at least potential, as it is also proximity to the survivalist emphasis on "everyone for himself".

But, seriously, if the ideology of neoliberalism tacitly presupposes Adam Smith's *invisible hand,* which brings harmony to the chaos of the market, what would follow from Negri's and Hardt's conception of the "will to be against" for the theory of the social? Before we proceed, the reader is once again asked to pay attention to the presentation of the will to be against Negri and Hardt use: "One element we can put our finger on at the most basic and elemental level is *the will to be against*. In general, the will to be against does not seem to require much explanation. Disobedience to authority is one of the most natural and healthy acts." It seems that will to be against is natural or self-explanatory and that no further explanation is needed. On that basis Negri and Hardt proceed further and link will to be against with many different political concepts or conceptions without further elaborating their differences. One thing is namely *rebellion*; *disobedience* to authority is something else, and again is not the same as *civil disobedience*. But to claim that "disobedience to authority is one of the most natural and healthy acts" might be a very problematical statement from any point of view. Which authority do the authors have in mind, authority *per se* or divine, political, parental, military, or collective authority? Any attempt to directly educate individuals so that their "will to be against" would strengthen, any program to educate pupils in the spirit of "disobedience to authority" would surely end in disaster, in the worst nightmare, which anybody who has ever participated in the educational process knows. The case and the experience of the Summerhill educational system might be quite a good example of such a result. In the educational process the aim is of course to raise an autonomous and critical individual, but the main paradox of this is that, if we set this goal as a direct goal, we do not achieve it. If we take as a goal of education to "produce" diso-

bedience to authority, this definitively leads to a society of individuals called by Christopher Lasch "the culture of narcissism", the society of self-willed, self-sufficient, self-complacent individuals that we actually live in right now.

And yet, if Negri and Hardt are talking about "natural and healthy acts", what for them is "natural"? What is nature? Is there today any part of nature that is not socially mediated? The same holds true for health. And finally, what is the authority that decides what health is and what is natural? If we take will to be against as disobedience to authority seriously, there is no authority which would be accepted except the authority of every individual, of every Ego. Any authority of others (universal truths included) is unacceptable, the paradox here is the same as in Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* But on the other hand, the situation is rather quite different. One thing is namely the "use of reason" in its public and private sphere, with the public as the arbiter in the last analysis, quite another is resistance qua disobedience to authority. It has to be said that on this particular point Hardt and Negri are particularly vague. They talk about many things at the same time. One thing is "to be against", "to oppose", quite another is to resist and to rebel. But in the end *droit de résistance*, the right to resistance, is surely nothing natural, it is a political and juridical concept. If resistance is really a natural act, what about its social and historical conditions? There are many forms of resistance. There are many resistance movements in history, too. The word *résistance* namely comprises different historical examples: the most famous is the French Resistance during World War II, but there are also partisan resistances against Hitler's army in the same period in Yugoslavia, Poland, the Soviet Union, etc. Each of these movements has its own history, its particularities and singularities. There are also many resistance movements today, one could mention an example which is not mentioned in *Empire*, the resistance movement against Milošević called *Otpor,* the Serbian word for resistance, and its famous logo of a fist is now part of the Russian democratic movement against Putin. The point is that many political movements today think of themselves in terms of resistance and that each of them has its own presuppositions and aims, too. That is why the very term resistance seems to be all-embracing and ubiquitous. In the final analysis, one could even comprehend (and why not?) Bush's War on Terror in terms of resistance: this war is really nothing but resistance to anybody who threatens American freedom, the American way of life. And the same holds true also for the various fundamentalisms and populisms fighting the same fight, they are the other side of the same coin, with the difference that they are on the other side of the gunsights...

But the vagueness and inoperativeness of resistance is not the only prob-

lematic feature of resistance. If we again take a closer look at the manner the concept of the will to be against is introduced in *Empire*, we see that it is something that "does not seem to require much explanation", because it is "one of the most natural and healthy acts". Healthy, natural, self-evident? What are these adjectives if not a concise definition of the adjectives that one can always find in any ideology? The main feature of every ideology, as Althusser emphasizes, is that ideology is something obvious, self-evident, something natural. But when we think about or take something as self-evident, for granted, as something which does not require any or much explanation, as natural – we are in the realm of ideology. But the will to be against *seems* to be just such a thing for Hardt and Negri, i.e. natural, healthy, self-evident. Even more. It is something "we can put our finger on", it is something "at the most basic and elemental level".

If we look around a society, what do we find? Individuals. But not just any individuals, not the autonomous and critical individuals the Enlightenment was praising and craving for, but mistrustful, disobedient, rebellious individuals. Individuals who have strong egos, narcissistic individuals. The only authority then is His Majesty the Ego, as Freud would put it. A society of egos is a society of conformists. This society of Egos, as the British Radicals understood it, is the society of Egos the *American Dream* and the *American Way of Life* are based upon. Only this Ego is what "we can put our finger on". This kind of Ego as a self-made man is constantly creating and producing himself (note the proximity to one of the key concepts in late Foucault, the aesthetics of the self), disobeying every authority who tells him what is right and what is wrong. Who can tell the Ego what to think and what to do? This rebellious instance of Ego was put in its center by Ego-psychology with the presupposition that it is in fact the middle, harmonizing instance responsible for the equilibrium of the psyche. Already in 1932, but more profoundly later with his "Mirror stage", Lacan showed that Ego is far from a harmonizing instance, far from being a source of stability, but a very problematic and ideological construction, a "bricolage" of various identifications. Ego for Lacan leads to paranoia, it is Ego which alienates the subject. This Ego is seen for Lacan as a "theology of free enterprise". By describing will to be against as a natural and healthy instance, Negri and Hardt ended up in troubled waters, not very far from the conception that was criticized by Freud, Lacan, and Lasch.

Although Negri and Hardt say that to them "it seems completely obvious that those who are exploited will resist and – given the necessary conditions – rebel", they stepped back in the very next sentence, claiming that "today, however, this may not be so obvious". But the first part of their claim is more

than true today, rebellion and resistance today really are everywhere. One meets them on every corner of the world, one can find them from Marinetti's *Manifestos of Futurism*[17] to rock and pop culture of various kinds. Today art is resistance and resistance is art. Jameson's thesis on the explosion of culture in "late capitalism" can be understood as an explosion of the culture of resistance. Resistance is today a way of life, a very profitable activity. As Massumi would say, pretend to be a part of the resistance (using one version of his expression) and you will "produce a niche market". For these reasons Hardt's and Negri's conviction that "the first question of political philosophy today is not if or even why there will be resistance and rebellion", but rather how to determine the enemy against which to rebel", is wrong. One has to explain why today resistance exists on every corner and yet nothing really changes. In other words, if resistance today is everywhere and economic, social relations remain the same, then one might ask *why* that is so. The answer lies in the fact that Hollywood, this factory of dreams, realized very early on that the image of the rebel is very salable, very profitable. There are many varieties and forms of it, from the legendary Charlie the tramp to Westerns, in short, in Hollywood rebels and those who resist are everywhere. The nickname of one of the first big Hollywood stars, James Cagney, is significant, they nicknamed him "The Professional Againster". "Being against" was then this particular actor's profession, something that made a profit.

One recent book on this topic, *The Rebel-Sell*,[18] does not mention Cagney, but it mentions one anecdote which is very symptomatic. During the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999 the protesters attacked the shops and display windows of famous global brands in order to show their disagreement and their protest against brands and their domination. One of the shops attacked was that of the firm Nike. After the protest and when all was said and done they reviewed the shots filmed by the security cameras. And one of them showed something very interesting and troubling at the same time. The leg of one of the protesters who was actually at that moment breaking down the glass, was wearing what? Nike sneakers. So, somebody was protesting against brands, but was at the same time vain enough to wear exactly the brand he had found guilty of all the misery in the world. If the era of postfeminism was marked by the movie *Kramer versus Kramer*, now the problem seems to be very straightforward. It is simply *Nike versus Nike*, i.e. the inner

[17] See Filippo Tommasso Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism", in: Apollonio Umbro (edited), *Futurist Manifestos* (New York: Viking Press, Documents of 20th Century Art, 1973), p. 21.

[18] See *The Rebel-Sell* and Robert Kurz, *Die Welt als Wille und Design. Postmoderne, Lifestyle-Linke und die Aesthetisierung der Krise,* Edition Tiamat, Berlin 1999.

conflict of the consumer. This anecdote nicely illustrates the birth of a new consumer called by Heath and Potter, *rebellious consumer*, *consomateur rebelle,* and by the German author Robert Kurz *Konsument-Dissident*. But although these authors were describing the 90s, this consumer was already born in the 60s.[19] No wonder that some (but not all, of course) of the ex-Maoists today have embraced neoliberalism.[20] The 60s were also the birthplace of a "new spirit of capitalism".[21] This new spirit was born in the 60s and resurged again in the 90s. Although it seems that this new spirit came from nowhere in the 90s, the truth is that was prefigured by the revolutionary events of the 60s and by the "revolutions" of Reaganism and Thatcherism in the 80s. The Fall of the Berlin Wall and other catastrophes in the 21st century only reinforced its breakthrough, and gave it another push.

For Boltanski and Chiapello, this new spirit of capitalism (called by Jameson "late capitalism") presents the third stage of development in 20th Century capitalism. This development concerns different and various levels, one is the organization of production and of management, the other concerns advertising and selling strategies, which are all connected with the consumption and the figure of the consumer. Boltanski and Chiapello divide the organization of production into two bigger phases, in the beginning there was Fordism and Taylorism (now prevalent in the Third world and in special zones, usually on the border of developed countries). Fordistic production (immortalized in Chaplin's *Modern Times*) uses analysis to divide the process into the smallest units, which can easily be learned and therefore does not need any skilled labor force. Fordism speeds up production, enables control over the whole process, and produces enormous quantities of mass produced products. The model is the assembly line. The products all look exactly alike and a mould is used to produce them. It is no coincidence that in modern philosophy (especially that of France, the most prominent representative here is Deleuze in his *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*) the critique of Platonism, representation, and mould goes hand in hand with the rise of the new spirit of capitalism which is based on different principles. These new principles arose in the 60s more and more due to the initiatives of employees, with less emphasis on a hierarchical structure (we are all in the same boat; the superior is foremost our colleague, and only secondly our boss). With all that comes joint ownership, participation in management, even self-management. But this shift would be impossible without the preva-

[19] See Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool.*
[20] Dominique Lecourt, *Les piètres penseurs,* Flammarion, Pariz 1999, p. 89 in *passim*.
[21] See Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *op. cit.*

lence of a "cultural capitalism", where the commodity is appreciated because it enables us to experience all kinds of authentic feelings and experiences. The commodity thus enables us to fulfill our life, to bring sense to it. The quest for authenticity and the fulfillment/growing of the Self was in the centre of the new spirit born in the 60s.

This shift reoccurred again in the 90s. We will leave out the complicated story and all details and try to illustrate the ideological climate of this reoccurrence with the help of a movie which is considered by many to be one of the best movies of the 90s (it nonetheless received many awards, among them also Academy and BAFTA awards). This movie, *American Beauty* from 1999, is important for our discussion because it clearly and nicely shows a growing nostalgia for the 60s, which was crucial for a kind of "repetition of the 60s" in the 90s. The film depicts a "perfect" American way of life and by means of black humor it shows us that this life is far from perfect. The main hero, Lester Burnham (an anagram of "Humbert Learns"), is 42 years old. He works for an advertising company and lives in a typical American suburban area. Work and life in such an environment takes its toll, in that one becomes a loser and a weakling. The very first shot of the movie shows us effectively what kind of world the main hero lives in. A shot from above gives us a clear picture of the suburban area: all the yards, trees, roads, and houses are the same. Everything is clean, nicely arranged in regular geometrical shapes. Nice, but boring as all hell! This effect is partially achieved through use of music played by keyboards with a kind of "hollow sound". This sound is recorded with a reverb which is cut at the end. The technical term is "gated reverb", a reverb that promises depth but just before the space opens up, it is suddenly closed, gated. In that way we can literally feel the frustration of the main hero even before the action and the events in the movie start. The lodestar of Lester's life is a daily session of masturbation in the morning in the shower (he tells us this in an off-screen voice). His wife, Carolyn, is an executive and very success oriented. She despises him, they haven't been intimate for a long time. Carolyn is a very boring and shallow person, but tries to control everybody. Their daughter Jane is an adolescent, who, like her mother, despises Lester, too. She's very distant to him, especially after she discovers that he is interested in her female friend Angela Hayes, a beautiful girl, who dreams of becoming a model and rising in that way above the common people. Because Lester falls in love with Angela, he suddenly rediscovers his will to live. Backed by this enthusiasm and his newly restored self-esteem, Lester quits his job, but manages at the same time to blackmail his boss for one year of his wages. He begins to do what pleases him, smokes marihuana, wears casual clothes, and buys himself a Pontiac Firebird, the

car he has always wanted to have. Lester is now *cool*. The pot he smokes connects him to a strange boy from the neighborhood, Ricky, who is mistreated by his father, a retired member of the US Marines, and deeply affected by the decline of moral standards in society. Lester's daughter falls in love with Ricky and events take their course.

But if we leave the movie plot and a detailed analysis of the movie for some other occasion, what in this initial set strikes our eye first? Lester's depiction of his grey and dull life has only one bright spot ("the high point of my day", he says), his regular morning masturbation in the shower. So, even before Lester changes his life, he is already only focused on his enjoyment and on his body – masturbation is nothing but the enjoyment of an idiot, says Lacan in his Seminar XX, of somebody who does not want to know (i.e. a cynic). The departing point of the film is, therefore, not what the film itself tries to persuade us, the viewers, of, i.e. Lester's search for meaning in life, for the authenticity of his life in an alienated society. No, the point of departure is: there is Oneness. There is enjoyment and the only question is how to "color" it, how to enrich it, how to bring variety into it. From the very beginning the underlying premise of the movie that we have here a kind of "clash of civilizations", "a clash of cultures", is false. The film namely depicts two ways of life, or better, it presents us with a choice between them. One can choose between the dull, grey, hollow, uniform life of a businessmen/businesswomen, army officers, and a full life lived by the young or by the young at heart. As if we had on the one side the forces of the establishment, Law and Order, and on the other those who are different, who protest with their way of life against such an order. As if there was a clash between two spirits of capitalism, to speak à la Max Weber: between rigid, stereotyped, conformist and creative, witty, nonconformist, full. Control contra resistance, *square* contra *hip*. As if the 60s would comment on the Thatcherist and Reaganist 80s, inviting the 90s to become different and to join them.

In popular culture this has frequently been portrayed as a fight between hippies and yuppies, between hedonism and asceticism, but this fight is a purely imaginary one. It is, nonetheless a common theme from the 80s onward and plays an important role in many television series. In the 80s, in *Family Ties,* Michael J. Fox plays a teenager who is a Reaganist (i.e. interested only in money and business affairs), whereas his parents are committed to the values of the 60s and will forever stay hippies in their hearts. The same motif is presented twenty years later in the English series *My Family*, where the parents (he is a dull dentist, she is a lousy cook and control freak) are accompanied by their three children: daughter Jenny is a caricature of an ideal youth consumer, the oldest son Nick is a loser, whereas the youngest son is

a Tory-to-be-politician Michael J. Fox reappearance look-a-like. Why we are mentioning these series? Because in them the parents are always hippies, working hard for their children. The children are, while portrayed as ideal consumers, nothing but parasites (the same structure exists in the sitcom from the 80s and 90s *Married with Children*). Here too, one meets the same choice as before: it is as if we had a clash of two worlds, the rebels and idealists from the 60s against the consumers and materialists from the 90s. But what if this dilemma, this myth about the conflict of two worlds, is a blatant lie? What if both these sides are, as comrade Stalin would put it, worse?

This dilemma is found also in *American Beauty,* where the *proton pseudos*, the original and downright lie, is presented in the description of Lester's workplace ("My job consists of basically masking my contempt for the assholes in charge, and, at least once a day, retiring to the men's room so I can jerk off while I fantasize about a life that doesn't so closely resemble Hell."). Lester's firm is in the advertising business. The film therefore tries to persuade the viewer that not only the advertising business, but every business is dull and non-creative. This is utterly wrong, especially in the light of what historians, most notably Thomas Frank, have shown us in the field of advertising and management. From the early 50s on there has been an intensive quest going on regarding how to sell cool commodities. The capitalist reality from the 60s was very different from what we usually imagine. The change that was brought about by the 60s and the boom of the consumer society was possible because of the freeing of leisure time. So, the result of the political changes and fights was the loosening of rigid control over spare time, which had an effect on spending money and goods with regard to qualitatively enjoying it. Lester Burnham's motto *Carpe diem!* (in the 90s one finds this also in the film *The Dead Poet's Society,* with Robin Williams), has a pivotal role in the birth of a new consumer already in the 60s. In *American Beauty* we encounter this motto a number of times. The self-introduction or self-description of Lester gives us the first one: "My name is Lester Burnham. This is my neighborhood; this is my street; this is my life. I am 42 years old; in less than a year I will be dead. Of course I don't know that yet, and in a way, I am dead already." In other words, *Carpe diem*! Life should be lived with joy (one of the reproaches to his wife Carolyn later is: "When did you become so... joyless?") and gratitude (from the end of the movie: "I can't feel anything but gratitude for every single moment of my stupid little life... You have no idea what I'm talking about, I'm sure. But don't worry... you will someday."). Yes, life should be lived fully, because you never know when your last day will be. Later in the movie Lester says: "Remember those posters that said 'Today is

the first day of the rest of your life?' Well, that's true with every day except one: the day that you die." Therefore, *Carpe diem*!

But to oppose this motto to business and especially advertising in the 60s and in the 90s, would, historically speaking, be inaccurate. Furthermore, to say that advertising and business in the era of Post-Fordism, "late capitalism", are dull, uninventive, and uncreative, would be a lie. It's also a myth, and movies combine it with another myth, that there are only conformists in the USA. As Daniel Bell (yes, the very same one that proclaimed the end of ideologies in the 60s!) said, no one today in the United States defends conformity, on the contrary, everyone is against it, and probably everyone always was! Today in America everybody is anticonformist and nonconformist. In other words, today everybody resists! And probably everyone always has!

Since the Second World War, starting in 1947 to be exact, American businessmen have sought solutions for (American) capitalism. They were wondering how to undertake the necessary transformations of both the ways capitalism operated and the way it imagined itself. Postwar American capitalism was hardly the unchanging and soulless machine imagined by the counterculture, it was a dynamic force in its own right. The solution capitalism sought lay in the values proclaimed later by the 60s: individuality, creativity, and authenticity. In the 50s one of the theoreticians of advertising, Ogilvy, said: "Our business needs massive transfusions of talent. And talent, I believe, is most likely to be found among nonconformists, dissenters, rebels."[22] This is the beginning of the revolution, not just in advertising, but in business and management as well. Its main guideline is resistance to conformism. Two examples, among many. In the 60s, the slogan of Young & Rubicam was "Resist the Usual!", while one of its successful ads was simply: "I hate conformity!".[23] So, advertising played a prominent role in creating not only the new consumerist culture – Frank speaks of the rise of hip consumerism – but also of radical change in production itself. George Lois, one of the great theoreticians of this shift, recalled later that "safe, conventional work is a ticket to oblivion. Talented work is, *ipso facto*, unconventional". In other words, "in order to breakthrough, advertising has to be fresh and different, it has to be surprising. And in order to do that, you need a talented art director and writer working together, who have some leeway and liberty to try to create advertising." In the 80s he gave the following description of a good ad: "Advertising should stun momentarily. It should seem to be out-

[22] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*, p. 54.
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 90.

rageous. In that swift interval between the initial shock and the realization that what you are showing is not as outrageous as it seems, you capture the audience."[24]

This definition should be particularly striking to every reader of Deleuze and Guattari's book from 1991, *What is Philosophy?* Why? Because in the beginning of the book Deleuze and Guattari describe under what historical conditions philosophy arose. Philosophy is possible only within a circle of friends, and it always has rivals. Throughout history there have been many examples of them and now advertising is the rival of philosophy, they say. I don't think that Deleuze and Guattari really knew what they were exactly talking about, certainly they didn't know Lois's work, though it is possible that they actually did. But, nevertheless, their description of the concepts is very close to Lois's description of a good ad. A concept, too, is something which stuns, surprises, shocks; it is something outrageous and violent. The concept is untimely, ill-timed, it is as original as a new creation that has never been tried before. It has already been suggested that Deleuze's theory is divided into two different Deleuzes,[25] but this proximity of one of his main concepts brings into question his whole understanding of what thought is. For Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* the task of the philosopher is to create new concepts. The basic equation, then, is the following one: thought = creation = resistance. This is the same logic we can find in advertising; no wonder they were talking about advertising being the main rival of philosophy today. Regardless of their later critique of advertising Deleuze and Guattari are suspiciously close to procedure of advertising. They are also one of the main theoretical sources of Hardt and Negri's theoretical project. One of the key common concepts in both projects is the notion of resistance.

Though the proximity between the paradigm of resistance and the praxis of advertising is a troubling affair, the resistance is problematic from many other points of view as well. If the main task of advertising and a philosophical concept is to shock, to be outrageous, then one must ask how this permanent shocking is possible? One has to know the boundaries and standards that are dominant at the moment, and to play with them. In that case one must always keep track of the rules and laws that are currently governing the situation, in order for the shock to be efficient and recognized as such, i.e. as a shock. This activity is in fact perverse, it is nothing but another version of

[24] Quoted in Frank, p. 85.

[25] See Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies. On Deleuze and Consequences*, Routledge, New York & London 2004.

the Law. It is founded on Law, or as Lacan formulated decades ago following Saint Paul: desire and Law are one and the same thing. In Pauline terms: "If it had not been for the Law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said you shall not covet". Sin is that dimension of desire which finds its object beyond the prescription of the Law and after the prescription of the Law. In other words, advertising and the paradigm of resistance have a common presupposition, which is – transgression. Though Lacan himself chanted hymns to transgression in his Seminar VII, he later completely changed his views and in Seminar XVII, which followed the events of May '68, called transgression pure and simple by its true name: obscenity. In that way he also expressed his critique of hippie culture, which was theoretically based on the notion of counterculture (note, by the way, the proximity of the use of this prefix with Negri and Hardt's counter-Empire). Counterculture was founded in Theodor Roszak's work *The Making of a Counter Culture* from 1968. Roszak says: "As with the counterculture, it is *transgression* itself, the never-ending race to violate norms, that is the key to resistance." Transgression, resistance, the quest for authenticity, the violation of norms. If we compare this to Hardt and Negri's concept of the will to be against, we can find many parallels: fidelity to oneself is will, transgression is disobedience to authority, rebellion and resistance are here, too, authenticity is to be found in the "most natural and healthy acts". One can see that there are many parallels here, that Negri and Hardt's conceptualization owes many of its concepts to the 60s and to the counterculture.

As Frank has shown, the counterculture was a very important part of capitalism's dynamics already in the 60s and in the 90s, during which the book *Empire* was written, too. While we don't have space for all the details here, let's quote Kurz's description of the new figure of the consumer, which he calls the consumer-dissident: "Airwalk sport shoes, Carharrt trousers, and Diesel shirts are propaganda for a better life; the wrong brand means the wrong life – on this point a raver is more dogmatic than a Stalinist would be."[26] A better life means a fuller and pleasurable life; in the end, it means more enjoyment. Enjoyment, jouissance, sexual enjoyment especially, was highly regarded in the 60s – as it still is today for reason that it is something which is "against" by its very nature. Is there a greater way to disobey authority than to enjoy (oneself)? Enjoyment seems to have a special anarchical appeal also because it is seen as something chaotic, anarchistic, undisciplined, and undisciplinary, as something crazy. It is conceived as spontaneity, and as such, something subversive. This, by the way, is far from true and again it is

[26] Kurz, *Die Welt als Wille und Design*, p. 39.

Lacan who emphasizes that enjoyment is not free and spontaneous: "Nothing forces anyone to enjoy except the superego. The superego is the imperative of jouissance – Enjoy!"[27] If there is a genre and a niche market, one of the most profitable today where this is clearly visible is pornography. Pornography celebrates spontaneity, and yet just the use of the fast forward button on the remote control would persuade anybody that an obligatory change of sexual positions serves to fulfill a strange injunction (of the superego). In pornography we have a different quest for cool: capturing on film (or making-believe) this free spontaneity called enjoyment, which should convince the viewer that he is dealing here with authenticity, with something real. From here arises the obvious question of whether the actors and actresses are "feeling it" for real or are they "faking it"? This question often pops up on different occasions which are all nothing but the advertising of products and goods that are sold by that branch of business. Part of the advertising fuss is also the obligatory question of their preferred sexual positions and also the question of orgasm, too. On one such occasion two famous porn actresses and feminists, Ovidie and Coraline Trin Thi, discussed the question. Coralie finally claimed that she not only has real orgasms on the film set, but also that this is for her the greatest subversion.[28] Not only because the enjoyment or orgasm is by its nature something subversive, but also because you can in that way make a (political) statement, you can protest against the hypocritical society. One can say that we are witnessing here the birth of a new kind of worker or producer: producer-dissident, rebel-worker. This worker is the key element of contemporary Post-Fordism: a porn actress does not merely act that she is having an orgasm, she is not just faking it, her goal is to achieve it actually on the film set. In this activity she is creative and resisting at the same time: she is creating something new, something which is singular only to herself and to that particular time and place, this is her sacrifice (to the noble cause of resistance, one might say sarcastically), she fights with her own obstacles, prejudices, and her own feeling of shame (she is just following the motto of our perverse society: "Do not be ashamed to…!"), and yet she is working! Work, sacrifice, creation, business, will to be against – all in one.

For all above mentioned reasons the concept of the will to be against of Negri and Hardt and the paradigm of resistance as such are more than questionable in the light of the critique of capitalism.

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[27] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, p. 3.

[28] See Ovidie, *Porno Manifesto*¸ Flammarion, Paris 2002, chapter 7; *Films x: y jouer ou y être? Le corps acteur. Ovidie. Un entretien avec Michela Marzano*, Éditions Autrement, Paris 2005.

The concept of resistance is too vague, inoperative, and, above all, it is nothing radical. Culture and resistance are two vehicles of profit today. If the motto of the fight against capitalism is that another world is possible, one must say that another world was always already here, at least from the 60s onwards. The notion of counterculture or counter-Empire does not present any alternative to the dynamic of capitalism, it was long ago appropriated by it. In light of recent shifts in Negri's theory – in *Goodbye Mr. Socialism* he glorifies the new digital capitalism, its deterritorializing force and power, one not only has to remind him that Deleuze has already noted that deterritorialization goes hand in hand with reterritorialization (this is, after all, what Massumi emphasized in the citation we used at the beginning of this article with the words "produce variety and you produce a niche market") – the proximity and overlapping of the paradigm of resistance and capitalism does really not seem so strange any more.

The paradigm of resistance must therefore today be abandoned. But all that does not mean that one has to abandon either culture or every form of resistance to power, disobedience to authority, or rebellion. We must move beyond the paradigm of counterculture. What today is needed, in order for all acts of subversion, resistance, and rebellion to succeed, is a reinvention of the politics of the universal, a redefinition of radical politics and the politics of emancipation – beyond the politics of resistance. This does not entail a glorification of globalization, the global market, or capitalism, neither their demonization, but a *critique*, based on a renewal of the Marxist critique of political economy.

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ABSTRACTS • IZVLEČKI

Slavoj Žižek

Descartes and the Post-Traumatic Subject

Key words: *Descartes, subject, unconscious,* cogito*, Malabou*

If the radical moment of the inauguration of modern philosophy is the rise of the Cartesian *cogito*, where are we today with regard to *cogito*? Are we really entering a post-Cartesian era, or is it that only now our unique historical constellation enables us to discern all the consequences of the *cogito*? The paper deals extensively with these questions on topics introduced by Catherine Malabou's *Les nouveaux blessés (The New Wounded).* Malabou proposed a critical reformulation of psychoanalysis, her starting point being external shocks, brutal unexpected encounters or intrusions, due their properly traumatic impact on the way they touch a pre-existing traumatic "psychic reality". Malabou's basic reproach to Freud is that, when confronted with such cases, he succumbs to the temptation of meaning: he is not ready to accept the direct destructive efficiency of external shocks – they destroy the psyche of the victim (or, at least, wound it in an unredeemable way) without resonating in any inner traumatic truth. These cases of post-traumatic subjects show that if we take the "stories they are telling itself about itself", the narrative symbolic texture, away, something (or, rather nothing, a form of nothing) remains, which is nothing but the pure subject of the death drive. This is an idea of *cogito* at its purest, its "degree zero", and this is also the reason why today we so adamantly resist the spectre of *cogito*.

Slavoj Žižek

Descartes in posttravmatični subjekt

Ključne besede: *Descartes, subject, nezavedno,* cogito*, Malabou*

Če radikalni moment vzpostavitve moderne filozofije predstavlja nastop kartezijanskega *cogita*, kje se danes nahajamo glede na ta *cogito*? Smo zares vstopili v post-kartezijansko dobo, ali pa nam, nasprotno, naša enkratna zgodovinska konstelacija omogoča ravno razločiti vse konsekvence *cogita*? Prispevek se obširno ukvarja s temi vprašanji skozi problematiko, ki jo je vpeljala Catherine Malabou v delu *Les nouveaux blessés.* Malabou je ob tem predlagala kritično reformulacijo psihoanalize, pri čemer je izhajala iz zunanjih šokov, nepričakovanih brutalnih srečanj ali vdorov, ki zaradi tega travmatično vplivajo na predobstajajočo travmatsko »psihično realnost«. Osnovni očitek, ki ga ob tem nameni Freudu je, da je tedaj, ko je bil soočen s takšnimi primeri, popustil skušnjavi smisla: da ni bil pripravljen sprejeti neposredne uničujoče učinkovitosti zunanjih šokov, ki uničijo duševnost žrtve (ali jo vsaj ranijo oziroma nepopravljivo poškodujejo), ne da bi to odmevalo

v kaki notranji resnici. Ti primeri post-travmatičnih subjektov pričajo o tem, da če odvzamemo »zgodbe, ki si jih pripovedujemo o sebi«, simbolno, stran, ostane nekaj (ali bolje nič, neka oblika niča), ki ni nič drugega kot čisti subjekt nagona smrti. Ravno za to pa gre pri *cogitu* v njegovi najčistejši obliki, »ničelni točki«, kar je nenazadnje danes razlog za tako nepopustljiv odpor do prikazni *cogita*.

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Tomaž Mastnak
Spinoza: Democracy and Revelation
Key words: *Spinoza, radicalism, democracy, political philosophy*

The question of whether Spinoza's political philosophy is radical is explored in the paper by focusing on the question of how successfully Spinoza solved the troubling relation between religion and public authority in his work *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (TTP). This is a burning political issue today and was a pressing political concern in Spinoza's time as well as for Spinoza himself. After the examination of this problematic in TTP it is clear that Spinoza does not provide a coherent and compelling argument against revealed religion having a role in the founding of the state and in statecraft. A minimalist conclusion would be that Spinoza allows for a role of revealed religion in democracy. A more daring conclusion would point at the affinity between republican democracy and theocracy. In either case, with the TTP's help, we cannot avoid either theological politics or political theology.

Tomaž Mastnak
Spinoza: demokracija in razodetje
Ključne besede: *Spinoza, radikalizem, demokracija, politična filozofija*

Problema, ali je Spinozova politična filozofija radikalna, se v prispevku lotevamo z osredotočenjem na vprašanje, kako uspešno je v *Teološko-politični razpravi* (TPR) Spinoza rešil problematično razmerje med religijo in javno avtoriteto. Gre za danes pereče vprašanje, ki pa je bilo takšno tako v Spinozovem času, kot nenazadnje tudi za samega Spinozo. Po podrobnejšem pregledu tega vprašanja v TPR lahko rečemo, da Spinoza ne predstavi koherentnega in nepremagljivega argumenta proti vlogi razodete religije pri utemeljevanju države in državništva. Minimalistični sklep, ki izhaja iz tega, je, da Spinoza dopušča vlogo razodete religije v demokraciji, medtem ko bi nekoliko smelejši sklep napotil na afiniteto med republikansko demokracijo in teokracijo. V vsakem primeru pa se s TPR ne moremo izogniti niti teološki politiki niti politični teologiji.

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miran božovič

***The Philosophy of Du Marsais's* Le Philosophe**

Key words: *materialism, atheism, morals, 18th century philosophy*

The article considers the eponymous character of Du Marsais's *Le Philosophe* and examines his moral rationalism. In the eyes of Du Marsais's sage, the ways of virtue are not necessarily as painful as they might seem to those who are willing to stick to them solely in the hope of the promised post-mortem rewards, and the ways of vice are not necessarily as pleasant as they might seem to those who avoid them primarily out of fear of the threatened post-mortem punishment. The sage is not encouraged to be virtuous by the prospect of eternal pleasure, nor is he deterred from vice by the thought of eternal suffering. For him, virtuous behaviour, i.e., observing the rules of probity, is in itself a source of genuine pleasure; likewise, he finds sinful behaviour repelling in itself: since the sense of probity enters as much into the mechanical constitution of the sage as the enlightenment of the mind, any action contrary to probity is also contrary to his very nature.

miran božovič

***Filozofija Du Marsaisovega* Filozofa**

Ključne besede: *materializem, ateizem, morala, filozofija 18. stoletja*

Članek obravnava naslovni lik Du Marsaisovega teksta *Filozof* in pretresa njegov moralni racionalizem. V očeh Du Marsaisovega modreca pota kreposti niso nujno boleča, kot so morda videti v očeh tistih, ki so se jih pripravljeni držati samo zaradi obljubljene posmrtne nagrade, kakor tudi pota pregrehe niso nujno prijetna, kot se morda zdijo tistim, ki se jih ogibajo predvsem zaradi zagrožene zagrobne kazni. Filozofa h kreposti ne spodbuja misel na večni užitek in od pregrehe ne odvrača misel na večno trpljenje. Nasprotno, za filozofa je krepostno ravnanje, se pravi, spoštovanje pravil poštenosti, sámo po sebi vir pristnega zadovoljstva; enako velja tudi za grešno ravnanje, ki se mu upira sámo po sebi: ker čut za poštenost ni nič manj del modrečevega mehanskega ustroja kot razsvetljenje duha, je vsako dejanje, ki je v nasprotju s poštenostjo, obenem v nasprotju s sámo filozofovo naravo.

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Mladen Dolar

Touching Ground

Key words: *touch, the five senses, Aristotle, Merleau-Ponty, Freud, prohibition, the object a, the analytic situation*

The paper takes up the problem of tactility, the sense of touch, as a philosophical problem largely neglected by the philosophical tradition. It tries to show how touch immediately raises some basic philosophical concepts, the notion of inner/outer, subject/object, of difference, of the ways to conceive the limit,

of appearance/the thing itself, the basic problem of counting (it takes two to touch), etc. It analyses the classical text on touching by Aristotle in *De anima*, trying to show how the notion of the limit necessarily becomes complicated the moment one tries to grasp it. Then it pits the Aristotelian notion of flesh as the medium of touch against the modern conception of flesh in Merleau-Ponty, arguing that Merleau-Ponty tries to strategically circumvent the notion of the difference, the lack and the cut. Finally it considers the way that Freud, in *Totem and Taboo*, posits the prohibition on touching as the elementary social injunction instituting the social, thus posing a concept of touch with coincides with the cut in which "the object touch" emerges. From there it procedes to an account of the analytic situation which is based on the prohibition of touch (as well as severing all other senses) in combination with a directive to speech, thus establishing a framework for a reinvention of touch in a paradoxical, roundabout way.

Mladen Dolar
Dotakniti se tal/temelja
Ključne besede: *otip, pet čutov, Aristotel, Merleau-Ponty, Freud, prepoved, objekt a, analitična situacija*

Prispevek se loteva problema taktilnosti, čuta tipa, kot filozofskega problema, ki ga je filozofska tradicija večinoma zanemarjala. Poskuša pokazati, kako smo ob problemu otipa/dotikanja takoj soočeni z nekaterimi osnovnimi filozofskimi pojmi, z ločnico zunaj/znotraj, subjekt/objekt, s pomom razlike, načini dojemanja meje, videza/stvari na sebi, temeljnim problemom štetja (za dotik sta potrebna dva) itn. Analizira klasični Aristotelov tekst o otipu v *De anima*, pri čemer pokaže, kako se pojem meje, čim ga skušamo pojmovno zajeti, nujno zaplete. Nato aristotelovskemu pojmu mesa postavi nasproti sodobno pojmovanje mesa pri Merleau-Pontyju, ki se skuša strateško izogniti pojmu razlike, manka in reza. Na koncu se loteva načina, kako Freud v delu *Totem in tabu* postavlja prepoved dotika kot elementarno družbeno zapoved, ki vzpostavlja družbeno in na ta način postavlja pojem dotika tako, da ta sovpada z rezom, v katerem vznikne »objekt dotika«. Prispevek se iz tega izhodišča loteva obravnave analitične situacije, ki temelji na prepovedi dotika (kot tudi omejitve ostalih čutov) v povezavi z zapovedjo govora, in tako na paradoksen način, preko ovinka, vzpostavlja okvir za reinvencijo dotika.

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Adrian Johnston
Courage before the Event: The Force of Affects
Key words: *Badiou, event, situation, affects, courage, Žižek, Kacem*

The paper deals extensively with the question of the emergence of the radically New in Badiou from *Being and Event*, *Ethics, Handbook of Inaesthetics,* to *Logics*

of Worlds, from the perspective of affects. It exhaustively presents many of the open dilemmas regarding Badiou's theory of affects, and subsequently also discusses other critical readings of Badiou on these topics, i.e. Žižek's reading of Badiou's theory of points and Kacem's understanding of affects. It finally concludes presupposing that Badiouian states are not as solid as they often appear to be, that this same margin of incalculability, rather than spurring doubt or hopelessness, should be seen as cause for optimism.

Adrian Johnston
Pogum pred dogodkom: moč afektov
Ključne besede: *Badiou, dogodek, situacija, afekti, pogum, Žižek, Kacem*

Prispevek se obširno loteva vprašanja vznika Novega pri Badiouju z vidika afektov in predstavi to tematiko v *Biti in dogodku*, *Etiki*, *Malem priročniku o inestetiki* ter *Logiki svetov*. Podrobno predstavi tematiko in številna odprta vprašanja Badioujevega pojmovanja afektov, v nadaljevanju pa predstavi tudi Žižkovo in Kacemovo razpravo o tem problemu. Na koncu sklene, da, če upoštevamo dejstvo, da situacija v Badioujevem pomenu le ni tako stabilna, kot je videti, to ni razlog za dvom ali obup, temveč za optimizem.

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Alberto Toscano
Ad Hominem: The Antinomies of Radical Philosophy
Key words: *Marx, radicalism, revolution, Lukács, Bloch*

The decisive inquiry into the volatile link between philosophy, revolution, and the "radical" is arguably Marx's "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: An Introduction", written in 1843. We can still find all these themes introduced by Marx at work 80 years later in an emblematic and instructive confrontation between Georg Lukács and Ernst Bloch. Where Lukács presents the proletariat as the practical and epistemological "Archimedean point" capable of unhinging the capitalist totality, Bloch reveals in a subjective metahistory of a utopian kernel whose drive and directionality – despite all of the changes in instruments, organisations, and motivating ideologies – remains invariant from the Taborites to the Bolsheviks. To borrow Lukács's formulation, we are thus confronted with two potent, and alternative ways, to politically and conceptually grasp the statement that man "*both is and at the same time is not*", or, in Blochian terms, both is and is not-yet. This antinomy signified by the names and texts of Lukács and Bloch is visible in the insistence of contemporary radical thought on the enigmas of philosophical anthropology, the political repercussions of messianism, and the possibility of a rational and partisan subjectivity.

Alberto Toscano
Ad Hominem: Antinomije radikalne filozofije
Ključne besede: *Marx, radikalizem, revolucija, Lukács, Bloch*

Nedvomno se je pri hitro spreminjajoči se povezavi med filozofijo, revolucijo in »radikalnim« treba lotiti branja raziskave, ki jo predstavi Marx v delu »Kritika Heglove pravne filozofije: Uvod« iz leta 1843. Vse teme, ki jih tu predstavi Marx, najdemo dobrih osem desetletij kasneje tudi pri značilnem in poučnem soočenju med Georgom Lukácsem in Ernstom Blochom. Tam, kjer Lukács predstavlja proletariat kot praktično in epistemološko »Arhimedovo točko«, ki je zmožna sneti s tečajev kapitalistično totaliteto, Bloch razkrije subjetivno metazgodovino utopičnega jedra, katerega tok in usmerjenost – ne glede na vse spremembe in sredstva, organizacije in navdihujoče ideologije – ostaja stalnica od taboritov do boljševikov. Tako smo, rečeno z Lukácsem, soočeni z dvema plodnima in alternativnima načinoma, t. j. s tem, kako politično in konceptualno dojeti trditev, da človek »hkrati je in ni«, ali, z Blochom rečeno, da je in še-ni. Ta antinomija, ki jo zaznamujeta imeni Lukácsa in Blocha, je v sodobni radikalni misli vidna tudi v ugankah filozofske antropologije, političnih odmevih mesijanizma ter proučevanja možnosti racionalne in militantne subjektivnosti.

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Bruno Bosteels
Radical Antiphilosophy
Key words: *antiphilosophy, act, event, suture, disaster, archi-event, speculative leftism*

Taking up Alain Badiou's project of systematizing the invariant traits of antiphilosophy as based on a radical "act" capable of discrediting and outstripping the philosopher's relation to truth, the author discusses the cases of Nietzsche's archi-political act of "breaking the history of the world into two halves" and Wittgenstein's archi-aesthetic act of "showing" that which one cannot speak of but which alone matters for the sense of the world. The difference between the antiphilosophical "act" and the philosophical treatment of an "event" is best understood in terms of "suture" and "disaster", two concepts which in the process must be thoroughly revised. Finally, the author discusses the extent to which Badiou's own philosophy falls prey to, and even thrives on, an irresistible antiphilosophical element of its own.

Bruno Bosteels
Radikalna antifilozofija
Ključne besede: *antifilozofija, dejanje, dogodek, šiv, katastrofa, arhi-dogodek, spekulativno levičarstvo*

Avtor se v prispevku loteva projekta Alaina Badiouja, ki skuša sistematizi-

rati stalne poteze antifilozofije, ki da se opira na radikalno »dejanje«, ki je zmožno diskreditirati in preseči filozofovo razmerje do resnice. Pri tem se loteva Nietzschejevega arhi-političnega dejanja »preloma sveta na dvoje« in Wittgensteinovega arhi-estetskega dejanja »kazanja«, o katerem ne moremo govoriti, ki pa je edino pomembno za smisel sveta. Razliko med antifilozofskim »dejanjem« in filozofsko obravnavo »dogodka« je mogoče najbolje razumeti s pomočjo terminov »šiva« in »katastrofe«, dveh konceptov, ki pa jih je treba temeljito predrugačiti. Na koncu se avtor loteva vprašanja, v kolikšni meri lastna Badioujeva filozofija zapade in celo uspeva skupaj z nekim lastnim antifilozfskim elementom, ki se mu ni mogoče upreti.

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Petar Bojanić
God the Revolutionist. On Radical Violence against the First Ultra-leftist
Key words: *violence, revolution, messianism, divine violence*

If we attempt to find signs of messianism within the rebellion as such, if, for example *Korah*, "contrary to" but always "together with" Benjamin, is the "first left oppositionist in the history of radical politics," then the final and divine violence carried out by God would, in fact, be Benjamin's pure revolutionary violence perpetrated precisely against this first revolutionary. The circulation of the alternative title of this text ("Benjamin's 'Divine Violence' and the case of *Korah*") within the subtitle ("The Rebellion against Moses as the First Scene of Messianism [Numbers, 16]"), and conversely, is an accurate description of the "misunderstanding" in connection to the understanding of revolution in Benjamin, because the one who carries out revolutionary violence is not found where we, all this time, had expected him to be. Is it precisely this betrayed expectation that constantly brings us back to Benjamin's "Critique of Violence"? But what exactly do we expect? Do we expect a final violence of catastrophic proportions negating every future violence and time of expectation? Do we expect the subject of this positive violence – the noble [*edle*] subject of the revolution?

Petar Bojanić
Bog Revolucionar. O radikalnem nasilju nad prvim ultralevičarjem
Ključne besede: *nasilje, revolucija, mesianizem, božje nasilje*

Kolikor skušamo poiskati znake mesianizma znotraj upora kot takega in kolikor je, na primer, Korah »v nasprotju z«, toda zmeraj »skupaj z« Benjaminom »prvi levi opozicionalec v zgodovini radikalne politike«, potem bi bilo končno in božansko nasilje, ki bi ga izvršil Bog, dejansko Benjaminovo čisto revolucionarno nasilje, ki ga je zakrivil natanko nad tem prvim revolucionarjem. Dileme glede alternativnega naslova tega teksta (»Benjaminovo 'božansko nasilje' in primer Korah«), skupaj s podnaslovom (»Upor zoper

Mojzesa kot prvega prizora mesianizma«), in obratno, predstavljajo natančen opis »nesporazuma« glede razumevanja revolucije pri Benjaminu, kajti nekoga, ki zakrivi revolucionarno nasilje, ne najdemo tam, kjer ga ves čas pričakujemo. Ali nas ne natanko to izneverjeno pričakovanje vztrajno vrača k Benjaminovi »Kritiki nasilja«? Toda kaj natanko pričakujemo? Ali pričakujemo poslednje nasilje katastrofalnih razsežnosti, ki negira vsako prihodnje nasilje in čas pričakovanja? Ali pričakujemo subjekt tega pozitivnega nasilja – t. j. plemenitega (*edle*) subjekta revolucije?

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Peter Klepec

Questioning the Paradigm of Resistance

Key words: *resistance, dynamics of capitalism, advertising, philosophy, Negri, Deleuze*

The paper presents a critique of untheorized elements in what is called the paradigm of resistance, which today presents a major part of the theory and practice of the Left. The critique is limited to the concept of *will to be against* found in Hardt and Negri. Parallels are shown with the demands of capitalist dynamics and the birth of the counterculture, as well as between the concept of resistance and management theory and advertising in the 50s and 60s. The paper pleads for the abandonment of the very paradigm of resistance. In order for all acts of subversion, resistance, and rebellion to succeed today, a reinvention of the politics of the universal, a redefinition of radical politics, and a critique of political economy are needed.

Peter Klepec

Problematiziranje paradigme upora

Ključne besede: *upor, dinamika kapitalizma, marketing, filozofija, Negri, Deleuze*

Prispevek izhaja iz neteoretiziranih elementov v tistem, kar imenuje paradigma upora, ki je danes prevladujoča na Levici. Kritika se omejuje na pojem volje biti proti, ki nastopa pri Hardtu in Negriju. Pri tem prispevek opozarja na vzporednice med zahtevami kapitalistične dinamike in rojstvom kontrakulture kot tudi vzporednico med konceptom upora in teorijo menedžmenta ter marketinga v petdesetih in šestdesetih letih dvajsetega stoletja. Prispevek pledira za opustitev te paradigme in, če naj vsa dejanja subverzije, odpora in upora uspejo, postavlja zahtevo po reinvenciji politike univerzalnega, redefiniciji političnega in obuditvi kritike politične ekonomije.