

A CRITICAL READING OF ALAIN BADIOU:  
RELATIVISM IN BADIOU'S THEORY OF TRUTH

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A CRITICAL READING OF ALAIN BADIOU: RELATIVISM IN BADIOU’S THEORY OF TRUTH**

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The purpose of this thesis is to develop a critical reading of Badiou’s theory of truth. Contemporary popular trends such as postmodernism and anti-philosophy champion the principles of pluralism and contingency. They use these against Hegel’s conception of history and theory of ‘relational totality’. Badiou agrees with these trends. But he criticizes their relativist theory of truth. He wants to provide an ‘objective’ foundation for ‘truth’. The question I wish to explore in this thesis is then to analyze critically Badiou’s work to find out whether he succeeds?

To do this I am presenting Badiou’s philosophical sources in ancient and modern philosophy and his main concepts he relies on. I am analyzing in particular in depth Badiou’s understanding of ontology and phenomenology. To explain his concept of truth, I am analyzing his concepts of ‘void’, ‘plurality’, ‘infinity’. However, to make sense of his theory of truth more fully, I am looking also at his conceptions of ‘event’ and subject’, which are the main components of his theory of truth. After having analyzed his theory of truth,

I am looking at his conception of emancipatory politics, to see how his conception of truth works in his practical philosophy.

Keywords: Badiou, Truth, Plurality, the Void, Relativity

## ÖZ

### ALAIN BADIOU ÜZERİNE ELEŞTİREL BİR OKUMA: BADIOU'NUN HAKİKAT TEORİSİNDEKİ GÖRECELİLİK

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Bu tezin amacı Alan Badiou'nun hakikat kuramının eleştirel bir incelemesini yapmaktır. Postmodern ya da anti-felsefe benzeri çağdaş popüler akımlar çoğulculuk ve olumsuzluk ilkelerini savunurlar. Bu ilkeleri Hegel'in tarih kavramı ve 'ilişkisel bütünlük' teorisine karşı kullanırlar. Badiou bu akımlarla aynı görüştedir. Fakat onların göreceli hakikat teorisini eleştirir. Kendisi 'hakikat'e 'nesnel' bir temel kazandırmak ister. Bu tezin amacı Badiou'nun çalışmalarını, bu konuda başarılı olup olmadığı sorusuna yanıt bulmak için incelemektir.

Bu amaçla Badiou'nun antik ve modern dönemdeki felsefi kaynaklarını ve dayandığı temel kavramları göstereceğim. Badiou'nun ontoloji ve fenomenoloji anlayışını inceleyeceğim. Hakikat kavramını açıklamak için 'boşluk', 'çokluk', 'sonsuzluk' gibi kavramlarını açıklayacağım. Ayrıca, Badiou'nun hakikat teorisini daha anlaşılır kılmak için, hakikat teorisinin temel bileşenleri olan 'olay' ve 'özne' kavramlarına inceleyeceğim. Hakikat teorisini

inceledikten sonra, Badiou'nun hakikat kavramının pratik felsefede nasıl iş gördüğünü görmek amacıyla, kendisinin özgürleştirici politika kavramına bakacağım.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Badiou, Hakikat, Çokluk, Boşluk, Görecelilik.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Some of the main questions that are referred to when issues concerning truth are considered are usually formulated as follows: What is truth? What qualifies truth as truth? Does that what has been claimed to be true have underlying structures? If so, how can these structures be accounted for? There are many different concepts of truth and most philosophers agree on the fact that there are many competing definitions of what is supposed to be true. The dispute concerns above all the nature of the concept of truth; whether it is subjective, or objective, or absolute for example. Alain Badiou is one of the most controversial contemporary philosophers. But he is at the same time one of the contemporary crucial thinkers who tries to reply to these questions. This thesis is devoted to Badiou's approach to issues concerning the theory of truth.

Badiou was born in Morocco in 1937. He studied at the *École normale Supérieure* from 1956 to 1961 and attended courses at the Sorbonne. Together with Jacques Lacan he was member of a study group founded by Louis Althusser. Both Althusser and Lacan were very influential in Badiou's philosophical development. Badiou taught at the University of Paris VIII from 1969 until 1999. During this time he was involved in some intellectual and philosophical debates with Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard. Since 1999 he has been teaching at the *École normale Supérieure* and he is member of the *Collège International de Philosophie*. Badiou is seen not only as a philosopher. At the same time he shows broad interest in art and literature. He is also a novelist and a play writer. One of his famous plays is *Ahmed le Subtil* and his first novel *Almagestes* was already published in 1964. Accordingly art

plays a crucial role in the development of Badiou's philosophy and it is defined as one of the four truth procedures in his philosophy.

Besides his theoretical work Alain Badiou has been a political activist during his academic career. He played a crucial role in the establishment of the Unified Socialist Party in the 1950s. One of the vital aims of this party was to decolonize Algeria. Badiou was involved in political activities during the revolts of May 1968. Since 1985 he is a member of *L'Organisation of Politique* and concerned in particular with the situation of the immigrants and laborers. He wishes to demonstrate what the situation of immigrants looks like and what ontological reasons can be given in order to support their uprisings. Accordingly his political activism plays a crucial role in the development of his philosophical theory. Like art, politics is one of the four truth procedures. Besides art and politics, love and science are other two truth procedures in Badiou's philosophy.

Badiou highlights some of the major contemporary philosophical questions and political problems. His philosophical theory is developed to overcome them. Stalin and Hitler are two major political figures who had a crucial effect on the content of the philosophy in the twentieth century. Both Hitler and Stalin are defined as dictators by many contemporary thinkers. Stalin is seen as the main signal for the crisis of Marxism. It is said that the period of Stalin shows that there are some controversial points in Marxists theory and praxis. These contemporary thinkers accuse Stalin of crime against humanity and claim that Stalin has to be put on the same footing as Hitler. Alain Badiou is one of them. But in one respect he differs remarkably. He does not define the political regime of the USSR in Stalin time as a kind of dictatorship but as a kind of totalitarianism. Philosophers like Gilles Deleuze, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek also reject the idea that there is an absolute identity between the two regimes, between that of Hitler and Stalin. But they claim that there is a

similarity between Stalin and Hitler and their regimes respectively. But what is similar between the two regimes? According to Badiou, the main drive of the twentieth century is to realize the declared promises of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that the thinkers of the nineteenth century developed ideas and those of the twentieth century have been realizing these ideas. The nineteenth century has dreamed and the twentieth century has realized these dreams. The former dreamed of what a completely new and just society looks like. The aim of the twentieth century was to create such a new humanity. According to the activists of the twentieth century this new humanity would have only be created by destroying the old one. This is, according to Badiou, a kind of totalized and totalizing thinking. The crimes of Stalin and Hitler are the result of this kind of desire to create a new world in which the promises of the nineteenth century should have been realized.

Especially after the dissociation of the USSR, some new concepts appeared in the domain of political philosophy. First of all, the concept of ‘truth’ has been put into question. The question is whether the truth is something ‘absolute’ and unique. The outcome of this debate is that ‘there is no one unique truth but the plurality of truths’. This is said to be the distinctive axiom of the contemporary philosophy. It was thought that Marxism was in a crisis and that it was any more unable to explain what happens in the present world. The working class, for instance, cannot be seen as the motor power of change in the capitalist world. Some of the contemporary thinkers do not designate the immigrants as the only subject of change but as one of these subjects. The concept of ‘masses’ has been invented to refer to a possible power of a possible change. The ‘imperial’ or institutional ‘hegemony’ then has become representative of capitalist exploitation. These kinds of operational concepts seem to have been invented to replace the concepts of the eighteenth or even more the concepts of

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<sup>1</sup> A. Badiou, *The Century*, trans. A. Toscano, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 19.

nineteenth century concepts such as the concept of class for example. In general, the thinkers of the twentieth century, like Deleuze and Negri for example, tend to comprehend 'being' as plural. This kind of thinking is the common feature of postmodernism, post-marxism and de-constructivism. In general they agree that there is no 'big truth', but there are many 'truths'. Accordingly, these truths supposed to be lacking of any objective foundation. Therefore, these truths are supposed to be relative to a subject or to a certain time. This relativist viewpoint leads of course to the giving up the 'Big Narratives'. In general, there can only be some conventions to achieve a common idea in the regime of thoughts and acts.

Badiou shares the aim of these thinkers to create a novel conceptual framework for philosophy. In agreement with these philosophers he rejects to commit himself to the idea that there is one single concept of truth. But Badiou's aim is to save the category of truth from being relative and to provide a universal and singular foundation for truth and at the same time he wants to reconcile this concept of truth with the idea that 'truth' is plural. In order to understand Badiou, we have to bear in mind that he has a different understanding of plurality and objectivity. First of all he rejects any kind of relativism. However, he does not support the 'big narrative' either. According to Badiou, relativism leads to an apolitical attitude. Politics, as Badiou defines it, is one of the realms for producing truth. Badiou also rejects to subscribe to the claim that ideologies have come to an end. On the contrary, he calls for 'the objectivity of truths', while he acknowledges the plurality of truths. In order to reconcile these two ideas that truths have to be objective and plural at the same time, he wants to revive Plato's concept of 'Idea'. This stand-point leads Badiou to a philosophical approach that may be summarized as follows: Life has to be lived with an Idea. He explains the concepts of 'subject', 'object', 'body', 'event', and 'radical change' in conformity with the multiplicity of truths.

Badiou seizes war against mainstream political and philosophical approaches of the twentieth century. He rejects for example principally the idea that capitalism and representative government provide the only natural solution and historical end for humanity. He says that liberal capitalism is unjust and is not an egalitarian regime. 'Money' has become the unique criterion for value-evaluation in capitalism. Badiou sees the current 'democracy' as an illusion. The discourse on human rights is, according to Badiou, only an ideology of liberal capitalism. Under these conditions people are made to believe that "we may not live in a condition of perfect Goodness. But we are lucky that we don't live in a condition of Evil".<sup>2</sup> Badiou examines the characteristic features of the 'state'. Each kind of state is only a kind of status quo. He declares that the state is only a representing figure and that politics does not have a representational character but only presentable character. This is why all kinds of emancipatory politics should firstly be at a distance from the state. Thus, any expression or affirmation in political philosophy concerning the fairness or justness of the parliamentary or representative democracy is unavoidably wrong because of its hidden drive of saving the status quo. Also, the understanding of human rights sees humanity as having a universal value by nature in every condition. From Badiou's point of view, this is wrong because of the fact that a man or a woman can have a value or can be a part of a universal truth only by participating in a truth procedure. There cannot be a universal humanity without any connection with a truth procedure in a given situation. This approach is a result of his understanding of materialism. Badiou describes truth always as appearing only in a concrete situation.

In the light of these explanations concerning the dominating thoughts in this century and Badiou's general attitude towards these thoughts, we can begin to

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<sup>2</sup> A. Badiou, "On Evil: An Interview with Alain Badiou [with Christoph Cox and Molly Whalen]", *Cabinet Magazine*, Winter 2001-2, retrieved on 24 May 2012, <<http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/5/alainbadiou.php.rnational>>.

analyze his general philosophical views. His first aim is to attack the domination of the one realm of philosophy. To achieve this aim, he drives philosophy out of the realm of thinking of 'being' as being, or that of ontology. He states that the form of thinking of being must be changed. The most essential difficulty in philosophy, for Badiou, is the thinking of being as the one, or as the unique whole. He states at the beginning of his *Being and Event* that the impasse of ontology is that 'being' in itself is thought as singular, while the beings are multiples and they are thought in terms of multiplicity. Badiou wants to overcome this impasse by his fundamental thesis of the identity of ontology with mathematics. He argues that 'the one is not', 'being' itself is also plural such as the beings. Only mathematics, for him, is capable of comprehending 'being' as multiple in conformity with the reality of being itself. This ability is the main reason of his equation of ontology with mathematics. More explicitly, set theory, especially Cantor's, for Badiou, is suitable to comprehend being as multiplicity. Badiou uses the axioms of set theory in his ontological explanations. For Badiou, both a set and its elements in the set theory are only functions. He concludes that there cannot be a single universal set such as Nature or God, which includes everything, since such a Universal Set at least cannot include itself.

Badiou's attitude is shaped by the contemporary discussion concerning the structure and the subject relationship: Badiou wishes to reconcile Althusser's structuralism with Sartre's subjectivism by his new understanding of structuralism and the subject. But he is at same time critical of both Althusser and Sartre. Badiou not only saves the 'structure' from being unintelligible but also sustains the category of the subject in his theory. In other words, he is concerned with the problem of structural formalism, while he examines the issues concerning the question who may be dealt with as 'subject' within the conditions of this structural formalization. This connection between the category of subject in Sartre's practical theory of freedom and Althusserian

structuralism, Badiou claims, becomes possible in his understanding of Maoism. Badiou sees Maoism as an alternative to Stalinism. In contrast to Stalinism, Maoism pays particular attention to the problems concerning the subjectivity in politics. Especially, Mao's phrase "every world is capable of producing its own truth within itself"<sup>3</sup> can show us why Badiou sees Mao as the most essential figure for his philosophy. This link to Maoism allows Badiou as he seems to believe to bring together a kind of radical subjectivism with formalism based on mathematics.

To sum up, Badiou says that not only beings are multiple but also 'being' itself. Only mathematics, more especially the set theory can comprise its multiplicity. He suggests that 'mathematics is ontology'. Ontology, for Badiou, is not one of the sub-disciplines of philosophy. The realm of being is not an issue for philosophy. Another crucial reason for this equation of mathematics and ontology is the axiomatic character of mathematics. The natural character of being cannot be understood by any kind of descriptive and conceptual explanation. This is why any attempt to determine or describe 'being' does not succeed in comprehending what it is. Badiou states that being as being does not have any features that can be described. Because of this not-being-descriptive and not-being-decidable character, an ontologist can begin only with a decision concerning what being is. This decision is not objective, nor does it have a firm foundation. Its main characteristic is to be axiomatic like the theorems of mathematics. This is why Badiou sees mathematics as ontology. In fact, this identification of mathematics with ontology is his decision about what being as being might mean. Hence, he uses mathematical terms, theorems and axioms in his explanation concerning what being-qua-being is.

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<sup>3</sup> A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, trans. A. Toscano, Continuum, London and New York, 1998, p. 8.

At the beginning of his *Being and Event*, he states that ‘one’ does not exist, or ‘being’ is not one. ‘Count-as-one’ is nothing other than an operation. Namely, one is not a number but only a result of a counting operation. Everything is a multiplicity, which does not have a quantitative character but a qualitative one. Ontology is concerned only with the inconsistent multiplicities which are not counted-as-one. Truth is also plural. In other words, there is no one truth but many truths. The ontological foundation of a truth is the void set, which every set includes as an undecidable element. Truth is the name of a comprehension and naming of this undecidable or unmeasured element. Truth is not an instant but a process. A novelty appears as a consequence of this process. ‘Event’ can be seen as the name of a truth-process or only as the undecidable beginning of this process. A subject is not a physical organism and appears only through a truth-process. A truth constitutes a subject, while a subject constitutes this truth. There is a reciprocal relation between them.

Badiou says that there are four discourses, in which a truth can come into existence and one can become a subject: art, science, politics and love. Philosophy, for him, is not a domain in which truth appears. These four discourses and truths which occur are the conditions of philosophy. Philosophy does not produce truth. The work of philosophy is to elucidate what happens in a truth-process. Philosophy is concerned with the current truths at its time. It gives a conceptual framework for contemporary truths that have to be compossible. Thereby it loses its sovereign power over other disciplines. Also, philosophy must be located at a distance from the realm of truth procedures such as arts, politics, science and love. The crimes of political agents in the twentieth century can be seen, for Badiou, as the result of a kind of reductionism of philosophy to politics.

In *Being and Event*, Badiou states that ‘event’ is not ‘being’ as being and that it cannot be explained by ‘ontology’. Some critics argue that for Badiou there are

two distinct realms (being and event) and that there is no relation between them. They stress the idea that Badiou's theory in *Being and Event* is unable to explain the phenomenal relations in the world we live in. Badiou admits that these criticisms are right. Then, in *Logics and Worlds*, the concept of relation becomes one of the most crucial categories in Badiou's theory. Badiou illustrates the relation between 'being as being' of ontology and 'appearances' of phenomenology in a concrete world or in a concrete situation. First of all, for Badiou there is not one world there are many worlds. A world is a space of phenomena. The appearances in a world are organized by the logic of this world. This is to say that a world has an intelligible structure or a logical organization. This logical organization of the appearances in a world is called the "transcendental" of the world by Badiou. Badiou insists that differences appear only in a phenomenal world. The transcendental is a scale of the degree of identities and differences only in the world. The transcendental is not outside the world, which it pertains to. It signifies only the inner logical structure or the intelligibility of the world to which it belongs. There are also as many transcendental as there are worlds. Every world has its own transcendental. Objects appear in a world as if they were indexed to a certain degree of identity or difference by the transcendental of this world. A subject does not play a role in the appearing process of an object. It must be said that, yes, there is a 'relation' in a world, but this relation is not a direct relation between an appearing and another appearing. The relation is a direct relation between an appearing and the transcendental. There is a relation between two appearances only by the mediation of the transcendental. The degree of identity or difference of an appearing can be compared with that of another one. By this understanding of appearance, Badiou wants to connect two distinct realms with each other: being and appearances. According to Badiou an inconsistent multiple in being becomes an object or a consistent multiple in a world by being indexed by the transcendental of the world.

Badiou points out that his method is 'objective phenomenology'. The aim of his phenomenology is to sustain the objectivity of truths via its understanding of body, object, subject, truth and point. Not only truth but also subject itself, Badiou maintains, are infinite not for the sake of their not having a beginning and an end or their being transcendental; they are infinite thanks to their being a consequence of a creative and aleatory action. This kind of creation, for Badiou, does not lose its objectivity in spite of its not being necessary. For, Badiou's body is that which makes intelligible the creation of an eternal truth in a particular world. It supports the appearing of a subject. The object is that which is 'counted-as-one' in the appearance. That is, it is that which ties the ontological and logical realms. A world localizes its elements according to its law or to its transcendental. A given object is the transcendental indexing of a multiple. An object is composed of its atoms. It counts its atoms as one. It is described as the real composition of a multiple being. An event can alter this kind of combination or the localization of an object by the transcendental which pertains to the world of this object. For, it modifies the law of localization or the transcendental of the world by which this object is localized. That is to suggest that an event changes the logic of localization of a world by modifying the law of transcendental indexing. Badiou explains this modification by exploring his concept of point. Every object according to him has a separate element which is not localized or indexed by the transcendental. This not-being-indexed element is the inexistent element of the object. The category of point begins to appear in his theory at this point. A point is a function. It functions in the level of decision concerning the inexistent element of a world. It is the logical foundation for a decision about this inexistent element to be or not to be. Namely, an inexistent element from Badiou's point of view is that which may appear in another world as a result of the changing of the old world and the transcendental of this changing world.

An object in a world always appears with other objects. There are relations among these objects. One of these objects can become a site which is the topological place of the inexistent element of the world thanks to its having a distinctive element. This inexistent element sometimes harms all the structure, which is composed of all the elements and their relation, without destroying it completely. Then this harm has some consequences, which Badiou calls its 'trace'. If this effect has sufficient power to create a radical change in the structure, a body appears as the ground for the 'subjectivization' of an individual. For, it has a point which is an undecidable one. It designates two elements: yes or no. In fact, it can be said that a point renders (or reduces) the universal character of the undecidability of an inexistent element to 'the two'. This two is designated by the phrase 'either, or'. Then, an individual can only become a subject by his/her decision upon this point. Badiou states in his *Logics of Worlds*, differently from his thought in his previous works, that there is not only the subject of a truth but also two other types of subject. An individual can become a subject not only by being faithful to these consequences of an event, but also by denying the emergency of an event or by the occultation of its consequences. However, only a faithful subject, who is faithful to both the occurrence of an event and the consequences of this event, can be a finite point of an eternal truth. I will elucidate this formalization in the following sections of my thesis.

As already mentioned, Badiou insists that a radical change in the structure cannot be explained via the deterministic understanding of change. An event inaugurates this type of a radical change by chance. It is 'chance' or 'wager' that which brings forth the emergence of an event. Only an event occurring by chance can lead to launch the creative procedure of a novelty. This rarity is similar to the swerve of an atom in Lucretius's materialism. Both of them leave no room for causality. The objectivity of this creative action or truth does not come from its necessity but from its ontological condition, which is based on,

for Badiou, the unmeasured void. In Badiou's conception of ontology there is necessarily at least one undecidable or unmeasured void in every situation. An individual becomes a subject of a truth only by deciding what it is, naming it and being faithful to this process. Badiou thinks that this structural 'void point' prevents his theory from lapsing into relativism.

It must be added that a world, as Badiou sees it, has a structure constituting the encyclopedia of knowledge in that world. In other words the structure of a world or all the objects in that world including their relations can be known. Badiou points out that in every situation there is an encyclopedia of knowledge, which is available to everyone. This encyclopedia is the same for each person. It must decipher the structure of a world in an objective way of thinking. However, the access to this encyclopedia can differ. Also, although there must be an encyclopedia of knowledge in every situation, this encyclopedia does not designate the unchangeable and absolute nature of this situation. It can be an ideological apparatus peculiar to this situation, in accordance with Althusser's view of this subject. However, one has to bear in mind that this effort to know the nature of a situation has to be situated outside the realm of truth.

Besides this knowable structure, some worlds have many 'points' which are undecidable. Badiou calls this kind of world a 'tensed world'. These points make an event possible, since they signal the undecidable void in a world and the topological place for the occurrence of event. It can be said that the points signal the excessive points in the order of knowledge. A subject transforms or changes an undecidable point into a known one by his/her decision concerning these points. Then, there appears a trace in the world, which is a kind of consequence of this decision. However, this does not meet the requirement for becoming a subject for an individual. Becoming a subject requires subject's fidelity to these consequences. By acting so, an individual becomes a subject

and there appears an infinite truth in a particular point by a finite mediation of a subject. This truth leads to a change in the encyclopedia of the world. That is, there appears a transformation in the structure of the world. By this transformation, a point is converted into a principle of fidelity. This is the realm of the 'true life' of a subject.

In Badiou's view, to live means to live with a truth. This is where Badiou brings into play Plato's concept of idea. Badiou's truths are similar to Plato's ideas. In Plato, to think truly means to think nothing other than ideas. 'Decision' or 'choice' is in fact in the order of thought like in Plato's true thinking. However, Badiou emphasizes the importance of action or broadly speaking practice. Badiou's subject becomes a subject who is alien to the question of consciousness. It escapes from the discussion of the duality of the empirical and the transcendental. It becomes independent from any kind of historical condition. Neither subject nor truth has any historical condition. They have only some conditions, which are not economic, social or linguistic. Badiou rejects the idea that there is a causal relation between two events, or two distinct truth procedures. An event is not explained or validated by means of a previous one. The accumulation of the consequences of a previous event does not lead to a later event. Every truth has its material and objective condition in the structure, which it pertains to. A truth occurs or can be produced only in four realms: science, politics, love and arts. Badiou says that economy is not such a realm. By his rejection of the idea that the economic explanation is appropriate to elucidate an event in the political level, Badiou separates politics from the economic determination.

In the second chapter entitled "A General Presentation of Badiou's Philosophy", I will introduce those thinkers who influenced Badiou most when he developed his philosophy. Badiou develops his philosophical arguments concerning truth in accordance with his critiques of especially the Marxist

understanding of revolution, humanist approach and the analytic thinkers. I will elucidate this in the same section as Badiou's main critiques of contemporary philosophy.

In *Logics of Worlds* Badiou declares that he is a defender of materialist dialectic. Badiou always defends the doctrine of materialism and uses the concept of dialectic in each moment of the development of his theory. Badiou is a philosopher who always revised his theoretical sources. I think that it is essential to elucidate changes in his theoretical development in order to understand properly his controversial theory. Therefore in the third chapter of my thesis, firstly, I will try to summarize Badiou's philosophy from his earlier period to his last work. I will illustrate the development of his theory of truth. Then I will analyze Badiou's thought concerning the disciplines of ontology and phenomenology. In the section on ontology, my aim is to determine the place of category of 'event' in Badiou's ontological views. His putting the event out of the realm of ontology is crucial, since event, for Badiou, is the first point in a truth procedure. Secondly, in the section on phenomenology, I will analyze Badiou's materialism. I will try to clarify the meaning of Badiou's materialism with respect to objectivity of a truth. I will discuss his distinction between the democratic materialism and the materialist dialectic. My main thesis in this regard is that, like in the defenders of democratic materialism whom Badiou criticizes, in Badiou's philosophy there are only bodies and languages. I will claim that Badiou does not leave room to accommodate truth and subject. I will try to show that Badiou is one of the defenders of democratic materialism, which he in fact criticizes.

After this general introduction to Badiou's philosophy, I will analyze, in the fourth chapter of this thesis, Badiou's understanding of truth and subject, and their correlative status. Firstly, I will present Badiou's theory of truth. Secondly, I will analyze Badiou's arguments concerning the concept of subject.

After the clarification of the concepts of truth and subject, I will analyze Badiou's emancipatory politics in accordance with his understanding of truth and subject.

Finally, in the last chapter, I would like to examine whether Badiou's philosophy lapses into relativism. It can be argued that there is no place for relativism in Badiou's philosophy. However, I am going to claim that Badiou can be seen as a relativist. I will refer to the reasons for this conclusion throughout the thesis. I think that there is no place for truth in Badiou's philosophy. This is the main argument of my thesis, which is expounded in the last chapter. I will explain why there is no place for subject and truth in Badiou's theory. Accordingly, I will try to demonstrate why Badiou can be seen as a relativist as a consequence of his conceptions of subject and truth. I will at the same time present some similar features between Badiou and some analytic philosophers such as Austin. I will discuss whether the approval of the multiplicity of truth is possible without a falling into relativism. I explore two further questions which are closely related to the assertion of relativism. The first concerns Badiou's idea that there is only actuality. Badiou rejects the distinction between the actual and the potential. However the distinction between the impossible and the actual appears to have a similar function to that between the possible and the actual in his theory. Accordingly, my first point is that Badiou does not succeed in rejecting the potential. The second question concerns Badiou's new view of substance. Badiou does not discuss substance. However his ontological acknowledgments seem to oscillate between the approval of one substance and the support of multiple substances. I will consider this oscillation as one between the Spinozistic and Leibnizian understandings of substance.

## CHAPTER II

### A GENERAL PRESENTATION OF BADIOU'S PHILOSOPHY

Badiou introduces a wholly new understanding of truth. There are not only many truths as declared by postmodernist philosophers, but also truth is not relative to different time, space and culture, which contradicts the postmodern view of plurality. I claim that this is the first event of Badiou. The second is that he introduces a new understanding of philosophy.

Badiou invokes a kind of "Platonism of multiple as a program for philosophy today".<sup>4</sup> The idea that there is a multiplicity of truth should be defended. There must be a war of philosophy against the modern sophistry, which rejects the existence of truth, Badiou suggests. There must be a new entanglement of philosophy with mathematics like in Plato's philosophy. Mathematics, for Badiou, enables to think a multiple truth as infinite. That is, by defending a multiplicity of truth, it must be provided an objective basis for this multiplicity in order not to lapse into relativism. Only the mathematical concept of infinite, according to Badiou, can provide such an objective basis.

The finite, Badiou argues, renders only an abstraction deduced from the infinite in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel "localizes the infinite in the temporalization of the concept as a historical envelopment of finitude".<sup>5</sup> However, Badiou wants to get rid of this kind of historical and dialectical relation between the infinite

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<sup>4</sup> A. Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, trans. R. Brassier & A. Toscano, Continuum, London and New York, 2004, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

and the finite by the help of mathematical category of infinite. More specifically, Badiou claims that philosophy should be freed from its transcendental roots. After Nietzsche's assertion that God is death, the transcendental root of philosophy according to Badiou has become devastated but is not wholly destroyed. Once philosophy is freed from its transcendental root, humans would start functioning as a transcendental base for philosophy in spite of being finite. In short, God is dead but human-god appears in the realm of philosophy. The only way to overcome this difficulty, for Badiou, is to approach the concept of infinity with mathematical concepts in philosophy. The concept of mathematical infinite overcomes the metaphysical concept of infinite (in accordance with the aim of the disappearance of God) without any reduction of it to the finitude. Badiou asserts:

In order for thought to carry out the decisive rupture with Romanticism (and the question is also political, because there have been historicist, and hence Romantic, elements in revolutionary politics), we cannot do without the recourse – which will perhaps one again be blind, possibly stamped with a certain constraint or violence – to the injunctions of mathematics. We philosophers, whose duty consists in thinking this time of ours beyond that has led to its devastation, must subject ourselves to the condition of mathematics.<sup>6</sup>

That is, philosophers must think his/her time with mathematical concepts. What does this connection between philosophy and mathematics mean? What kind of systematization has Badiou achieved by thinking in this way? Has he overcome the difficulties which he hoped to do by this close link between philosophy and mathematics? These questions will be elucidated throughout my thesis.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

Besides his use of the mathematical concept of infinity, Badiou also redefines what philosophy is. According to Badiou a philosopher must consider the current occurrences of his/her time. Philosophy must think of the truth procedures in its time. There are four domains in which a truth procedure occurs: science, art, love and politics. That is, a truth procedure occurs outside the realm of philosophy. Badiou asserts that “the imperative of philosophy is to seize the events of truths, their newness, and their precarious trajectory”.<sup>7</sup> Badiou adds that truth occurs outside and independently of philosophy. Philosophy does no longer have its classical position of sovereignty over other discourses. Philosophy is conditioned by its daily truth procedures. Badiou summarizes his thought concerning the role of philosophy as follows:

The specific role of philosophy is to propose a unified conceptual space in which naming *takes place* of events that serve as the point of departure for truth procedures. Philosophy seeks to *gather together all the additional-names*. It deals within thought with the compossible nature of the procedures that condition it. It does not establish any truth but it sets a locus of truths. It configures the generic procedures, through a welcoming, a sheltering, built up with reference to their disparate simultaneity. Philosophy sets out to think its time by putting the state of procedures conditioning it into a common place. Its operations, whatever they may be, always aim to think ‘together’, to configure within a unique exercise of thought the epochal disposition of the Matheme, poem, political invention and love (or the event status of the Two). In this sense, philosophy’s sole question is indeed that of the truth. Not that it produces any, but because it offers a mode of access to the unity of a moment of truths, a conceptual site in which the generic procedures are thought of as compossible.<sup>8</sup>

This suggests that the task of philosophy is not to establish truth. Philosophy can only indicate a rational and formal place for the spontaneous truth

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<sup>7</sup> A. Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, trans. O. Feltham & J. Clemens, Continuum, London and New York, 1998, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. N. Madarasz, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1999, p. 37.

procedures, which occurs in different conditions (such as in science, in love, in politics and in art). This place or site is only conceptual. More specifically, philosophy searches to find a common feature in the series of truth in its time. It can find only, for instance, the fact that the human capacity of thought is that which is the common thing to every political truth procedure.<sup>9</sup>

In order to understand what truth is according to Badiou and who the subject of this truth in his philosophy is, we have to refer back to his sources upon which he draws when he develops his philosophy. Further we have to bear in mind what Badiou's main motivation in his system of thinking is. In this chapter, firstly, I am going to refer to some thinkers who influenced Badiou's philosophy. Then I shall present some of Badiou's critiques of the philosophical attitudes of contemporary thinkers. Finally, I would like to clarify some of Badiou's concepts that seem to introduce a new meaning in philosophical discourse.

## **2.1. Philosophical Background**

Badiou develops his philosophical theory in relation to many thinkers. Plato is the most evident figure of them. Not only Sartre's existential subject but also Althusser's structuralism has impact on the way how Badiou's defines the aim of his philosophy. Lacan unarguably is another prominent thinker. Badiou draws heavily on some new mathematical inventions when he develops his philosophy. Let us analyze these influential thinkers on Badiou's philosophy respectively.

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<sup>9</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, p. 70.

### 2.1.1. Two Philosophers: Plato and Althusser

Badiou declares that he is a Platonist. There are many reasons for this declaration. In addition to his subscription to Platonic concept of Idea, there are two other reasons, which are also fundamental for Badiou's Platonism. Firstly, Plato does not see philosophy as a total system of knowledge, says Badiou. Philosophy has to be in a permanent dialogue with other disciplines. The *Symposium* is a dialogue with the truth of love, the *Republic* with politics. These works are proofs according to Badiou for the necessary relation of philosophy with other realms. These realms are the conditions of philosophy. Badiou points out that from Plato's point of view philosophy cannot add anything to the category of truth or idea. In other words, philosophy, as Plato seems to think, can only examine what can be called 'truth' or 'idea' in different domains such as love and politics for example. It cannot create its own truth from within, that is, without any relation to the realms of truth-procedure.

However, it needs further analysis and explanation of reasons why Badiou declares himself as a Platonist. Plato's concept of idea, in fact, is a controversial one. What does Plato mean by Idea? Is it over and above the material things in the world? Or, is it a transcendental thing? Are material things parts of the idea or are they copies of idea? This debate is present in Badiou's readings of Plato. Badiou uses Plato's concept of idea firstly to explain his understanding of truth, which is the true movement of thought. Badiou calls Platonic "idea what is thinkable, what there is in thought".<sup>10</sup> Plato's main question, for Badiou, is not concerning what is thought but about what is the action of thought. Badiou emphasizes that the first question gives a priority to transcendence, while the second does not. Badiou does not see

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<sup>10</sup> A. Badiou, "Politics and Philosophy: An Interview with Alain Badiou" [with Peter Hallward], *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1998, p. 123.

Plato's ideas as transcendental. Also, he does not see Plato's philosophy as a pure idealism. In the eyes of Badiou, Plato is a defender of the materialist dialectic, which can make space for truth. The principle of Badiou's materialist dialectic is expressed as follows: there are only bodies and languages except that there are also truths. Badiou also equates his concept of truth with Plato's concept of idea. Thank to this equation, Badiou sees Plato as a defender of this materialist dialectics. Badiou explains this idea as follows:

This pure didactics aims to show that positions of exception exist, even if it is impossible to deduce from them their necessity or to empirically existence their difference from opinions. This didactics, as we know, is the crux of Plato's first dialogues, and subsequently of the whole of non-critical philosophy. Starting from any situation whatever, one indicates, under the progressively clear name of Idea, that there is indeed something other than bodies and languages. For the Idea is not a body in the sense of an immediate given (this is what must be gleaned from the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible), nor is it a language or a name (as declared in the *Cratylus*: 'We philosophers, we start from things, not words').<sup>11</sup>

In the passage just quoted, Badiou states that Plato saw the existence of truths as a position beyond bodies and languages. The Idea in Plato's philosophy is replaced by the term truth in Badiou's philosophy. That is to say that Badiou sees Platonic idea not as transcendental but as exceptional point. Badiou especially emphasizes this exceptional character of truth. He constitutes his materialist dialectical explanation of truth by taking advantage of these features of Platonic idea.

Badiou uses Plato's concept of idea not only to explain his concept of truth but also to correct (or to revise) his understanding of existence. Badiou states that there is in no way a distinction between the potential and the actual, or the

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<sup>11</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 9.

virtuality and the actuality for a philosophy based upon Platonism. He says that:

In clear affiliation with the Platonic spirit, virtuality is everywhere conceived as actuality. There is but one type of Being, the Idea (or, here, the set). Therefore, there do not exist actualizations. For any kind of actualization assumes that several regimens of existence be granted (or, at least two, potency and the act).<sup>12</sup>

That is, following Plato, Badiou also argues that there are no types of existence. There cannot be an actualization of potential being. It should be said that there is only one type of being, the set or the multiple. Badiou adds that there can only be a localization of this kind of set whatever it occurs.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to this rejection of the distinction between actual and potential, Plato, according to Badiou's reading, rejects the idea that there is a distinction between the knowing subject and the known object.<sup>14</sup> Badiou argues that Plato solves the problem of distinguishing the knowing subject from the known object by his concept of innate idea. A mathematical object, Badiou maintains for instance, does not have any distinct and independent existence. That is, the ideas do not exist outside the world, or the subjects themselves. A mathematical idea is already in a being. Only if it is activated in thought or in a subject, then it becomes thinkable. This is why Plato is not concerned with the question of "what is thought" but with the question of "what is thinkable". In our view, this is one of the most remarkable points to conceive why Badiou declares that he is a Platonist. Plato really argues that knowledge of mathematical ideas is innate. In *Meno*, he explicitly claims that the ideas of all

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<sup>12</sup> A. Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, trans. N. Madarasz, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2006, p. 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

the mathematical concepts already exist in the mind of a slave but as latent ideas.<sup>15</sup> These innate ideas in Plato's philosophy, for Badiou, designate two ideas: the first is that the 'idea' is not that which is transcendental and the second is that there is no distinction between the knowing subject and the known object.

Accordingly, Plato, in Badiou's reading, sees "mathematics as a thought".<sup>16</sup> This is another reason for Badiou's Platonism. The definition of mathematics as a thought emphasizes its independency from any sensible object or linguistic determination. The ideas are neither subjective nor objective. They exist in the beings. The marriage of idea and being are 'coextensive'. The ideas, for Plato, are indiscernible. It may be said that the ideas are only the forms of existent beings. Only the philosopher can invent these indiscernible ideas through the way of dialectics.<sup>17</sup> Badiou says:

That mathematics is a thought means in particular that, with respect to it, the distinction of a knowing Subject and a known object has no pertinence. There is a regulated movement of thought, coextensive to the being it embodies – which Plato named "Idea". It is a moment wherein discovery and invention are strictly indiscernible, in the way the idea and ideatum are indiscernible.<sup>18</sup>

Plato, for Badiou, examines the ideas by his way of thinking, the dialectics. The dialectics is a kind of creative conversation to make clear an idea. The dialectics and mathematics are different kind of thought. Badiou points out that

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<sup>15</sup> Plato, *Meno*, in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (ed.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002, pp. 353-385.

<sup>16</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence*, p. 91.

<sup>17</sup> Plato, *Republic*, in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (ed.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002, pp. 746-747, 511a-e.

<sup>18</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence*, p. 94.

philosophy, or dialectics, as a thought process is conditioned by mathematics in Plato. In fact, in Plato, everything made thinkable by a thought is an idea. Badiou states that the subtraction of mathematical idea from sensible object, or from being objective, is a crucial foundational assertion in Plato's philosophy. Because of his agreement with such a subtraction in Plato, Badiou turns towards directly to the formalization of mathematics. More clearly, Badiou states that Plato's philosophy is a suture between mathematics and philosophy. Plato sees, for Badiou, mathematics as a condition of philosophy. Further, the ideas, which signal the foundational character for being, are not transcendental or objective existent but only mathematical. This is the point in Plato's philosophy, which motivates Badiou to equate mathematics and ontology. The idea of 'mathematics as a thought', for Badiou, is the most essential point for the support of Platonism. Badiou defines Platonism as follows:

Finally, one thing alone is sure: Mathematics is a thought (which, in Plato's parlance, means that it breaks with the sensible immediate). Dialectics is also a thought. And when considered in the protocol of their actual practice, these two thoughts are different thoughts. From this idea, we can attempt to draft a definition of the Platonic inscription of the mathematical condition of "philosophizing":  
*Platonism is the recognition of mathematics as a thought that is intransitive to sensible and linguistic experience, and dependent on a decision that makes space for the undecidable, while assuming that everything consistent exists.*<sup>19</sup>

As can be seen from this passage, the phrase 'as a thought', in Badiou's philosophy, emphasizes the importance of the concept of 'undecidable'. The undecidable, for Badiou, was also an essential concept in Plato's philosophy. Badiou suggests that the place of mathematics in Plato's philosophy can be truly understood by the term undecidable. Thought should decide on what the idea is. It makes an axiom concerning this undecidable idea. The outer

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

existence is a secondary problem, in Plato's philosophy, while the problem of idea is the most crucial one. More clearly, Platonic idea is that which must be made thinkable by the medium of dialectical conversation. As already pointed out above, Plato's idea is that what is truth in Badiou's philosophy. It is not a passage from nothing to being. It is obviously inspired by Plato's innate ideas. It is the name of a passage from the state of unknown to that of known.

Althusser is another influential figure in Badiou's philosophy, in particular in his early period. Althusser is also one of the most crucial thinkers in the domain of Marxists theory of subject. Badiou, in order to theorize a new revolutionary politics, criticizes the previous revolutionary theories. One of these theories is that of Althusser. In fact, Althusser is one of the philosophers who deeply influenced not only Badiou's understanding of revolutionary politics but also his theory of subject. First of all, Althusser rejects the idea of humanism and approves a different understanding of subject. Badiou develops his theory by criticizing Althusser's theory.<sup>20</sup>

Althusser states that there is no subject but a kind of subjectivity. He explains the category of subject as follows:

I say: the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that *the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects*. In the interaction of this double constitution exists the functioning of all ideology, ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> A. Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. J. Barker, Verso, London and New York, 2005, pp. 58-67.

<sup>21</sup> L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. B. Brewster, New Left Books, London, 1977, p. 160.

There are only processes and these processes are scientific. This is why only a process can be scientifically and accordingly truly apprehended. Contrary to these processes, the subject is ideological. This means that it is constituted by the ideology of its State. Althusser comprehends the possibility of politics therefore under the condition of the existence of processes without a subject. That is, Althusser tries to distinguish the politics from the science of processes, or the historical materialism. By doing so, he also aims not to reduce politics to ideology and to science.

The most important feature of Althusser's theory is the rejection of both 'humanism' and 'economism'.<sup>22</sup> Both of them are also the main aims of Badiou's theory. Ideology, for Althusser, is a statist concept and the subject is one of the ideological state apparatuses. The subject is determined by the state. By the rejection of humanism and economism, Althusser in fact opposes the idea of human self-creation based on the theory of a linear history. There cannot be a political subject but only a 'partisanship', a position or 'militant activity', since human cannot make itself a subject. And subject is not the creator of the history. Only these militants of revolutionary class struggles can truly grasp the processes in existing relations. This understanding of subject as a militant activity can be similarly seen in Badiou's theory of subject.

Althusser's definition of philosophy is similar to Badiou's definition. According to Badiou's interpretation for Althusser philosophy is not that which theorizes the politics. For him, "philosophy authorizes a non-historical perception of political events".<sup>23</sup> That is, philosophy is only a thought of the occurrences of events. It is not only "the theory of theoretical practice" but also

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<sup>22</sup> A. Honneth, "History and Interaction: On the Structuralist Interpretation of Historical Materialism", in G. Elliott (ed.), *Althusser: A Critical Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford & Cambridge, 1994, pp. 74-78.

<sup>23</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 62.

“the representation of the revolutionary class struggle”.<sup>24</sup> Badiou similarly sees philosophy as a thinking activity but not only over the political struggle but also other events in the realm of art, love and science.

To sum up, in Althusser’s philosophy, economy is placed in the domain of science, since it is well ordered stability. And, the subject and the state are only statist places. This is why they are placed in the realm of ideology. Then, the political place is that of ‘evental overdeterminations’, revolutions and novelties. There is only a subjective order without subject. This subjectivity is the place of choice, militancy or partisanship. More importantly, Althusser rejects “the humanist vision of the bond, or the being-together”.<sup>25</sup> Badiou is influenced by the theory of Althusser in many respects: the refusal of the historical materialism and his understanding of militant subject etc. Badiou agrees with Althusser in refusing the economical reductionism in any political theory. But despite this agreement in political theory, in some respect Badiou differs from Althusser. First of all, Badiou rejects the idea of Althusser that there is no subject because of its ideological institution by the ideology of the state. Badiou criticizes Althusser’s subscription to the idea of subjectivity without any subject. While Badiou admits the importance of the subjective order in Althusser’s theory, he points out that there must be a subject.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

### 2.1.2. The Lacanian Psychoanalysis

Jacques Lacan is one of the most controversial and challenging thinkers in the twentieth century. He is called the Lenin of the Freudian psychoanalysis. Badiou is highly interested in Lacan's psychoanalysis. There are two essential ideas in Lacan's theory, which are essential for Badiou's philosophy: Lacan's distinction between knowledge and truth, and Lacan's conception of 'real'.

Lacan is a thinker who criticizes the subject of the modern understanding of science by following Freud. After the Newtonian revolution and its effects on the understanding of subject in the eighteenth century, the category of subject begins to be seen only as rational being. Accordingly, the philosophers of the Enlightenment state in general that, 'truth' is an exact explanation of that which we can achieve by 'thought'. Consequently, thinking is seen as the unique criteria to conceive the unique truth. Freud can be seen as important one of the first radical thinkers who criticize this ability of total explanation of truth by thought. Lacan explains this diversion in the tradition as follows:

In a word, the work of the philosophers gave us to suppose that thought is a self-transparent act, that a thought that knows it is thinking is the ultimate criterion, the essence of thought. Everything we thought we should purify ourselves of, rid ourselves of, in order to isolate the process of thought, namely our passions, our desires, our anxieties, and even our colics, our fears, our follies, all that seemed simply to bear witness to intrusion within us of what someone like Descartes calls the body because, at the cutting edge of this purification of thought, we find that there is no point at which we can grasp that thought is divisible. It all stems from the way the passions interfere with the workings of our own organs. That is the point we reach at the end of philosophical tradition.

Freud says quite the opposite. . . . Thought has always been embodied, and we are still aware of that in what seem to be eminently redundant, scrappy and unassimilable, at the level certain failings that, apparently, seem to owe nothing to anything but the deficit function. It thinks, in

other words, at a level of where it does not grasp itself as thought at all.<sup>26</sup>

The importance of Freud is his discovery of the unconsciousness. Lacan, by being faithful to Freud's discovery, inaugurates to constitute his own theory of psychoanalysis. Lacan's theory can be summarized briefly as follows: the spiritual life has three conceptual orders.<sup>27</sup> Firstly, 'the imaginary' is only the place of image – image not of a thing but of its small pieces. The whole of these images constitutes a spiritual totality or 'ego'. Secondly, 'the symbolic' is a kernel of signifiers, which are in a harmony with each other. It has a dual structure, or it is the ordered relation between one signifier and others. This symbolic is in motion. This motion does not have any rule or law. Whenever a signifier spontaneously comes to the edge of this kernel, then a sudden effect appears. This effect is called subject. Finally, the real is not image or signifier. It is unknown and unnameable thing, which cannot be symbolized or signified. It can be said that the symbolic is not only the place of language but also operates as 'unconscious'. It is a structure. However, it is not immobile but in a motion without any rule. Lacan calls the principle of this irregular movement 'jouissance'. This term is similar to Freud's 'libido'<sup>28</sup>. *Jouissance* signifies the void of the real. It is associated with the dimension of the real, though they are not similar. Thus it can be said that the unconscious is moved by the effect of

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<sup>26</sup> J. Lacan, *My Teaching*, trans. D. Macey, Verso, London and New York, 2008, pp. 102-103.

<sup>27</sup> See: J.D. Nasio, "Jacques Lacan Kuramının Genel Kavramları", trans. A. Karakış, *Monokl*, no. 6-7, 2009, pp. 48-53.

<sup>28</sup> Freud sees the concept of *libido* as an energy "which must be supposed to underlie mental processes in general." (S. Freud, *On Sexuality*, trans. A. Richards, Penguin Books, New York, 1977, p.138.) Freud's concept of *libido* signifies the unbalanced thing in the human nature. Each satisfaction of a need always creates a possibility of an extra satisfaction, which swerves from the object and the aim of the given need, thereby constitutes a non-functional swerve. This swerve and its space is the source of the ground not only for all kinds of culture but also all kinds of perversions. That is, Freud's concept of *libido* signifies the creative unsteadiness of human nature in Freud's psychoanalysis. (See also, A. Zupančič, "Cinsellik ve Ontoloji", trans. B. Kemaloğlu, *Monokl*, no. 6-7, 2009, pp. 589-598).

the real. Accordingly, since the subject is an effect of the motion in the realm of symbolic or unconscious, it can be said that he/she is constituted by an unknown real. This is why, for Lacan, the speaker who speaks by means of language is not the subject, but that what speaks by means of subject is the language.

In addition to what has been said above, I would like to highlight that according to Lacan the irregular driving motion of the symbolic repeats infinitely. In other words, this infinite motion continues without achieving an end. Lacan inaugurates his *Television* with the words: “I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there’s no way, to say it all. Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail.”<sup>29</sup> The real in Lacan’s psychoanalysis is then that which cannot be attained at the end of a process. In fact, the real is the reality of non-being of such attainable end. This is why the aim of an analyst is to provide a comprehension of reality for an analysand. The real is to live of unorganized drives. It can be more or less certainly said that Lacan is arguing here against Hegelian understanding of absolute knowledge.<sup>30</sup> Lacan says that:

Truth is nothing but what knowledge can learn that is knows merely by putting its ignorance to work. This is a real crisis, in which the imaginary is eliminated in engendering a new symbolic form, to use my own categories. This dialectic is convergent and proceeds to the conjuncture defined as absolute knowledge. As it is deduced, this conjuncture can only be the conjunction of the symbolic with a real from which nothing more can be expected. What is this, if not a subject finalized in his self-identity? From which one can conclude that this subject is already perfect(ed) here and is the fundamental hypothesis of the entire process. He is named, in effect, as substratum of this process;

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<sup>29</sup> J. Lacan, *Television*, trans. D. Hollier, R. Krauss & A. Michelson, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> R. Maoti, “Düşüncenin Semptomla Dönüşmesi (Tinin Semptomatolojisi): Lacan Hegel’e Karşı mı Yoksa Onunla Birlikte mi?”, trans. N. Başer & K. Canatar, *Monokl*, no. 6-7, 2009, p. 347.

he is called *Selbstbewusstsein*, the being of the conscious, wholly conscious self.<sup>31</sup>

Lacan puts forward some arguments against Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. To highlight just some of them: (1) the symbolic, in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, is identical with the real. This identity does not allow us to think the real. Hegel ignores the domination of the real. (2) As a consequence of this identity, Hegel supports the unity of truth and knowledge. Also he thinks the Absolute knowledge of the real is attainable. (3) Hegel ignores the subject of unconscious by unifying of truth with knowledge. The subject of Hegel is a speculative one. This subject is only a combinatory unity of his/her own contradictions and splits. This unity can be attained only by means of the completed knowledge. Each subject is made identical with another as being only a moment of the whole process. Thereby, though Hegel does not see a differential point in a subject, he reduces it to a sole temporary difference. As a consequence of these critical points of Lacan, it can be said that Lacan rejects the idea of truth in a formalization of absolute knowledge. Lacan wishes to back the idea of truth, which does not permit to be enveloped with a whole knowledge.<sup>32</sup> His truth is that which is "not-all" and "semi-expressed". Lacan states, in his "Reverse of Psychoanalysis", that truth is a kind of weakness, or restriction.

Badiou draws on the category of real and the distinction between knowledge and truth in Lacan's psychoanalysis.<sup>33</sup> Lacan says that "the impossible is the

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<sup>31</sup> J. Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. B. Fink, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 2006, p. 675.

<sup>32</sup> R. Maoti, "Düşüncenin Semptomata Dönüşmesi (Tin'in Semptomatolojisi)", p. 350.

<sup>33</sup> See: A. Badiou, "Truth: Forcing and the Unnameable" in his *Theoretical Writings*, trans. R. Brassier & A. Toscano, Continuum, London and New York, 2004, pp. 119-134.

real”.<sup>34</sup> Badiou also sees the real as the impossible, which cannot be wholly expressed or known. Truth appears as an unnameable nudity in his theory, which reminds strongly of Lacan’s conception of real. To show what Lacan means by the distinction between knowledge and truth I would like to refer to a passage in “The Power of the Impossibles”. He asserts that:

For truth one fights, which is, however, only produced through its relation with the real. But that it is produced is much less important than what that produces. The effect of truth is only a collapse of knowledge. It is this collapse that creates a production, soon to be taken up again.

The real is neither better nor worse off as a result. In general it dusts itself off until the next crisis. Its momentary benefit is that it has refound its glass.<sup>35</sup>

Badiou insists on the distinction between truth and knowledge because he wants to stress the destructive power of truth over knowledge. This negative approach to the relation between truth and knowledge is detectable in Badiou’s *Theory of Subject*. But after *Being and Event*, he revised his thought in this regard considerably. The production of a truth is then not a result of its destruction but a supplementation of a new thing to the situation. Such destruction can only be a one-necessary-side of a truth process. It must be added that the temporality of the effect of a truth, stated in the quote above, I think, is the unvarying agreement of Badiou with Lacan. Badiou does not think that there can be a contradiction between the acceptance of such a temporality and the approval of the infinity of a truth.

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<sup>34</sup> J. Lacan, “The Impotence of Truth”, in R. Grigg (ed.), *the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Seminar XVII*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 2007, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup> J. Lacan, “The Power of the Impossibles”, in R. Grigg (ed.), *the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Seminar XVII*, New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, p. 187.

Another influential aspect of Lacan's theory on the development of Badiou's philosophy is the dualistic structure in the symbolic. As already said, the symbolic in Lacan's psychoanalysis is composed of all the signifiers. If one of these signifiers arrives at the edge of this composition, it creates an effect. This effect is the source of subject. The duality is between a simplifier at the edge of the structure and the other simplifiers. One of Badiou's important categories is the 'two': the void and the name of the void, or the event itself and its elements. Further, Lacan's term *jouissance* signifies the void, which is the ground for any change. The importance of the void in Badiou's philosophy can also be seen as originating from Lacan's conception of term *jouissance*.

There are also other sub-reasons for Badiou's familiarity with Lacan. Lacan can be seen as materialist and thus anti-humanist.<sup>36</sup> The material appears as a consequence of the effect of 'one', which accidentally comes to the edge of the symbolic order. In other words, the void of the real, the nothingness, or *jouissance* materializes via the appearance of this one by chance. Lacan also states that subject is constituted by the effect of this motion in the symbolic order. He/she is a specific conclusion of the infinite motion of his/her symbolic order. Thus, it cannot be claimed of humans that they have a universal or common feature in their nature. This is why Lacan is an anti-humanist. Badiou follows him in that regard and defines himself also as an anti-humanist. He argues that the human description of humanism is only an abstraction. Also he insists on the idea that humanism is an ideology of capitalist world.

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<sup>36</sup> L. Chiesa, "Lacancı Hakikatin Marksist Maddecilik Olarak Olası Ele Alınış Biçimini Önceleyen Düşünceler", trans. S. Kibar, *Monokl*, no. 6-7, 2009, p. 561.

### 2.1.3. The Mathematicians: Cohen and Zermelo-Fraenkel

Badiou is influenced by two new mathematical doctrines. One of them is Cohen's non-constructible set, or generic set.<sup>37</sup> This understanding of generic set can be understood more easily by comparing it with Gödel's constructible set.<sup>38</sup> Firstly, logician Gödel examines a set which has a clear description or has a clear name. To have a clear name for a thing means that it can be clearly defined or formulated. Gödel describes the constructible subset as a set which is subset of a clearly described set. Badiou states that the realm of constructible set is the place of normality or the great law. This law is formulated in a way that all sets are to be seen as constructible. The assertion or rational conclusion of the law is that all parts of society can be classified without losing anything from its reality. That is, there is a totality which can be conceived by a rational classification. Badiou does not reject the idea that there is a normality in nature or society which can be explained by the hypothesis of constructible set. He, however, adds that this explanation is not enough to understand what happens in the world. There is something beyond the law of constructability. Arrived at this point, Badiou uses Cohen's generic set to further develop his philosophy. Cohen describes the generic set as not being constructible. This set is beyond the predicative description or nomination. That is to say that it cannot be classified by any rational law. Badiou draws his category of generic on Cohen's generic set and receives its meaning also from Cohen's conception of generic set.

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<sup>37</sup> To understand Badiou's term 'generic', we must consider the mathematical and logical distinction between the constructible set of Kurt Gödel and the generic set of Paul Cohen. Both of them have a certain influence over the contents and meanings of Badiou's categories of ontology.

<sup>38</sup> Badiou compares the features of these two groups of set in order to make clear his concept of "generic" in his "Politics: A non-Expressive Dialectics". This article is his presentation at Birkbeck Institute for the Humanity on 25 November 2005. (It is retrieved on 26 May 2012 at <http://blog.urbanomic.com/sphaleotas/archives/badiou-politics.pdf>.)

Cantor achieves a different understanding of absolute as a consequence of this acknowledgement of generic set. Cantor develops this view of absolute as a solution for Russell's paradox. Russell defines a set as follows:  $\alpha$  is a set of sets each one of which is not an element of itself. There appears, however, an impasse of this definition of set, since if this set ' $\alpha$ ' itself is not an element of itself, it must be an element of  $\alpha$ , and then if it is an element of itself, it must not be an element of  $\alpha$ . Cantor overcomes this impasse, according to Badiou's reading, by his explanation of infinite. Badiou asserts that the expression "if some multiplicities cannot be totalized, or 'conceived as unity' without contradiction, it is because they are absolutely infinite rather than transfinite (mathematical)".<sup>39</sup> That is to say that it is uncountable, unpredictable and undecidable. Cantor, however, sees this infinite as God. In contrast, Badiou uses this understanding of infinite not for an affirmation of a transcendental being. He uses it to elucidate his distinction between inconsistent and consistent multiplicities. He states that if all the elements of a multiple can be conceived together without any contradiction, it is a 'consistent multiplicity or a set'; if any conception of a unity of all the elements of a multiple leads to a contradiction, it is 'absolutely infinite multiplicity or inconsistent'.<sup>40</sup> This is why Badiou sees infinity not in a transcendental level. Infinity can only be a feature of a truth as a consequence of its generic character. That is to suggest that truth has always an infinite part, since it can only be a consequence of the movement of unpredictable parts of a set. Further, a truth, for Badiou, cannot be known wholly without a contradiction.

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<sup>39</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. O. Feltham, Continuum, London and New York, 2005, p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

The other mathematical development, which has a remarkable influence on Badiou's philosophical development, more particularly on that of his conception of ontology, is the Zermelo-Fraenkel formal system. There are, for Badiou, three major characteristics of the Zermelo-Fraenkel system. The first of them is a relation of belonging. Belonging is not a property in the strict sense. The 'one' is assigned to the relation of belonging as an operator. This means that the relation of belonging, "*unbeing* of any one, determines, in a uniform manner, the presentation of 'something' as indexed to the multiple".<sup>41</sup> The second characteristic of this system is contrast to Cantor's distinguishing a set from its elements. According to Zermelo-Fraenkel system there is only one kind of presentation of being. That is to say that there are only multiples, or not only a set but also its elements are multiples. Belonging to a set or being an element of a set reveals only the characteristic of multiplicity: the presentation. "A multiplicity can be presented by another multiplicity".<sup>42</sup>

The other characteristics of Zermelo-Fraenkel system are its definition of 'the axiom of separation' and 'the axiom of foundation'. They are also concerned with the procedure dealing with the paradoxes. A language is only capable of making some distinctions between the appearances. The language only separates out the distinct features of the elements of a set. Namely, the sentence "human being is alive, while a table is not" can be articulated without any paradox. Thus, a paradox appears in the realm of language, if one tries to exceed this capacity of language. In other words, the sentence "a man/woman is not only organic but also inorganic" can only be expressed with a paradox. The expression "a human is alive in conformity with his/her vital cells" is in a contradiction with that "he/she also has inorganic things, since the cells are composed of inorganic molecules". Thus, there appears a paradox in language.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

In Zermelo-Fraenkel system, the axiom of foundation and the axiom of separation work to overcome such a paradoxical statements.

A set, according to the axiom of foundation, is composed of its foundational elements. The cells in humans are the foundational elements of its wholeness. These cells exist in accordance with the aliveness of humans. The cells belong to the vitality of this man or that woman, for example; because they are also alive and organic like this man or woman. Additionally, the axiom of separation is concerned with an element of a set that does not have any common thing with the set. The man or woman in question has also inorganic molecules distinct from this wholeness. These molecules are not organic or alive. These distinct elements are the point at which the set or the multiple is no longer itself. This is to say that a human is not alive when it is thought with the molecules of its cells. There appears the material edge of the human's vitality.

By considering these axioms, it can be said that a set is composed of not only its foundational elements but also its separate elements. In other words, as a crucial consequence of this axiom of separation, on the one hand, there can be separate elements in a set, which has not any common feature with the set. The crucial consequence of the axiom of foundation, on the other hand, is that a multiple cannot be an element of itself because of its inclusion of such a separate element. In Badiou's philosophy, the axiom of foundation can be the law of being as being, while his category of 'event' is in conformity with the axiom of separation. Only an event can be an element of itself. Badiou says: "an event is composed of the elements of a site, but also by the event itself, which belong to itself".<sup>43</sup> Even if these inorganic and distinct molecules constitute 'objectively' a part of the man or woman in question, they are not vital components of the liver. This is why such a separation can be said to be

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<sup>43</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 100.

‘on the edge of the void’. This is also why Badiou states that event occurs ‘on the edge-of-the-void’ not in a situation. In other words, Badiou explains his category of event by using the axiom of separation.

## **2.2. Badiou’s Critiques of the Contemporary Philosophy**

Badiou wants to determine the task of philosophy or that what philosophy may be able to do. First of all, he attempts to free philosophy from the influences of politics, science, history and poem. He tries to withdraw philosophy from not only the influence of speculative thinking but also that of 'positivism' and 'linguistic turn'. Badiou stresses the idea that if a philosopher is guided by positivism the theme of finite things controls the style and the content of thinking in philosophy. This is not to refuse the existence of finite things. Badiou wishes to determine the special domain of philosophy as a different one from that of the finite things. This realm is that of the infinite things. Why does he distance himself from positivism? The reply to this question is in fact very clear for one who is familiar with Badiou’s philosophy. It can be said that his understanding of materiality can be seen as different from that of the defender of positivism. Badiou does not reject the reality or the existence of the material objects and the lawful relation between them. Economy is a positivist discipline that inquires the determinable economic relation in society. Or, sociology can be seen as having a share with positivism, since the sociologists explore also the lawful relation in society. These researches are only one type of act of thought. Badiou does not decline all the importance of them. He only rejects the reduction of the realm of philosophy to that of positive sciences. He tries to create a space for infinite and singular truths. He determines the work of philosophy therefore as thinking about these truths in their times. In contrast to positivists, he argues that lawful relations in society exist, but exist only temporarily. According to Badiou the cause of radical change in society is

discontinuity. However, by relying on the one-sided view of positivism one can hardly see that discontinuity.

As we will see in the following sections, Badiou wants to revise the theory of praxis in Marxism. He sees the historical materialism of Lenin and Engels as originated in the reduction of political philosophy to positivist science. This is due to the influence of Althusser on Badiou's philosophical theory. I am going to analyze firstly his view of Marxist revolution. Badiou also criticizes the humanist approach to philosophy. He sees this attitude as an abstraction. I would like, secondly, to present his critique of the defenders of human rights. Finally, I shall look at his critique of the attitude of linguistic turn. I want to concentrate on these critiques than others because it is essential for the research project of this thesis; because in the last chapter of this thesis I am going to examine whether Badiou solves the problems, which he indicates, by developing his theory of truth without falling into relativism.

Firstly, then, let us start with his general observations on the contemporary philosophy. Badiou specifically tries to determine what is going on wrong in philosophy in his time and why so. In order to comprehend more clearly what is the distinctive characteristic of his philosophy, we must comprehend his critiques of the contemporary philosophy. His critique can be summarized and put into one idea. In our time philosophy fails to respond adequately to contemporary issues in question because it is almost entirely disconnected from mathematics.

Badiou asserts that philosophy is subject to a kind of 'Romanticism' today<sup>44</sup>, it has lost the connection to mathematics. He sees the Anglo Saxon philosophy as a linguistic sophistry. Its main idea is that mathematics does in no way enable

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-28.

to think and that mathematics provides only the grammar for science. This philosophy, for Badiou, admits only forms of knowledge and ignores the existence of truths. Heidegger is another exemplary philosopher who disentangled philosophy from mathematics. Contrary to the Anglo Saxon philosophy, he opposes to any kind of scientific approach in philosophy. The ideal form of thinking, for Heidegger, can be found in art, specifically in poetry. His philosophy summons a kind of myth for thought because, according to Badiou, Heidegger thinks of being as ‘being in its totality’.<sup>45</sup>

Wittgenstein is another philosopher who separates mathematics from philosophy and asserts that “mathematics is a logical method”.<sup>46</sup> According to Wittgenstein “mathematical propositions express no thought”.<sup>47</sup> Badiou points out that by doing this, Wittgenstein only describes what the world is. The logic or the mathematics according to Wittgenstein should be kept separate from philosophy because there is no logical existence in the world. Indeed, he connects the world to the language. He states that the limit of the world is determined by the ability of language. He admits the idea of “strict coextensivity between the world and language”.<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, as Badiou sees it, there is something in Wittgenstein’s philosophy which cannot be said. Finally postmodernism, after the death of God as Nietzsche asserted and after the crisis of Marxism, appears in the realm of philosophy to solve these reductionist attitudes or transcendentalist attitudes. Its general emphasis is over the plurality and relativity of truths as explained before.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>46</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden, Gutenberg [eBook, ISO-8859-1], 2010, retrieved on 08 June 2012 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5740/5740-pdf.pdf>>, 6. 2, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 6. 21, p. 82.

<sup>48</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 108.

First of all, Badiou refuses to subscribe to the idea that philosophy is at the end. This idea is supported by some “anti-philosophers” or postmodern thinkers of the twentieth century. One of them is Jean-François Lyotard. These anti-philosophers declare that philosophy is completed or impossible. By admitting the idea of the impossibility of philosophy, they try to resolve the problem of totalitarianism, which they see as a result of the speculative philosophy such as that of Hegel. They argue that philosophy cannot explain everything or it is not the king of all realms of knowledge. In fact, they insist that there is no achievable total truth, which involves and explain everything, by the assistance of philosophy. Then there appears a kind of specialization of the contents of philosophy or a kind of accommodation of philosophy to another domains of thought such as that of science or language. For these anti-philosophers, the grand narratives are meaningless.

Badiou states that the idea of the end of the philosophy is not less meaningless than the philosophical aim to explain everything and in fact the grand narratives themselves. He says that “I believe the end of this End must be announced, or stated”.<sup>49</sup> By rejection of the impossibility of philosophy, Badiou does not directly admit the idea that philosophy is absolutely possible. He suggests that philosophy can be possible. He explains his approach concerning the possibility of philosophy as follows:

Ones philosophy’s stakes have been delimited, the pathos of its ‘end’ gives way to quite another question, which is the one of its conditions. I do not claim that philosophy is possible at every moment. I propose a general examination of the conditions under which it is possible, in accordance with its destination.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 121.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

In fact, it must be asserted that Badiou does not approve the speculative philosophy or metaphysics by his rejection of the idea of end of the philosophy. He acknowledges the main idea of anti-philosophers that philosophy cannot achieve the complete explanation of the world because there is no such completeness. Like anti-philosophers, Badiou also rejects the idea that there exists one unique 'whole', 'history', and 'one'. Badiou also tries to free philosophy from the effects of teleological speculations. If speculation has an effective role in thinking then philosophy becomes a discourse of elucidating a kind of 'sacralization', says Badiou. This is because he defines 'infinity' not as endlessness or as transcendent to finite beings or as opposite to 'finite'. 'Infinite' in his philosophy is the opposite to 'singular' or another aspect of the 'singular'. I will clarify the meaning of these concepts in Badiou's philosophy in the following sections. It suffices to say at this stage that Badiou frees the concept of truth from any teleological meaning by dismissing the categories of whole and history from his philosophical framework. There is not one whole, not one history or one truth of this history. There can be infinitely many truths. The infinity of truth does not come from its relation to this unique whole or history. A truth is not only infinite because of its genericity it is also finite because of its being a production of a finite subject and in a concrete situation. Badiou also excludes the concept of speculative or teleological goal from his philosophy in this way. There is no such a goal, which determines what happened, what is happening and what will happen in accordance with this goal. In fact, there is, according to Badiou, no such a relation between the past and the future. The present is not a consequence of the past events. Badiou therefore develops a new concept of "present" in order to illustrate this inexistence of such a causal relation in time. Badiou in fact opposes to the understanding of time in historical materialism. He sees the defenders of historical materialism as the supporters of democratic materialism. He explains his view of 'the past' as follows:

Contrary to what transpires in the Stalinist version of Marxism – a version that Althusser inherited, though he disrupted it from within – it is crucial to disjoin the materialist dialectic, the philosophy of emancipation through truths, from historical materialism, the philosophy of alienation through languages-bodies. To break with the cult of genealogies and narratives means restoring the past as the amplitude of the present. . . .

In democratic materialism, the life of language-bodies is the conservative succession of the instants of the atonic world. It follows that the past is charged with the task of endowing these instants with a fictive horizon, with a cultural density.<sup>51</sup>

That is to suggest that Badiou sees the understanding of time or history of historical materialism as something that has gone totally wrong. The historical materialism is a type of democratic materialism. The supporters of this materialism see ‘time’ as a unity of its moments.

He approves, however, the possibility of philosophy in a different way from the earlier understanding of the nineteenth century. The systematic form of philosophy, for Badiou, can be said to be impossible. This does not mean that Badiou supports the unsystematic philosophy like postmodern philosophers. He states that to be systematic is the essence of philosophy only if “by systematicity we understand, as we must do, the prerequisite of a complete configuration of the four generic conditions of philosophy . . . by means of an exposition that also exposes its expository rule”.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it can be said that Badiou supports the idea of the impossibility of philosophy only insofar as philosophy is seen as a domain of thought without its four conditions. What are these conditions of philosophy? They are the novelties in the realm of art, love, science and politics.

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<sup>51</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 509.

<sup>52</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 65.

Secondly and more importantly, Badiou rejects any reduction of philosophy to one of these conditions. It can be said that philosophy, for Badiou, prescribes the current occurrences in the truth procedures of its time. Art, science, politics and love are only the conditions of philosophy. None of them can be reduced to philosophy as its unique function. Badiou calls the reduction of the functions of philosophy to one truth procedure a ‘suture’. He clarifies this reductionism as follows:

If philosophy is, as I defend it to be, the configuration, within thought, of the fact that its four generic conditions (the poem, the Matheme, the political and love) are compossible *in the eventful form prescribing the truths of the time*, a suspension of philosophy can result from the restriction or blockage of the free play required in order to define a regime of passage, or intellectual circulation between the truth procedures conditioning philosophy. The most frequent cause of such blockage is that instead of constructing a space of compossibility through which the thinking of time is practices, 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. I shall call this type of situation a *suture*.<sup>53</sup>

Badiou sees the philosophy of Heidegger as an example for a suture. Heidegger is an anti-positivist and anti-Marxist philosopher. He, according to Badiou’s reading of Heidegger, sees the modern science and the totalitarian state as essential effects of the technology. The main assertion of Heidegger is that only the poet can neutralize the negative effects of the technology. This is a kind of suture of philosophy only with its artistic condition.

The other masters of philosophy, for Badiou, are following: the suture of philosophy to its scientific condition in the Anglo-Saxon philosophy, or

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

analytic tradition; the suture of philosophy to its political condition in Marxism; the suture of philosophy to the love in postmodern philosophy. Badiou calls the philosophy, which is sutured to only one of its conditions, the '*philosopheme*'. Each one of philosophemes restricts and shadows the real domain of philosophy. Then this act of suture results in a kind of suspension of philosophy.

### **2.2.1. The Marxist View of Revolution**

In order to understand Badiou's political thought more clearly, it is useful to examine what he says about the Marxist theory of state. The Marxist theory asserts, in Badiou's terminology, that the state counts as one not the multiple of individuals but the multiple of classes of individuals.<sup>54</sup> The state is the metastructure of every historical and social situation. It is the state of the ruling class, or represents the term parts, which are already presented by the situation.<sup>55</sup> This class is the bourgeoisie. That is, the bourgeoisie is a normal term, which both belongs to a situation and is included in a situation. The proletariat is a singular term, since this class is presented in a society but not represented by the state. The state is itself the point of excess.<sup>56</sup> The state has two fundamental functions: coercion and separation. Firstly, it separates two fundamental parts of a society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The essence of the state is based on the class antagonism. Then it works as coercive function by the hand of the normal term of the situation, the bourgeoisie. Engels and Lenin explain, for Badiou, that coercion and separation has a reciprocal relation. The state for them is the bureaucratic and military

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<sup>54</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 105.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 109.

machinery. This feature of the state shows its excrescent essence or its excess over society.<sup>57</sup> Communism means the disappearance of the state. In this regard, Badiou backs the Marxist thought. This disappearance amounts to the end of classes and it will be sufficient to make the universal the singular term.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast to the Marxist thought, he posits, however, that the state does not originate in the class antagonism. He acknowledges the dialectic of the void and excess but does not see this dialectic as an antagonism. He states his view of dialectic as follows:

It is not antagonism which lies at the origin of the State, because one cannot think the dialectic of the void and excess as antagonism. No doubt politics itself must originate in the very same place as the state: in that dialectic. But this is certainly not in order to seize the State nor to double the State's effect. On the contrary, politics, stakes its existence on its capacity to establish a relation to both the void and excess which is essentially different from that of the State; it is this difference alone that subtract politics from the one of statist re-insurance.<sup>59</sup>

As can be seen from the paragraph above, from Badiou's point of view there is a dialectical relation between the void point and the excess point in the structure. By using this dialectical relation, we can explain what the state is. Badiou argues that politics has also a capacity of establishing a relationship with both the void and the excess; however this relation is different from that of state. While a state is that which ignores an element and is itself an excess in the structure, a political activist is one who can notice this ignored element in this social structure and give it a proper name.<sup>60</sup> Politics does not produce a

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

statist representative activity such that of a state. In other words, though the state and a politics are originated from the dialectic of void and excess, their status is not contradict because of non-antagonistic dialectic between the void and the excess. This is why a political subject does not seek to establish a new state. If it did establish such a state, it would only be another classification of the group of humans by a different category. In fact, whether it is possible to surpass this act of classification in Badiou's philosophy is a highly controversial point. I think that any surpassing act in politics is impossible because of this non-contradictory dialectics. In other words, Badiou sees communism as the vanishing of all the kinds of state. I stress the idea that this vanishing is impossible, since the act of representation is unvarying point in Badiou's ontological explanations. In Badiou's philosophy, there is a dialectical relation between the void point and the excess point in the structure, but this relation is infinite. It cannot be ended. In other words, because of that this dialectical relation does not include a contradiction between two distinct poles, it is impossible to exceed this relation completely. It is only possible a particular surpassing of a particular relation of a void and an excess in a concrete situation. After this surpassing, there could appear only a new structure, which also includes a new void and excess.

A political revolution can only be a singular event. That is, there cannot be a final revolution under the condition of the existence of a state. This is why the result of a revolution based upon a state power cannot be totalized such as in the USSR with Stalin. Yes, there happened a revolution in October 1917. The proletariat, the certain part of proletariat, is the subject of this revolution. However, for Badiou, it was wrong to transform the party into the power of state, since after that the proletariat disappeared again. The party totalized the consequences of the revolution. It determined itself as a unique means of

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government. Badiou also states that the aim of an emancipatory politics is not to constitute a dictatorship of the proletariat but the withering away of the state.<sup>61</sup> As already explained in the previous paragraph, this withering away renders an impossible in Badiou's philosophy.

Let us examine Badiou's central concept of 'two' in the political domination to explain more fully this non-antagonistic dialectics. Badiou sees the strong contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as a wrong description of what happens in the capitalist state. The classical Marxism, for Badiou, is only a reduction to a strict economical explanation. This structural two such as the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is placed in a moment of history. It is said that each one has, or must have, a strategy to achieve the power of the state. The bourgeoisie struggles to save its power, while the proletariat to destroy this coercive power and to constitute its dictatorship. Badiou says that this strong contradiction is mistaken by the events of the 1960s and 1970s, the Bolshevik Revolution and Cultural Revolution. After these events, Badiou declares, "the real two is an eventful production, a political production, and not an objective or 'scientific' presupposition. . . . Man's highest duty is to jointly produce the Two and the thinking of the Two, the *exercise* of the Two".<sup>62</sup> What does this statement mean? It means that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie cannot be directly acknowledged as structurally pre-existent. The real duality in dialectics is not such a classification to create a novelty. In fact, there is no contradictory or non-contradictory dialectical relation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Badiou describes this as follows:

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<sup>61</sup> A. Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. J. Barker, Verso, London and New York, 2005, p. 79.

<sup>62</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, pp. 90-91.

The true contrary of the proletariat is not the bourgeoisie. It is the bourgeois world, imperialist society, of which the proletariat, let this be noted, is a notorious element, as the principle productive force and as the antagonistic political pole. The famous contradiction of bourgeoisie/proletariat is a limited, structural schema that loses track of the torsion of the Whole of which the proletariat qua subject traces the force. To say proletariat and bourgeoisie is to remain within the bounds of the Hegelian artifice: something and something else. Why? Because the project of the proletariat, its integral being, is not to contradict the bourgeoisie, or to cut its feet from under it. This project is communism, and nothing else. That is, the abolishing of any place in which something like a proletariat can be space of placement of classes. It is the loss, for the historical something, of every index of class.<sup>63</sup>

The contradiction, as Badiou asserts in this paragraph, should be seen as between the existent and its place in his *Theory of Subject*. This is similar to his dialectic of the void and the excess in *Being and Event*. Badiou tries to articulate the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be seen as a project of the proletariat. The proletariat aims to construct a communist society, which is the place of the disappearance of the classes. These assertions are that which Badiou has subtracted from the revolutionary theory of Karl Marx. However, it should be said that *Theory of Subject* is the book in which Badiou's theory of truth was not completed yet. In this book, Badiou argues that a truth can only be political. That is, politics had a privileged importance for the production of truth. Badiou renounces this privilege. He begins to announce the other realms in which a truth can also be produced after his *Being and Event*.

Badiou tries to find a true foundation for an emancipatory politics. One crucial characteristic of Badiou's emancipatory politics is its being 'unbound'. Badiou sees the revolutionary party as a means of obedience of politics to its 'supreme being', its God or the state power. One of his crucial aims is to demonstrate

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<sup>63</sup> A. Badiou, *Theory of Subject*, trans. B. Bosteels, Continuum, London and New York, 2009, p. 7.

why a revolutionary party such as that in the USSR with Stalin brings forth the bureaucratic submission or a totalitarian state. This is why he tries to examine what the party is. In fact, he does not see the Leninist theme of party as a direct cause of this kind of totalitarian state.<sup>64</sup> The party, for Lenin, is necessary for the event and its most significant characteristic is its flexibility. This understanding of party with a flexible character involves an organizational consideration, which is crucial moment in an emancipatory politics for Badiou. Lenin emphasizes the points of ‘iron discipline’ and ‘professional revolutionary’ which can only be achieved by the organization capacity of the party.<sup>65</sup> Lenin’s view of party cannot be seen as the bond between the party and its partisanship or between the part of a truth and the whole truth. Badiou argues that after Lenin, Stalin makes the firm bond between the party, the leadership, and its militants.<sup>66</sup> This kind of bond, for Badiou, is based upon the principle of superego. Additionally, it can be only a fiction of the maxim of equality, which is the only principle of politics. Badiou gives the Stalin’s politics as an example of politics of totalities.<sup>67</sup> This critical approach to Stalin’s period is very famous one for the contemporary thinkers. Whether this approach is more profitable to show the possibility of an emancipatory politics is discussed in the following sections of my thesis.

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<sup>64</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 74.

<sup>65</sup> Badiou sees politics as a thought or as a different kind of intellectual activity of axiomatic decision. One of the most crucial characteristics of the militants of politics is to utter what happens newly in the situation. He/she produces an axiom concerning this novelty. In this regard, the characteristic feature of politics, for Badiou, is its being without party. However, this does not mean an unorganized political movement. Politics, for him, is “organized through the intellectual discipline of political process” (Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 122.). In my view, the relation between this intellectual organization and politics’ being a thought is obviously the most critical point in Badiou’s philosophy. This kind of relation makes clear the transformation of politics into only a kind of contemplation of thought.

<sup>66</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 75.

<sup>67</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 56.

Badiou says exactly that “the collapse of the socialist states teaches us that the ways of egalitarian politics do not pass by State power, but rather by an immanent subjective determination, an axiom of collective”.<sup>68</sup> In other words, Badiou suggests that the true politics should undermine “the illusion of the bond”.<sup>69</sup> Politics must firstly be unbounded from the State. This is why politics deals with the masses or the mass movements, not particular figure of the proletariat. The mass does not signify a given structural individual in a structure but the entire possible individual, which has a possibility to be subject of a political truth.

### **2.2.2. The Humanist Approach**

Badiou criticizes the ethical tendency of postmodern thought based upon the category of 'the other'. He wants to falsify the fundamental explanations of postmodernism in this regard. He examines the contemporary theory of evil in his *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Badiou refuses any negative account of ethics based upon a negative term such as evil and other. To be subject, for Badiou, cannot be elucidated by means of ‘the other’ of postmodernist thought. Badiou tries to reply the question of what the good is in this work. He advocates an explanation of the category of subject, which is grounded in such a positive term. The good is an interchangeable term with that of truth. The subject can only be seen truly as a component in the appearance of a truth. Badiou stresses, in his *Ethics*, the role of subject in a truth process can only be positive. Evil can only be an effect of the act of corruption of this process. Badiou explains evil as an effect of the corruption of a truth process as follows:

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<sup>68</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 76.

<sup>69</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 77.

To believe that an event convokes not the void of the earlier situation, but its plenitude, is Evil in the sense of *simulacrum*, or *terror*,  
To fail to live up to a fidelity is Evil in the sense of *betrayal*, betrayal in oneself of the Immortal that you are;  
To identify a truth with total power is Evil in the sense of *disaster*.<sup>70</sup>

Nazism is given as an example for terror by Badiou because of its insistence of the German race, which is not a void point. Conformism is an example of betrayal. And, the Cultural Revolution's Red Guard is given as an example of disaster. It insists on the idea that its truth is capable of explaining everything. More radically, Badiou sees positivism as an example of disaster because of its principle that everything can be knowable by the help of positivist law. As a consequence, it can be said that Badiou does not give a negative explanation for ethics. Even the negative term of evil turns to a destruction of a positive point, or the annihilation of truth.

Peter Dews makes a similar point concerning Badiou's *Ethics*. He states that "Badiou proposes a new positive account of ethics what he terms an ethics of truths".<sup>71</sup> He adds that Badiou frees ethics from the metaphysical category, the evil. Evil, for Badiou, cannot exist except that a subject is not obedience to the effects of a truth.<sup>72</sup> Ernesto Laclau also agrees with Dews in thinking that Badiou's *Ethics* cannot be seen "as a purely *defensive* intervention – that is, as a reaction to the violence of human rights" and that his ethics has "an

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<sup>70</sup> A. Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. P. Hallward, Verso, London and New York, 2002, p. 71.

<sup>71</sup> P. Dews, "States of Grace: The Excess of the Demand in Badiou's Ethics of Truths", in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 108.

<sup>72</sup> Badiou, *Ethics*, pp. 55-61.

essentially affirmative discourse”.<sup>73</sup> Badiou’s affirmative explanation in this regard, I think, is a consequence of his anti-humanism.

Why can it be possible to think so? First of all, Badiou names the good as ‘truth’ in the plural. A truth, for him, is a process, which begins with a sudden change in the structure, or in the status quo and develops only by the ‘fidelity’ to this novelty. A subject is constituted in this process by participating in it. It depends on a truth-process or an event. That which transforms one into being ‘immortal’ is his/her participation in a truth process, or an event. We can see easily the duality of his ethics. On the one hand, human is presented as mortal; on the other hand, Badiou expresses its capability to become Immortal. It can be said, in my view, that this duality shows the possibility of becoming immortal of human. In other words, the immortality, or the universality, or the eternal human value is not be acknowledged as a given, or as an absolute truth in Badiou’s philosophy. There must be a necessary and sufficient condition to become immortal for a subject or to achieve this eternal value. To have a breath or the totality of organism, for Badiou, is not sufficient to have eternal value. According to Badiou the assertion that humans have in themselves some infinite values without any actualization can only be an abstraction. The humanism, which is supported by this way, must be rejected because of its abstraction.

Badiou states that man/woman achieves humanity only through his formal participation in a truth procedure or an event. He agrees with Sartre on the idea that man/woman constitutes himself/herself only through his/her decisions and practical actions. However, he differs from Sartre in the sense that he is not a humanist. While Sartre sees this ability of constitution of himself/herself as a

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<sup>73</sup> E. Laclau, “An Ethics of Militant Engagement”, in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 120.

universal and unchangeable human value, Badiou does not so. Badiou does not make a distinction between the potential and the actual. Thus, he does not see a potential ability of constitution of himself/herself in human. Badiou posits that there is no universal human subject. There is no universal humanity in men/women. In other words, human does not have a universal value in it by nature. It can have this kind of value only by participating in a truth procedure and its fidelity to the consequences of the event.

With these presuppositions, Badiou attacks the concept of universalism of the human rights. Specifically, Badiou rejects supporting any form of human rights based upon humanism. However, his understanding of humanity can be read as a kind of humanism again. Power and Toscano ascertain that Badiou can be defined as a ‘political humanist’. They emphasize that while Badiou supports of anti-humanism, he fell in a kind of ‘political humanism’ by his term of ‘generic humanity’.<sup>74</sup> Badiou states that the common or generic capacity of human is their ability of thinking or of truth. This human capacity is one of the conditions of emergency of truth.

The utterance of human rights, for Badiou, functions as only ideological in the current capitalist world. Badiou starts his *Ethics* with a discussion over the human rights. He declares that all the matters such as ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘respect for the other’ in this regard are only the ideological means at the hand of the West or ‘White-man’. The West, for him, uses the utterance of human rights for its own utility. The rest of the world is made to believe that all the purpose of the acts of the West is to develop a more democratic system in the rest of the world. That is, the utterance of human rights leads to an illusion over the rest of the world. They believe in the idea that the countries of the West

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<sup>74</sup> N. Power & A. Toscano, “The Philosophy of Restoration: Alain Badiou and the Enemies of May”, *Boundary 2*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2009, p. 41.

want to help to develop their countries. The East, by the help of illusionist function of the utterance of human rights, cannot see the real aim of the West. Badiou states that the only real aim of the West is to improve its own economic and political power. The utterance of ‘equality’ or ‘justice’ of the ideologists of the West, for Badiou, is only an illusion. He tries to give true meaning to these categories of equality and justice by his theory of truth. I will analyze whether Badiou’s use of these categories also faces the problem of universalism in the following sections.

### **2.2.3. The Analytic Thinkers**

Both the term ‘linguistic turn’ and ‘logical positivism’ stand for a philosophical position which may be described as analytic. It may be claimed that the thinkers standing in analytic tradition are the other group of thinkers who are the main target when Badiou formulates his critique of contemporary philosophy. Badiou criticizes these thinkers in particular because of their reductionism of the issues concerning truth to that of logic and to that of linguistic problems. I analyze whether Badiou is right to criticize them in the last chapter of my thesis.

Firstly, let us look at why Badiou criticizes the logical positivists. The American academic philosophy originates in particular in the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle. This tradition is one of the most influential philosophical traditions throughout the world. This tradition of the analytic philosophy tends indeed to reduce philosophy to science. Badiou asserts that the logical positivism is ‘anti-Platonist’.<sup>75</sup> Plato, for logical positivism, was a realist concerning the reality of mathematical objects. This is why Plato must be

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<sup>75</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 121.

surmounted in philosophy. According to logical positivists, it is possible to develop an exact logic, which explains the lawful relation in the events. They see the logical signifiers as not having a share with the existent things without their ability to explain the law of the relation between these existent things. Badiou qualifies this attitude of the analytic thinkers towards Plato as false. They for Badiou misunderstand Plato's view of the existence of mathematical objects.

Badiou attacks the philosophical project that is closely related to the so-called 'linguistic turn' at the beginning of the twentieth century. Badiou defines philosophers who back the 'linguistic turn' as modern sophists. He points out that any way of thinking bringing forth the refusal of the existence of truth is that of sophistry. In his *Conditions* he states that both modern and ancient sophists say that there are not truths but only conventions. This reduces truth to the linguistic conventions by the sophists. Badiou by his philosophical categories aims at preparing the ground for the idea that there are objective truths independent of any convention.

In order to achieve this aim, Badiou firstly makes a distinction between his idea of truth and that of other thinkers who support the existence of truth. He states that the twentieth century in general is that of the authority of multiple. He says that the main characteristic feature of this century is 'Platonism of the multiple'. Badiou is also amongst these thinkers to support the idea that being as being is multiple. The main difficulty in the modern sophistry, however for Badiou, is to determine what the category of truth is. The modern sophists acknowledge the existence of truth. They admit the idea that there is not one single truth but there are many truths. By this admitting of the quantitatively infinite being of truth, they are forced to advocate the relativity of truths. Since the category of multiplicity is not truly determined by these modern sophists as Badiou thinks it has created space for relativism. The truths are rendered to

have a kind of conventional character. Nietzsche, in the eyes of Badiou, is one of the modern sophists, since he sees the multiplicity of truth as a consequence of the infinitely many potency of life in human or of the will to power. Badiou defines the philosophical intend of Nietzsche's philosophy as follows:

Nietzsche inaugurates the trial of truth in the name of the multiple potency of life. As we are unable to subtract ourselves from jurisdiction of this potency on the thinking of being, we are forced to propose a doctrine of truth compatible with the irreducible multiplicity of being *qua* being. A truth can only be the singular production of a multiple. The whole point is that this multiple will be subtracted from the authority of language. It will be indiscernible, or rather: it will *have been* indiscernible.<sup>76</sup>

The point from modern sophists' point of view, as Badiou sees, is that if truth has a being it must also be multiple because of the multiple character of being. They ask how the multiple character of truth can be conceived. It is the point where the relativity of truth appears for the modern sophists. They state that truth cannot be multiple but 'a singular production of a multiple'. There are many truths as a singularity and thus these truths do not have any certainty or infinity. More clearly, they conclude that the idea that a truth is not multiple but it receives a share from the multiplicity of being. As a consequence of this, the concept of truth is replaced by the concept of rules.

An important example for this replacement may be seen in the philosophy of Wittgenstein, as Badiou suggests. The final statement of *Tractatus* is that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"<sup>77</sup>. Then he advocates 'the linguistic games' in his *Philosophical Investigation* in order to explain what is. This explanation, for Badiou, is a model of "the linguistic authority of

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>77</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus-logico-philosophicus*, 7, p. 90.

the Law”.<sup>78</sup> As can be seen in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, there is not truth but “only convention, rules, types of discourses or language games”.<sup>79</sup> Thus, not only ancient sophists but also modern sophists, according to Badiou, cannot give a true explanation of the multiplicity of truth. This is why philosophy must be distinguished from sophistry.

However, according to Badiou the sophistry plays an important role in drawing the framework for what may be seen as proper philosophy. The sophist plays this positive by preventing the philosopher from falling into a kind of dogmatism. Badiou explains this as follows:

The sophist is required at all times for philosophy to maintain its ethics. For the sophist is the one who reminds us that the category of Truth is void. Indeed, he only does it to negate truths, whereby he must be combated. But combated within the ethical norms of this combat. Philosophical extremism, a figure of disaster within thinking, strives for the annihilation of the sophist. But it is in fact to his triumph that it contributes and abets. For, if philosophy renounces its operation and its void, the category of Truth has only dogmatic terror left to establish itself. Against which, the sophist will have an easy time showing the compromises of philosophical desire with tyrannies.<sup>80</sup>

As can be seen from this passage, the contrast to a sophist, for Badiou, provides philosopher a critical reminder of what the truth might be. A sophist reminds the philosopher of the impossibility of one single truth and in doing so he/she prevents a philosopher from falling in a position of defending of totalitarianism.

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<sup>78</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 118.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

### 2.3. Badiou's Invention

Badiou declares that the 'resistance' is, or must be, one of the most crucial figures in philosophy. He sees Cavailles, Albert Lautman and Sartre as the philosophical figures of resistant in France. The resistance "is not an opinion. Rather it is a logical rupture with dominant and circulating opinions".<sup>81</sup> Plato, for Badiou, is a crucial figure of philosophical resistance with his *Republic*. 'Resistance' in Badiou's terminology means a kind of subjective rupture from the realm of corrected knowledge. Plato is a resistant figure since we experience an extreme rupture from his contemporary political understanding in his *Republic*. This is a personal act of thought. After these explanations, we can ask whether Badiou is one of the 'resistant' figures in the contemporary philosophy. Bartlett sees Badiou as a modern resistant figure.<sup>82</sup> Badiou's emphasis on the necessity of the creation of *modern Republic* is shown as the sign of his resistance. Badiou tries to demonstrate the possibility of a new model of life.

First of all, Badiou sees 'historicism' as the most dangerous tendency for philosophy. He argues that "*philosophy must break, from within itself, with historicism*".<sup>83</sup> This does not mean the ignorance what is said in the history of philosophy. It means that philosophy should firstly constitute itself without reference to its history. This forgetting of the history of philosophy appears as a method in Badiou's philosophy. By this forgetting, Badiou emphasizes on the responsibility of a philosopher towards the truths, which appear at his/her time. A philosopher must look at his contemporary statements or axioms of thinking

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<sup>81</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>82</sup> A.J. Bartlett, "Conditional Notes on a New Republic", *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, vol. 2, no: 1-2, 2006, p. 65.

<sup>83</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 114.

and must subtract some consequences from them. He/she should look at and grasp what is happening in his/her world. Only after this act of comprehension, he/she can, or should call for the history. Badiou says “philosophy must determine itself in such a way as to judge its history itself, and not to have its history judge it”.<sup>84</sup>

If we acknowledge the idea that Badiou makes a room in his philosophy for the concept of history, we must be careful for determining its meaning. The meaning of his concept of history is not similar to that of Hegel, or Heidegger. There is no continuity in history. The occurrences do not continue the others. There is no causality between them. Badiou, although, does not want to neglect the concept of history, Hegelian history loses its meaning in his philosophy. 'History' turns to a kind of 'ahistory'. Also, Heidegger admitted the idea that there is a huge history of being from the Greek to the present day. Heidegger, in fact, emphasizes the idea that this history is not that of being but of the forgetting of being. It can be said that there is a common point in Hegel's and Heidegger's philosophy from the point of history. They acknowledge the existence of a huge history of both being and thought. Badiou rejects this common idea in Hegel and Heidegger. He explains this rejection as follows:

I think it is necessary to speak of historicity and not of a History. I think there is a profound historicity of truth, which is quite natural, since truth is a process and not a donation. But there is not *a* History of being or *a* History of truth; rather there are histories of truths, of the multiplicity of truths. So, I am neither Hegelian, nor Heideggerean! Because the common feature of Hegel and Heidegger's thought is precisely that of thinking there is *a* History of being and thought.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>85</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 181.

In other words, according to Badiou, there is no one history but histories. In the time between his *Theory of Subject* and his *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou states that 'history does not exist'. There is no causal relation between two distinct events. A philosopher should investigate theoretically the occurrences, the current events and the truth procedures at his/her time; because philosophy is a thought or a kind of contemplation of its present history. Thus, if we follow Badiou it can be said that there is no one unique scene of history in which every event occurs in accordance with its law. There is not a final goal of history and there are not agents who are only the mediators for achieving this final goal. Badiou sees this kind of understanding of history as a result of failure in understanding history. This kind of teleological history admits that there is continuity in the occurrences and also causality between these happenings. Badiou also states, contrary to this continuity, that an event or a novelty in a world can only be as a result of discontinuity. A novelty, in Badiou's view, can occur in a world only as a result of an interruption of the previous structure of this world. This is why he strongly rejects admitting the existence of one single history. It can be said that the subject does not operate as a mediator of the history. However, the subject still appears as a mediator in the transformation of an event to a truth by both his/her decision over the undecidable and his/her fidelity to the consequences of event. Only by his/her mediation, he/she becomes a subject.

Secondly, philosophy, for Badiou, is 'subtractive'. The central categories of his philosophy are the triple of 'event', 'subject' and 'truth', and the couple of 'singularity' and 'infinity'. The 'void' and the 'two' are other crucial categories for his philosophy. Badiou states that philosophy fills in the void by seizing the singularity and infinity of a truth. That is, the main work of philosophy is the seizing of a daily truth. Truth, in Badiou's philosophy, does not refer to anything in a situation before an event. It refers to 'nothing', or the void, or indiscernible in a situation. Further, a truth, for Badiou, is not that which adds something to the situation from the outside of this situation. It subtracts that

which is already in this situation but undecidable yet. Truth is always eternal, since it is only an operation of filling in the void. In other words, a truth transforms an in-existent to an existent by this operation. The infinity of truth comes from the generic or undecidable character of this in-existent. The void in Badiou's philosophy designates this in-existent. In his ontological terms, 'being-qua-being' is inconsistent multiple, which can be signaled by the void. It is undecidable. It is free from every determination of the linguistic predicates. It does not have any predicative feature. This undecidability is its generic character. Also the infinity of a truth can only be explained by this genericity. A truth operates on such a generic point and this is why it is infinite. Accordingly, philosophy, for Badiou, must explain this process. More explicitly, philosophy must distinguish a truth from the other occurrences of its world by seizing its infinity and by the act of subtraction.

The eternity of a truth is not a quantitative attribute, but only a qualitative attribute of truth. There is, for Badiou, not the empirical time but the timeless essence of time. Philosophy seizes the temporality of a truth procedure and contemplates concerning what has happened in such a truth procedure. Philosophy determines the place of a truth and names it. Indeed, it makes compossible the truths, which are created in one of the realms of truth procedures: science, politics, love and art. Badiou explains truth by following Lacan's thesis of truth as such that:

I call this conceptual and nominal swarming of forms of knowledge, the encyclopedia of the situation. The encyclopedia is what classifies subsets [of the situation-set]. . . . . To that end, he [Lacan] took up the modern notion of a non-conceptual gap between truth and forms of knowledge and projected it onto the field of psychoanalysis. Not only did he distinguish between truth and knowledge, he also showed that a truth is essentially

unknown; that it quite literally constitutes a *hole* in forms of knowledge.<sup>86</sup>

Philosophy's act of seizing separates truths from the other beings in the world. A truth constitutes a hole or an interruption in 'the encyclopedia of knowledge'. It leads to some change in the structural features of the world. By the act of seizing, philosophy also makes a hole in the encyclopedia of knowledge, ends the stubborn insistence over the old knowledge and prepares the ground for a new supplement or a novelty.

Thirdly, Badiou states that philosophy should be axiomatic. Not only truth but also the subtractive operations of philosophy have to have four figures: 'the undecidable', 'the indiscernible', 'the generic' and 'the unnamable'. It is the undecidable that which is related to the event. This is the opening point of a truth process. The subject is the indiscernible of this procedure. It decides on whether an event occurs or not. He/she makes a statement or an axiom concerning this undecidable. This subject only forces this undecidable one to be veridical by his/her decision. His decision can be only axiomatic, since it cannot be possible to determine what happened exactly. Also it is impossible to know exactly what happened because of the event's undecidable character. This is also why Badiou states that philosophy has to be axiomatic.

The infinity of a truth comes from its genericity, or being originated from an undecidable element of a set. A truth is an infinite set which is subtracted from all the predicates and the names in the encyclopedia of knowledge. This is to say that a truth is the result of an operation upon the inconsistent, undecidable multiple or the void. Thus, a truth can only be a novelty in a situation. It cannot be a different composition of the things already in the situation. It cannot be a

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<sup>86</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 123.

new interpretation of the old. It adds, or supplements the new thing to the situation. It should be said that this addition cannot come from the outside of the situation but inside. More clearly, an event occurs in a relation with the undecidable part of a situation, and inaugurates a truth procedure. This starting point of a truth process is already in the situation as an undecidable. This undecidability or genericity of a truth requires the fidelity of a subject to itself, since a truth cannot be objectively determined by means of some proofs or evidences. Thus, there must be only an axiomatic decision and a subject's fidelity to this decision. Further, a truth also has an unnamable part in it. This part is that which cannot be named. This unnamable part of a truth is the most emphasized thing in Badiou's philosophy. Badiou states by the help of this unnamable part that a total expression of a truth cannot be possible. This is also why a truth is only axiomatically expressed. Total explanation is forbidden, in Badiou's understanding of truth, thanks to this unnamable part. Accordingly, philosophy can conceive or express this axiomatic nature of truth only by the help of axiomatic thought.

Fourthly, Badiou declares that philosophy operates over the truths but it does not produce a truth in its own domain. According to Badiou four truth procedures, i.e. science, love, art and politics produce truths. More explicitly, a truth can be produced only in these realms. Philosophy in no way produces a truth and it only operates over the multiple truths of these procedures. Truth is not a kind of correspondence between an object and knowledge about this object. It does not pertain to the theoretical domain. In accordance with these declarations, for Badiou, philosophy cannot be divided into some intellectual division such as the epistemology or the political philosophy. Badiou explains his disagreement with this division as follows:

Philosophy, which requires the deployment of four conditions, cannot specialize in any one of them. I am opposed to every academic division

of philosophy in would-be objective domains: there is nothing legitimate, or interesting, in what is termed ‘epistemology’ (philosophy of science), ‘aesthetics’ (philosophy of arts), ‘psychology’ (philosophy of affects) or ‘political philosophy’ (philosophy of the practices of power).<sup>87</sup>

Philosophy can only evaluate a general concept of truth by looking at these truth procedures of its time. It must be said that truth is not only the source but also the target of philosophy. Not only philosophy is conditioned by a truth in these four domains, but also these domains require a philosophical evaluation to complete a truth process in them. Only philosophy seizes or should seize the value of a truth. Badiou uses ‘inaesthetic’ for aesthetic, ‘transitional ontology’ for epistemology and ‘metapolitics’ for the political philosophy to emphasize this doubled relation of condition/evaluation coupling.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. xxxi.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.

## CHAPTER III

### PHILOSOPHICAL ATTITUDE

As I have already pointed out above, according to Badiou there are four domains in which a truth procedure occurs: science, art, love and politics. Philosophy, Badiou maintains, must reflect upon these truths. But one has to keep in mind that none of these truth procedures is produced by philosophy. Truth occurs outside and independently of philosophy. Philosophy does no longer have its classical position of sovereignty over other discourses. This is due to the fact that “philosophy is conditioned by the faithful procedures of its times”.<sup>89</sup> To be more accurate, philosophy produces concepts to comprehend what has newly happened in the situation as a result of an event. The task of philosophy is not only this production of concepts but also a comprehensive and complete analysis of the conjuncture.<sup>90</sup> Additionally, philosophy must be “axiomatic not definitional or descriptive” in order to do its own natural duties.<sup>91</sup>

One of main aims of Badiou is to attack the concept of transcendental truth. According to Badiou there is not any transcendental truth. A truth can only occur in a concrete situation. There is no single truth, which is inclusive of other truths. That is, there is a multiplicity of truths. Philosophy is concerned, for Badiou, with these truths occurring in any of the domains of science, art, love and politics. It is not a realm of appearing of a truth, since it cannot

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<sup>89</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 340.

<sup>90</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 84.

<sup>91</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 122.

produce a truth. It only enables to evaluate the truths and their production process.

Philosophy works only as an operation over that which Badiou calls ‘truth procedure’. Therefore, there cannot be claimed that there is a history of philosophy. Because of this philosophy “does not exist within all historical configurations; its way of being is discontinuity in time as in space . . . the procedures that condition philosophy are truth procedures”.<sup>92</sup> But there are periods of philosophy. These periods are determined by the effects of current events. The period from Descartes to Leibniz is effected by the Galilean event. The period from Rousseau to Hegel was effected by the historical and political conditions of French Revolution. The current period of philosophy is, for Badiou, conditioned by the events of “Cantor-Gödel-Cohen for the Matheme, Lacan for the concept of love, Pessoae-Mandelstam-Celan for the poem, the sequence of obscure events between 1965 and 1980, for the political invention”.<sup>93</sup>

In the light of what has been said above on attributes which Badiou attaches to philosophy, it may be useful to look at his concept of ontology and phenomenology before analyzing his theory of truth. For, I think that all endeavors Badiou makes are aimed at to create space to establish his view of truth. The *Being and Event* what may be seen as his major work is devoted to the discussion concerning the distinction between ‘being’ and ‘event’. These concepts are principally differentiated from each other, though Badiou connects with ‘and’. ‘*Being*’ is the issue of ontology, while ‘*event*’ is not. Badiou defines event as ‘not being’, for he wants to save truth from the

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<sup>92</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 33.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

deterministic character of ontology. I will analyze these distinct categories in the next section.

After his '*Being and Event*', Badiou notices some deficiencies concerning the relation between 'being' and 'event' in his theory. Further, he examines the world of phenomenon in his last work major work *Logics of Worlds*. In this book, he aims at finding a rational and topological place for the relation between 'being' and 'appearing'. By this way, he tries to find an ontological foundation for the appearance of an event. He also provides the logical basis for his theory of truth. I will look at this logical background for his theory of truth more closely in the section 3.3 entitled "The Phenomenological Attitude". Before I am going to look at what I call Badiou's ontological attitude, I would like to examine his early period in order to prepare the ground.

### **3.1. The Early Badiou**

Badiou is a Maoist in the period of his works of especially *Théorie de la contradiction* (1975), *De l'idéologie* (1976) and *Théorie de sujet* (1982). In this period, he supports of not historical materialism but dialectical materialism. Historical causality, for this earlier Badiou, cannot capture the changes in the existing world. Badiou gives more importance and primacy to the practice of the militant subject than to the mode of production or commodity fetishism. He reduces dialectic to a kind of structural localization of a militant subject. In *Theory of Subject*, there are two fundamental terms: the outplace and the splace. The split between them is the motor for the change. The proletariat as outplace of the situation wants to find a local place for itself.

Badiou, in this earlier period<sup>94</sup>, rejects the idea that the dialectical necessity can be captured by a historical causality. He nonetheless seems not rejecting completely the idea of necessity in his period of philosophizing. However, later in works such as *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds* he rejects it entirely. In his earlier period, if Badiou admits causal relation, this has to be taken not in the sense of historical but only in the sense of dialectical causality. He states that there is no linear course of history and thus no historical necessity of a revolution. The subject cannot appear as a historical result of cumulative causes. That is to say that history does not give a meaning or direction to an emancipatory politics. However, this is not to suggest that Badiou rejects the concept of history. Rather, it seems to be more accurate to assert that he tries to put forward a new understanding of history. In *Theory of Subject*, there are two possible histories: the practice of knowledge or the history of repetition and non-linear revolutionary practice. This revolutionary practice cuts off the repetition of the history of knowledge. It is contingent and indifferent to historical necessity. It is only a sudden configuration of contingency. It is not chronological, relational or causal. It can be said that there are, for Badiou, no unchanging laws of the radical change. In *Theory of Subject*, for example, though not defined from an historical point of view, the concept of necessity is retained, which is taken into account within the framework of his conception of change. In doing so, Badiou radically transforms the concept of history to a kind of discontinuous and scissional one. Accordingly, there appears ahistorical political subjectivity, which has a singular form. It may be said that we encounter in early Badiou an attempt to formulate an idea of necessity of a radical change, which seems to be viewed as non-historical but rather dialectical.

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<sup>94</sup> See also: O. Feltham, *Alain Badiou: Live Theory*, Continuum, London and New York, 2008, pp. 32-83.

In *Theory of Subject*, Badiou describes the ‘reality’ as a structure of representations. He seems to suppose that thought operates twice: once when it comes to the separation of the excess in this reality and, then, when it comes to the point that the transformation of this excess to a consistent point takes place. That is to suggest that the separation plays a significant role at the beginning of such a kind of transformation or change. Badiou makes a distinction between presentation and representation and posits that the state is a form of representation. The state is supposed to be the point of excess in a situation. Communism is only the disappearance of any kind of state. These explanations and the concepts used such as ‘representation’ and ‘the excess point’ are similar to those in his later works. However, there are also some concepts, which Badiou renounces in his later works. For example, the concepts of *splace* and *outplace* are these types of renounced concepts.

In *Theory of Subject*, Badiou posits that a being can appear only by the localization of the act of representation. The localization is that which allows a being to appear. Further, every being is supposed to be a combination of itself and its localization by representation. Badiou calls this space of localizations ‘*splace*’. The appearing is only the *splace* of a being. Being itself cannot be represented, while it is ‘the real’ of the ‘*splace*’. It is the ‘out of the place’. In this earlier work, the real is not conceived as in the world of appearance, but, though it is the basis of all the appearances, it is suggested to be as out of the world of appearance. The subject is one who organizes being, which is out of place. The subject is the name of the organization of this ‘out-of-place’. It ‘forces’ the representation to represent this ‘out-of-place’, or to include it, or to locate it. Additionally, such a localization of out of place is called “radical change” and only this can lead to the actualization of equality in a society. That is to say that the only way for the eternal equality is only to be represented of being itself, or of ‘the real’ of the ‘out-of-place’, as put forward in *Theory of Subject*. This can be actualized only by the act of organization of subject over

the out of place. In his later works, like in *Theory of Subject*, the subject is thought of as a non-historical one. In this regard, although we may ascertain a similarity between his *Theory of Subject* and his following works, in *Theory of Subject* he champions the concept of dialectical necessity of radical change. After his work *Can Politics Be Thought*, he abandons this necessity too.

Badiou sees himself as a thinker or an activist of Marxist theory. He always accepts the idea that Marxism is in a crisis and must be revised. He wants to develop a new understanding for a social revolution not by refusing Marxism but by modifying it. Almost in all his works Badiou states that a politics must be at a distance from the state and the discipline of economy. He disregards or ignores the importance of concept of the mode of production and that of the relations of production, which are not only essential to Marxist tradition theorizing but also to Marx's own theorizing. He avoids giving economic explanations in order to elucidate what is the social radical change, since such a justification, for him, leads to economic determinism. There is, Badiou argues, an antagonism in the structure of society, but this is not between the social and economic classes. In *Theory of Subject*, he asserts that antagonism is a precondition of change. But he argues against the concept of social class in Marxist thought. What he means by antagonism may be seen from an exploration by Alberto Toscano:

Badiou's theory of the subject does in fact contain a notion of transitivity but it is one 'woven' out of antagonism. This antagonism is to be understood in two ways: (1) the *structural* antagonism between place and force that constitutes determination as domination, as the indexing of every force to its proper place within the system of representation; (2) the *subjective* antagonism of a force bent on destroying its place, by crossing the limit imposed by determination and

thus limiting representation itself, what Badiou, with some irony, calls ‘the labour of the positive.’<sup>95</sup>

In this passage, Toscano argues that Badiou’s category of antagonism has two aspects that are closely connected. There is a relation or transitivity between the constitutional side and destructive side of antagonism. This relation can be seen as a dialectical transitivity in Badiou’s *Theory of Subject*. The structure determines the correct place of force. As a result of this antagonism, there appears a system of representation and some forces remain as not having their places. At the second level, these forces out of the system of representation enfold and thus destroy the system of determination. The first level of antagonism leads to the state domination, the second level is the source of destruction of the state or is the source of a revolution.

In his *Theory of Subject*, Badiou sees the proletariat as an antagonistic class; however, he defines the proletariat not as against bourgeoisie but against the bourgeois state. The proletariat can destroy this system of representation only via its organized force of party. It must be said that the party is synonymous term of the subject in this work. There is transitivity between the politics of non-placed force of ‘*esplace*’ and the structure of representation. All the ideas concerning party are missed out in Badiou’s subsequent works. He claims that the proletariat cannot be seen as the subject to cause a radical change in society. The moment of ‘destruction’, however, appears in Badiou’s following works not as an entire result, or necessary part of a radical change but only as a moment of that change. That is to suggest that the destruction as a negative side of change loses its importance, while the creative action of the subject becomes more important. The positive side of change becomes more important

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<sup>95</sup> A. Toscano, “Communism as Separation”, in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 142.

than its negative side. Badiou explains this decreasing importance of the moment of destruction as follows:

I think that in *Theory of Subject* destruction is a dialectical concept. Destruction signifies that a part of the situation can be destroyed for the new, for the event. It is sometimes necessary. I don't say in *Being and Event* that destruction is always a bad thing. It can be necessary to destroy something for the newness of the event. Because I think the newness is a supplementation and not a destruction. It is something which happens, something which comes, and this point is the crucial point. It is possible that for the becoming of the newness something has to be destroyed but it is not the essence, the being, the kernel of the process. It can just be a consequence. In *Theory of Subject* I thought that negativity was creative in itself and I don't think that now. I think that creativity is a sort of affirmation and not a sort of negation.<sup>96</sup>

As may be seen from the passage above, after the middle of 80s, the moment of destruction is not a fundamental part of a truth process any more. The real essence of a radical change, in Badiou's view, is a positive supplementation to the structure. His stress turns from 'destruction' towards 'creation', or 'affirmation'. It may be said that the main issue of his *Theory of Subject* is then the events in the political realms. This special focus must have Badiou prompted to admit the necessity of destruction. In fact, in his *Theory of Subject*, the realm of radical change or truth process was seen only in the political structure. I think this is the main reason why Badiou stressed the moment of destruction in this work. For, in a political transformation of a situation, there are always some people contrary to this change. The rich men do not want to have the system of private property extinguished. Also, one who has the power of sovereignty does not want to lose the apparatus of this sovereignty. Badiou, however, awakes this relation of destruction with the political event. He states that destruction can be only a temporary consequence of a political event. It is not an intrinsic feature of a truth process in itself. It can be, for Badiou, but the

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<sup>96</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 176.

moment of destruction is not necessary for every truth procedure, which is no longer just political.

After 1985 in *Can Politics Be Thought*, Badiou starts to change his idea on the transitivity. The place of the two in the political subjectivity is no longer based on a destructive antagonism. In order to explain the place of subject, Badiou gives up this terminology and proposes a new term instead: 'discontinuous'. A theory of subject is supplemented by a theory of event, and then Badiou rejects to take into consideration any kind of transitivity. As a result, he ends to analyze the forms of class antagonism. Badiou analyzes the category of subject only in a formal discourse. Politics and thus subject is only formally defined. Neither politics nor subject has a materialist content any more. To break with the structure of representation is sufficient to be subject. All kinds of political subjectivity, for him, are vied as forms of communist. It can be said that Badiou abandons the structural function of antagonism after his *Can Politics Be Thought*. Then he starts to elucidate the rare and non-cumulative nature of political subjectivities. Toscano elucidates this change in Badiou's thoughts as follows:

While Badiou is indeed proposing something like politics for politic' sake (Whence its autonomy as a generic procedure), the universalizable and egalitarian determination of such a politics cannot but have effects, 'communist' effects in real . . .

Having abdicated the principle of (class) antagonism, politics thus depends on a wager on the dysfunction of representation, on holding true to the decision that something in representation has faltered, that at the edges of order the real unbinding has made an irruption. It is therefore as the precarious point of a dysfunction of representation that the concept of the event allows for the construction of communism in the absence of structural antagonism.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Toscano, "Communism as Separation", p. 146.

After *Being and Event*, this dialectical thought also disappears from Badiou's philosophical theory. The event, for Badiou, is singular and ahistorical. It is rare, thus it is in no way predicted from the beginning. It has an enigmatic or traumatic quality, since it interrupts the repetition in a situation by its invention of a novelty. It cannot be counted by the unchanging laws of change, since it has changeable and unpredictable consequences. Thus, any explanatory history, for Badiou, can only be a narrative, which justifies the status quo. It can be said that there is a dynamic or active history in Badiou's view of change. There is not a big and inclusive history but only historicity of certain multiplicities, which becomes a temporal. He rejects the historical continuity as a condition of change.

It cannot be said that Badiou does not change all his ideas after his *Being and Event*. His last work *Logics of Worlds*, however, has many different categories from those of *Being and Event*. Badiou himself points out some of them. First of all, the term 'situation' is replaced by the notion of 'world' in *Logics of Worlds*. A world is seen as a situation of an appearing. In fact, the main issue in *Logics of Worlds* is the appearance, while that in *Being and Event* is 'being-as-being' itself. And the term of world is more appropriate for an explanation of the appearance. Secondly, Badiou, in his *Being and Event*, sees the passage of inconsistent multiples to consistent multiple as the foundation of the entire phenomena. Thus, there is no ontological relation in being according to his theorizing in this earlier work. In contrast to this 'non-being of relation', *Logics of Worlds* shows that there is a relational consistency in a world.<sup>98</sup> Finally, Badiou sees, in his *Being and Event*, the identity of mathematics and being as the first and unique identity, while he supposes a second identity in his *Logics of Worlds*. Logics and appearing are identical and 'transcendental' is the

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<sup>98</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 99.

central operator of this identity.<sup>99</sup> That is, we encounter with the category of transcendental, which has an operational character in the realm of appearing, such as ‘one’ in being.

After having presented some of the major thoughts of early Badiou, I would like now to turn to Badiou’s ontological and phenomenological attitude.

### **3.2. The Ontological Attitude**

Badiou’s ontology is a subtractive one. According to Badiou, ontology can only be a theory of ‘inconsistent multiplicities’. Being as being is an inconsistent multiple. That is to say that what ‘being’ is can only be understood by the act of its subtraction from all the predicative determination. It can be said that Badiou subtracts being from the power of ‘one’. Additionally, he argues that everything is multiple and “every multiple is a manifold of multiple”.<sup>100</sup> Badiou says that “what can be thought of Being per se is found in the radical manifold or a multiple that is not under the power of the One”.<sup>101</sup> He calls this radical multiple ‘multiple without one’ or ‘inconsistent multiple’. This inconsistent multiple is that which can be conceived without the domination of one. That is, they are devoid of any predicative determination.

Badiou also declares that a definition, which involves a predicative explanation, impedes the ability of thinking about these inconsistent multiple without one. Thus, being as being cannot be expressed by means of any definitional or predicative statement. This is why, for Badiou, there is a need of

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 36.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

‘axiomatic thought’ of being as being, which “seizes upon the disposition of undefined terms”.<sup>102</sup> A subtractive ontology expresses ‘being as inconsistent multiple’ in the form of axiom. Thinking of this multiple cannot be expressed by another way of thinking. Badiou declares that the value of an axiom of subtractive ontology comes from its subtraction from any kind of objective certainty. As already pointed out above, Badiou is deeply influenced by Plato. The importance of the axiomatic thought, however, is the point where Badiou’s philosophy differs from that of Plato’s. Badiou explain his opposition to Plato as follows:

It is clear perfectly that, for Plato, the trouble with mathematics is precisely the axiom. Why? Because the axiom remains outside of the thinkable. Geometers are compelled to proceed discursively because they do not enter into the normative power of the One, whose name is *first principle*. And this constraint is testimony to their exteriority in relation to the principle-based norm of the thinkable. In Plato’s view, the axiom is laden with an obscure type of violence, owing to the fact that it does not appropriate the dialectical and definitional norm of the One. In the axiom and mathematics there is certainly thought, but not yet free thought. It is marshaled by the paradigm, the norm and the One. On this issue, my conclusion is opposed to Plato’s. What determined the axiom’s value – the axiomatic disposition – is precisely its subtraction from the normative power of the One. Unlike Plato, I do not see the constraint it includes as being the sign of anything lacking in the unifying and grounding clarification he seeks. In it I see the necessity of the subtractive gesture itself. It is the movement by which thought is torn from everything that still keeps it connected to the common or to the general.<sup>103</sup>

As can be seen from this passage, only an axiomatic method of thinking, for Badiou, is appropriate for thinking the being thanks to its independency from the authority of the one. Further, the axiomatic thought does not produce any definite definition. Badiou says also that “every grasping of Being [...]”

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

presupposes a decision that decisively orients thought *without any guarantees or arbitration*".<sup>104</sup> In other words, ontology cannot be a discipline exploring 'being as being' by the help of some principles such as dialectical one.<sup>105</sup> This is why Badiou, as opposition to Plato, employs the axiomatic thinking of mathematic to think being as being.

This leads Badiou to his equation of ontology to mathematics. I would like, firstly, to examine this equation. I shall then examine the main theses of his ontology and in relation to this I am going to explore some fundamental concepts. This may provide, as I hope, a much deeper understanding of his mathematical ontology.

There are many philosophers who rely on mathematical realm when they develop their philosophies. Badiou points out some of them. Descartes, by referring to mathematical thinking, aims the simplicity and clarity for the philosophical terms and explanations. Kant gives the mathematical thinking as an example in order to free his concept of infinite from the mediation of time and space, and to explain his category of 'a priori'. Badiou stresses the idea that there is more beyond this fertility of mathematics for the development of philosophy. He says as follows:

In any case, our maxim is: *philosophy must enter into logic via mathematics, not into mathematics via logic.*

In my work this translates into: mathematics is the science of being qua being. Logic pertains to the coherence of appearance. And if the study of appearance also mobilizes certain areas of mathematics, this is simply because, following an insight formalized by Hegel but which actually goes back to Plato, it is of the essence of being to appear. This

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 57.(The emphasis pertains to me.)

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

is what maintains the form of all appearing within a mathematizable transcendental order.<sup>106</sup>

First of all, mathematics reveals how the idea that there are unthinkable things is meaningless. It rejects the existence of such spiritualist categories of superstition. Only in the realm of mathematics, for Badiou, we can recognize the idea that every problem formulated by thought can also be solved.

It should be emphasized that the developments in the domain of mathematics, for Badiou, cannot follow a linear path. Mathematics always begins at the very beginning and constantly transforms its central concepts. This may be the most crucial feature of mathematics that motivates Badiou to suggest the equation of ontology and mathematics. The aim of his ontology is not to give the absolute explanation of ‘what is’. Similar to this, Badiou hesitates to give a qualitative definition of being as being. It would not be entirely true, however, to say that Badiou draws all his understanding of ontology on mathematics. Yes, Badiou uses some mathematical terms such as ‘infinity’ which is constituted via the axiomatic intuition. It must be added that Badiou is also influenced by the poetic affirmation of infinity. Badiou explains this poetic affirmation as follows:

Mallarmé accuses mathematicians of denying chance and thereby of fixing the infinite in the hereditary rigidity of calculation. In *Igitur*, that rigidity is symbolized by the family. Whence the poetic, anti-mathematical operation which, Mallarmé believes, binds infinity to chance and is symbolized by the dice-throw. . . .

But what Mallarmé has failed to see is how the operations through which mathematics has reconfigured the conception of the infinite are constantly affirming chance through the contingency of their recommencement. It is up to philosophy to gather together or conjoin the poetic affirmation of infinity drawn metaphorically from chance, and the mathematical construction of the infinite, drawn formally from

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<sup>106</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 15.

an axiomatic intuition. As a result, the injunction to mathematical beauty intersects with the injunction to poetic truth. And vice versa.<sup>107</sup>

This is the Mallarmé's influence over his understanding of infinity. Similar to Mallarmé, Badiou put forward of the idea that a truth is infinite because of its dependency on a chance.

Badiou declares that 'mathematics is ontology' as his first and fundamental thesis. In doing so, he hopes to free philosophy from thinking of 'being as being'.<sup>108</sup> Mathematics, for him, is the only discourse, which is suitable to the articulation of pure being as being. It can show 'being as being' without reference to particular qualities. Mathematics, for Badiou, is a "pure theory of the multiple".<sup>109</sup> Only mathematics, for him, can show that it is only an operation, which counts something as one. This is why Badiou equates ontology with mathematics. It can be said that Badiou's ontology examines 'being qua being' by the help of some operations. He equates ontology with mathematics, since the operational and axiomatic character of mathematics, Badiou argues, is the most suitable thing to understand 'being qua being' and its multiplicity.

Badiou's discourse is neither epistemology nor a philosophy of mathematics. He tries to eliminate the understanding of being as a unity. Badiou posits that being itself is not a singular 'one'. The impasse of ontology, for him, is that the beings are thought as plural while 'being' itself as 'one'. Heidegger is one of the philosophers who come to this impasse. He, in the eyes of Badiou, speaks of being in its totality. Badiou emphasizes the inconsistency of thinking of

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>109</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 5.

being in its totality.<sup>110</sup> He raises a question of how being can be singular, while the beings are plural. This question is his motivating point for his turning towards mathematics to comprehend being. More specifically, the set theory, for Badiou, allows one to conceive being in terms of its multiplicity. Badiou states that “ontology, namely, what of Being *qua* Being is inscribed or written as *logos*, is exactly mathematics itself”.<sup>111</sup> This is because his thinking of being as multiplicity does not cause a chaotic thesis. Badiou wants to explain being as multiple by the help of set theory and its various formulations: ‘the void set’, ‘the power set’, ‘inclusion’, ‘belonging’ and so on.

To sum up, Badiou reduces ontology to the formal discipline of mathematics, especially to the set theory. By the guide of this formal discipline, he rejects getting entangled in the particularities of the positive sciences such as biology and physics. These sciences work only in the realm of the encyclopedia of situation and can only be “ideologies”.<sup>112</sup> Badiou accepts the Heideggerian distinction between the ontological and the ontic. He cedes the particularities of the ontic to the natural sciences. He accepts the idea that being as being can only be expressed in mathematical terminology rather than in that of these natural sciences. Additionally, Badiou’s equation of ontology to mathematics aims to show “the nullity of the opposition between analytic thought and continental thought.”<sup>113</sup> The majority of continental philosophers abandon the mathematical thinking to the hand of analytic philosophy. They pay attention to the cultural, historical or literary chases. Analytic thinkers set their

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<sup>110</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p 177.

<sup>111</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 107.

<sup>112</sup> A. Badiou, “Afterward: Some Replies to a Demanding Friend”, in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 233.

<sup>113</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. xiv.

philosophical understanding in relation to mathematical formalization and logical language. Badiou's philosophy tries to fuse both analytic and continental philosophy. However, the mathematical thinking is elevated to a central position. I will discuss whether this elevation protects Badiou's philosophy from lapsing into relativism in following sections.

### **3.2.1. What is Being-as-being?**

Badiou's ontology is a subtractive one. According to this ontological theory being is not available to direct experience. It can only be axiomatically expressed because it can in no way be articulated. This expression can only be made by the way of mathematical mediation. In order to comprehend the being's whatness, it must be subtracted from all the particular attributes.

Ontology, Badiou argues, is the theory of inconsistent multiplicities, which are not counted-as-one. Its subject is the multiple as multiple. That is, ontology works on "the multiple without any other predicate than its multiplicity"<sup>114</sup>, or 'being-qua-being'. Badiou identifies 'ontology' with 'mathematics', and after this identification, being is no longer in the domain of the material or the existential. That which pertains to the domain of the existential is not being but beings. As can be seen from these explanations, in *Being and Event* Badiou makes a sharp distinction between the domain of 'being as being' and the domain of phenomenological world. In Badiou's approach, there is no term or concept which may provide an ontological or logical connection between them.

Badiou suggests that the fundamental character of being is its multiplicity. 'Being' itself is not a singular 'one'. The set theory, for Badiou, allows one to

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

conceive being in terms of its multiplicity. It is the correct place where we must look at the discussion of ‘substance’ in the history of philosophy. There is an important debate concerning the question whether being is plural or one. Spinoza can be seen as monist, while Leibniz as pluralist with respect to this discussion about substance. However, Badiou generally hesitates or even avoids getting into such a discussion. He does not use the term ‘substance’ except that when he criticizes the views concerning it. Badiou does not prefer to say about whether substance is plural or many. Instead, he declares that being is not one but plural.

This preference gives us an idea about Badiou’s ontological tendency in general. He does not make a discussion about what is being in the line of substantial viewpoint. He does not see the category of ‘substance’ as a fundamental term for an ontological analysis. In fact, the term ontology itself is an extravagant category in the examination of what is being. Mathematics is the sufficient domain for this examination of plurality of being. It shows that ‘one’ is only an operation over the multiple nature of being. I think that Badiou can be seen as monist, though he declares himself as a defender of plurality. For, the ontological origin for all the happenings, as I will be showing below, is determined as ‘the void’. If there is no void in a situation, there cannot be any becoming, or a new appearance. I think therefore that “no void, no truth!” can be said to be the gist of Badiou’s philosophy.

Badiou rejects the idea that being is one. By this rejection, he aims to justify his idea that being in itself is multiple. Badiou also wants to validate the idea that there is no universe or whole. It is meaningless to say, for Badiou, that there is a universe including all the worlds or that there is a multiple including all the other multiples. He explains why he refuses the idea that there is a universe as follows:

We will call *reflexive* a multiple which has the property of presenting itself in its own multiple-composition. Adopting an entirely classical reasoning, we have just said that if the being of the Whole is presupposed, it must be presupposed as reflexive. Or that the concept of Universe entails, with regard to its being, the predicate of reflexivity. If there is a being of the Whole, or if (it amounts to the same) the concept of Universe is consistent, one must admit that it is consistent to attribute to certain multiples the property of reflexivity, since at least one of them possesses it, namely the Whole (which is). Moreover, we know it is consistent not to attribute it to certain multiples. . . . Thus, there certainly exist non-reflexive multiples.<sup>115</sup>

There is no one or whole, in other words, for Badiou, as a multiple of all multiples cannot be consistent. Such a multiple cannot reflect on itself or does not represent itself. In fact, all the multiples are ‘non-reflexive’ ones.

Badiou declares first that ‘one’ exists only as ‘an operation’. In other words, there is not one but “only count-as-one”.<sup>116</sup> ‘One exists only as number. The fundamental character of being is its multiplicity. A multiple belongs to a ‘situation’ or is presented by a ‘situation’. Such a presentation of a multiple is a counting operation. Badiou calls ‘structure’ the mode of counting-as-one of a presented multiple. A multiple is consistent, for Badiou, if it is counted-as-one. If not so, it is inconsistent.<sup>117</sup> This inconsistent multiplicity is the only issue of Badiou’s ontology.

The inconsistent multiple amounts to the pure multiple, which is anterior to any structure or is not counted-as-one. Plato’s ‘Other’, for Badiou, is aiming at thinking these inconsistent multiplicities. According to Badiou’s reading, Plato suggests that thought is incapable of thinking the pure multiple, or making it

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<sup>115</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 109.

<sup>116</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 24.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

consistent. Thought is capable of doing so only by the ‘non-being-mediation of the one’.<sup>118</sup> Plato seems to have formulated this idea in a passage in *Parmenides* when he says that “if there is no one, none of the others can be so much as imagined to be one, nor yet to be many, for you cannot imagine many without a one”.<sup>119</sup> Badiou sees this mediation as similar to his operation of ‘count-as-one’. Ontology as an axiomatic system seizes the multiple as multiple by “forming into consistency all inconsistency and forming into inconsistency all consistency”.<sup>120</sup> Badiou’s ontology deconstructs the sovereignty of one by showing this operational function of the one. Then, Badiou expresses the multiple as the absolute form of presentation.

Pure multiple or inconsistent multiple is, according to Badiou, the multiple without the operation of ‘count-as-one’. It is not wrong to assume that inconsistent multiple is the multiple without any qualification. It may then be said that it is a form of abstraction. It may be added that Badiou is well aware of the operational character of this abstraction, which he emphasizes.

‘The void’ is the most fundamental conception of Badiou’s philosophy. Badiou sees ‘the void’ as the name of being. That is to suggest that in Badiou’s philosophy the void is the most essential point of being. He asserts that the first ontological law that “every multiple is composed of multiples”, and the second ontological law is “the first presented multiplicity has to be a multiple of nothing”.<sup>121</sup> That is to say that the void is ‘unpresentable’ and it is “a

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>119</sup> Plato, *Parmenides*, in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (ed.), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002, p. 956, 217b.

<sup>120</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 30.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

subtractive term of the presentation of presentation”.<sup>122</sup> In fact, it may be claimed that the void does not designate ‘nothing’; it is only unknown, non-presented or undecidable element of a situation. The void is everywhere or exists in every situation. Badiou wants to show the existence of this unchangeable element by using the axioms of the set theory.

The void is an ontological structure. It has three negative properties: ‘indifference, in-finite, un-measured’.<sup>123</sup> Lastly, it is the “unpresentable *point of being* of any presentation”.<sup>124</sup> This unpresentable point is the source of change as Badiou conceives. There are two distinct relations between the multiples: ‘inclusion’ and ‘belonging’. In other words, they are two different operators of counting. A multiple can be an element of a set, or it can be a subset of a set. The first relation is belonging and the second is inclusion. It should not be forgotten that the void, or the set  $\emptyset$ , is a subset of every set and that it is a unique set of its power set. In other words, the void is then “in a position of universal inclusion”.<sup>125</sup>

Additionally, the set of the subsets of the void is not an empty set. It has a unique element: ‘the name of the void’ or the singleton of the void,  $\{\emptyset\}$ .<sup>126</sup> Further, Badiou supposes the singleton of the first singleton as  $\{\{\emptyset\}\}$  by ‘forming-into-one’ of  $\{\emptyset\}$ . The element of this second singleton is not  $\emptyset$ , but  $\{\emptyset\}$ .  $\{\emptyset\}$  and  $\{\{\emptyset\}\}$ , for Badiou, are distinct from each other. Then he conclusively states that “this is where the unlimited production of new

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., pp. 88-91.

multiples commences”.<sup>127</sup> This is the generic character of the void. The void in a situation is the ontological source for every novelty. Each new multiple is subtracted from the void as a connected result of the power-set axiom and forming-into-one. In other words, the new comes into existence by naming the unrepresentable, which is infinite void. This infinity of the void is the cause of the fact that the production of the new is unlimited.

As already pointed out, all situations, for Badiou’s ontology, are structured twice. There is always presentation and representation. Firstly, a multiple, a consistent multiple, belongs to a situation, or is counted as one by a situation. This belonging or counting is the presentation of this consistent multiple by the situation. Secondly, the same multiple is also counted as one by means of that which Badiou calls ‘the state of the situation’.<sup>128</sup> In other words, a group of consistent multiplicities is also included in a situation and these included parts belong to the state of situation. That is, this combination of consistent multiplicities is represented by the state of situation. In *Being and Event*, Badiou defines this state of situation also as a ‘*metastructure*’, which is the set of all subsets of a set.<sup>129</sup> This ‘*metastructure*’ is the conception, which Badiou renounces in his *Logics of Worlds*. However, he continues to use the conception of ‘structure’ in the later works too.

This category of structure, for Badiou, is different from the state of situation. He explains this difference in an interview made by Oliver Feltham as follows:

The problem is how a multiplicity becomes consistent. There are two responses to this question: first, at the level of presentation and, second,

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

at the level of representation. Structure is the name I give to the combination of the two levels, presentation *and* representation. Structure is not the same thing as the state of situation because the state of situation is only the second level, the level of representation. Structure includes the first level of presentation, belonging, and the second level – the state, the second count-for-one. Structure, I think, has two determinations and not one determination. The first is the level of presentation, which only designates that some sort of multiplicity is in the situation. The second level, the state, of inclusion, designates that multiplicity is not corrupted by the void. Structure consists of both levels.<sup>130</sup>

In brief, Badiou says that an inconsistent multiple turns into a consistent multiple by two kinds of count-as-one: the operation of ‘count-as-one-by-belonging-to-a-set’, and that of ‘count-as-one-by-included-in-a-set’. The first level produces a situation, while the second a state of situation. It must be said that, for Badiou, both of these operations are the counting operation. At the end of these operations, there appears a ‘structure’ which Badiou sees as the combination of these two levels: presentation and representation. The void appears at the level of the state of situation. It is not an element of a set, or presented by a situation. It must be, however, included in a situation, or represented by the state of the situation, since it is a subset of every set. It is the indifferent, infinite and unmeasured part of every situation.

Badiou points out that there are three distinct degrees of connections between a situation and its state.<sup>131</sup> Firstly, if a multiple not only belongs to a situation but also is included in this situation, it is both presented by the situation and represented by the state of the situation. Badiou calls this multiple ‘*normal*’. This is the ‘term part’ of a situation. It signifies a consistent multiple such as the bourgeoisie in the capitalist world. Such a term part of a situation is

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<sup>130</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 169.

<sup>131</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 99.

structured twice. It is legally an element of a situation and it is a legal component of the state. There cannot be any contradiction in this level of the structure.

Secondly, a multiple can belong to a situation, although it cannot be included in this situation. That is, it is not represented by the state of a situation but presented by this situation. Badiou calls this type of multiple '*singular*'. This is the 'immediate term' of a situation. Why does Badiou use the terms 'singular' and 'immediate term' to name this non-represented element? Firstly, there is a binary characteristic of the structure: the presentation and the representation. The former is an immediate operation. For, if an element exists in a situation, it becomes directly an element of this situation. There is no need of a mediating operation for this natural belonging. Contrarily, the operation of representation is a mediatory operation upon the first. This is why Badiou calls this non-represented term 'immediate'. A singular multiple is that which is not mediated by the operation of representation. Badiou gives the proletariat as an example for this term.

Lastly, there is a point of excess in a situation. Badiou calls this multiple '*excescence*', which does not belong to a situation but is included in this situation. This *excescence* is not a term but a part of a situation. It is not presented by a situation but represented by the structure, or by the metastructure. The state as a political category can be seen such an *excescence* multiple in Badiou's philosophy. In fact, this term indicates the excessiveness of the operation of representation. In the set theory, the power set of a set is a set of all the subsets of this set. The number of element of this power set is more than that of the set. This means that the power set of a set has more power than a set of which it is the power set. Let us think the set A with two elements. The power set of A has four elements.

Whether this excessiveness of the power set has negative or positive meaning is questionable point in Badiou's philosophy. I think that both of them are true. It is negative because a singular term transforms to a normal term only by restricting the power of this excrescence point. In other words, it should be annihilated, since any restriction of its power means the loss of its natural characteristic excessiveness. More explicitly, after such a restriction, the excrescent point becomes meaningless. Also, it is positive, a singular point as the very source of every radical change can only exist by the existence of such excessive point in the structure. Badiou explains not only 'being as being' but also the nature of radical change by the help of this '*excrescence*' term. There is a dialectical relation between the void as *singular* term and the *excrescence* term, which require each other without contradiction.

### 3.2.2. The Constitutive Event

Badiou points out that an event is not being as being. What does this conception then mean, if it is not a being? Event is the undecidable occurrence. Badiou wants to explain the occurrence of an event in his philosophical system. It can be said that all the aim in his ontological explanation of being with the guide of mathematics is to give the proper place to the conception of event. Event is the starting point of a truth process. This is why it is very essential in order to understand Badiou's theory of truth.

What qualifies an event as event is that it *occurs*, and not it *is*. It is "that which subtract itself from the ontological determination".<sup>132</sup> It is not being as being but that which is over being-as-being or 'trans-being'. It can be said that it is that which is 'impossible'. Badiou states that event is that which is irrelevant to

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<sup>132</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 98.

the ontological determination and that “philosophy is the theory of what is strictly impossible for mathematics”.<sup>133</sup> Event is not what is but what happens. It is not a kind of miracle. It is not mathematically explained, since it is a ‘trans-being’. The components of an event, however, are subtracted from the situation, which is defined by means of ontological terms.

Badiou makes a distinction between nature and history. Nature consists of natural multiplicities. Nature is “what is normal in being”.<sup>134</sup> Let us examine what ‘normal’ is. The ontological law for normality, for Badiou, is ‘transitivity’. A set is transitive only if all the elements of this set are also parts of its power set, or the set of its subsets.<sup>135</sup> A transitive set is called an ordinal number and natural multiples are ordinals. They are stable, homogeneous and have an immanent order.<sup>136</sup> There is no separating point in nature. There is a regular order in a natural situation. All multiples in nature are interconnected with each other without any void point. As we already saw, all multiples in nature both belong to the situation and are included by the structure. All of them are both presented and represented.

On the other hand, ‘history’ has the opposite features of nature. It is the place of ‘singularity’, which is presented but not represented by a situation. Contrary to the nature, history is not stable, normal and natural. Nature is ‘absolute’, while history is ‘relative’.<sup>137</sup> In other words, Badiou distinguishes the natural situations from the historical situations in which truths are produced. History is

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<sup>133</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 60.

<sup>134</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 129.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

the place of eventual occurrences, which cannot be defined in terms of ontological terminologies. Badiou explains his distinction as follows:

We have a concrete situation. We can think the ontological structure of that situation. We can! It is very difficult sometimes, but we can. So we can think about infinite multiplicity, something about the natural multiplicity, something about the historical character of the situation, something about the eventual site and so on. There is an ontological schema of the situation. With this schema we can understand the situation. The crucial point is, are we able to understand the situation from the point of view of truth or only from the point of view of knowledge? If we can understand the situation from the point of view of truth then there is a process of truth which is irreducible to the ontological categories. Because when the subject is constituted in the concrete development of a truth, he or she experiences the situation, directly, and that sort of experience has nothing to do with ontology. When we are in a political fight, or in love, or in a concrete artistic creation we are not in the ontological situation.<sup>138</sup>

Badiou explains the process of truth with respect to this historical situation. There is, as Badiou suggests, not a reciprocal relation between nature and history. History is the realm of the production of a truth contrary to the natural situation. Also, a historical situation can be naturalized or normalized, though nature cannot be singularized or historicized. After the production of a truth by a subject in a historical situation, there appears knowledge of it, thereby a historical situation turns to a natural situation. This is not a valid transformation for an ontological situation. Thus, there is a dissymmetrical relation between them and because of this non-symmetrical relation there cannot be any unity of nature and history. History is the realm of each possible change.

Accordingly, Badiou makes a distinction between his conceptions of ‘event’ and ‘fact’. It may be said that an action is an ‘event’, if it occurs in a historical

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<sup>138</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, pp. 178-179.

situation, while it is a ‘fact’, if it occurs in a natural or ‘neutral’ situation.<sup>139</sup> The event occurs ‘on the edge of the void site’ and belongs to ‘that-which-is-not-being-qua-being’.<sup>140</sup> In other words, it has a relation to the undecidable void, unmeasured void. Thus, ontology cannot say anything concerning the event, since it is concerned not with ‘that-which-is-not-being-qua-being’ but with ‘being-qua-being’. The discourse of event is a historical situation.

Badiou also distinguishes the evental site from the natural situation. Natural site is global, while evental site is local. An action leading to a radical change occurs in a point which is an ‘evental site’.<sup>141</sup> A situation is historical, for Badiou, only insofar as at least one evental site occurs in it. An action, which leads to a radical change, occurs in a point, which is not a natural situation but an evental site. The evental site is not global but local. It occurs in a situation and this kind of situation is historical one, as explained before. The phrase ‘on-the-edge-of-the-void site’ signifies the evental site. The evental site can be seen as a connecting point between ‘being’ and ‘event’. It signifies a deficiency in an ontological structure, which can be the cause of the occurrence of an event. Badiou explains more fully his category of ‘evental site’ as follows:

The liver cells of a cat, for example, also belong to the vitality of the cat. Cells are alive. This is why the liver is a solid, integrated and organic part of the totality that is the cat. The liver is not an evental site. Inversely, a cell can be considered as a site, because the molecules that compose it are not ‘organic’ in the same sense as the liver may be said to be organic. A chemically determined molecule is no longer ‘alive’ in the sense that the cat can be said to be alive. Even if it is ‘objectively’ a part of the cat, a simple aggregate of molecules is not a vital component in the same sense as the liver. We would say that with this aggregate we have reached the material edge of the cat’s vitality. This is why such an

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<sup>139</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 178.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

aggregate will be said to be ‘on the edge of the void’; that is, on the edge of what separates the cat, as a singular multiple-situation, from its pure indistinct being, which is the void proper to life.<sup>142</sup>

In other words, an event has a relation to the undecidable void, unmeasured void in a situation. The ontological material of an event is its site or its being on the edge of the void. Thus, ontology cannot say anything regarding the event, since it is not concerned with trans-being. This does not mean that there is not homogeneity in a multiple. Badiou explain this homogeneity by means of the axiom of foundation. There is not only foundational elements of a set (as in the example: the cells of a cat is the foundational elements), but also an element, which does not have any common thing with the set (distinctiveness of the molecules of the cell from the cat). This distinct element is the point in which the set or the multiple is no longer itself (the cat is not alive when it is thought with the molecules of its cells). Another crucial consequence of the axiom of foundation is that a multiple cannot be an element of itself. Badiou also declares that an event is not subjected to the law of being such as the axiom of foundation. It can be an element of itself. “An event is composed of the elements of a site, but also by the event itself, which belong to itself”.<sup>143</sup> It is reflexive on itself contrary to the non-reflexivity of being upon itself. This is why Badiou states that the event occurs ‘on the edge-of-the void’ not in a situation.

After an event there will be an interruption of the law of the representation, and there will be some ‘changes’ in the situation.<sup>144</sup> That is, there will be some novelties in being and a separation from the law of representation. Badiou states that a truth must begin with a new thing or that there must be a

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<sup>142</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 99.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>144</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, pp. 206-207.

‘supplement’ to launch a truth process. This novelty can only appear by chance.

There is no deterministic examination of truth process in Badiou’s philosophy. Badiou states that a supplement by chance “is unpredictable, incalculable. It is beyond what is. I call it an event. A truth thus appears, in its newness, because an eventual supplement interrupts repetition”.<sup>145</sup> The main character of an event, for Badiou, is a new statement, or its supplementation to the state. This statement can be expressed as follows: the event belongs to the situation. It has not a certain truth value. If it has, it cannot be said that there is a truth. The undecidability of an event exactly means its not having this kind of a certain value. A decision of a subject concerning its truth value can only be a ‘wager’. Badiou posits that “this is why a truth begins with an *axiom of truth*. It begins with a groundless decision – the decision to *say* that the event has taken place”.<sup>146</sup>

Further, an event is not a term but an ‘interval’.<sup>147</sup> As already mentioned, an event has a relation with the singular term determined by the law of ontological determination. However, an event does not directly signify this singular term. It is not a term, which can be determined by the law of mathematical ontology. The existence of a singular term in a situation only gives an event a logical place to occur: the eventual site. An event occurs between ‘the two’: the void and the name of the void, or between  $\emptyset$  and  $\{\emptyset\}$ , or as mentioned in the previous paragraph, between the elements of site and itself. It establishes itself between the un-measurable empty and ‘the addition of a name’ to it. In fact, any set cannot belong to itself according to the normative laws of mathematics.

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<sup>145</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 62.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 206.

There is an exception for a multiple, which has an eventual character. Badiou calls this kind of multiple ‘*abnormal multiple*’.

The abnormal multiple has an element, which is not represented by the state of situation, or by the power set of this multiple. This multiple is not wholly identical with the singular term. Badiou uses the category of abnormal multiple in order to highlight the features of eventual site. This abnormal multiple does not signify directly a void set. Badiou uses the phrase ‘on the edge of the void’ or ‘evental site’ for this abnormal multiple. This emphasis is important and necessary, since it underlines the fact that an abnormal multiple is not void. It has some elements, but these elements are not represented. In other words, an abnormal multiple has some illegal elements. Further, an event produces an additional signifier and by this additional naming, it changes a previously presented situation. Badiou names this additional name as ‘*supernumerary*’. This is the effect of an event on the presented situation.

‘Event’ is a radical change as dealt with not only in *Being and Event* but also in *Logics of Worlds*. There are, nevertheless, some differences between these works with regard to their explanations of change. These differences do not lead to a radical alteration in his understanding of change. There appear some new concepts in *Logics of Worlds*: ‘point’, ‘tensed world’, ‘atonic world’ to overcome the previous problem of transition between ontology and logic, or pure multiple and an apparent. A point can be called a ‘choice’ or a ‘decision’, which Badiou uses in *Being and Event*. It crystallizes the infinite in the form of either/or. That is, it reduces the infinite to the ‘two’.<sup>148</sup> The two was also one of the essential concepts of *Being and Event*. It indicated the set such as  $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$ . Its elements were the void and the name of the void. This duality signifies the characteristic infinity of a novel because of its undecidability. In

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<sup>148</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 401.

*Logics of Worlds*, however, the two shows also a set with two elements: a maximal element and a minimal element, or an existent and an inexistent. A point is a function, which connects “one of the values of a set” with these two elements.<sup>149</sup> A point, by doing so, “concentrates the appearing of a truth in a place of the world”.<sup>150</sup> It localizes a truth. Badiou declares that if there is not any point in the transcendental of a world, there cannot be any truth, and there are only objects and bodies. Badiou calls such a world an ‘atonic world’. This world is one of the democratic materialists. Badiou adds that if there are many possible points in a world, this is called ‘tensed world’. Further, decision or choice is possible in this tensed world. In this world, there are not only objects and bodies but also truths. This is the postulate of Badiou’s materialist dialectic. In his theory, there appears a room for the appearing of a truth by means of his concept of ‘point’. A subject can make a truth appear through his/her decision on a point of a world.

In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou equates ‘the site’ and ‘evental multiplicities’, whereas he distinguishes them in *Being and Event*. He saw ‘the naming’ as a crucial moment of an event in *Being and Event*. He begins to see this moment of naming as mysterious or unclear in his *Logics of Worlds*. He states that ‘the site’ is an instantaneous figure of a change as an ontological category. It is only a momentous exposition of the void, which inherits in multiplicities. Badiou adds that the site “appears only to disappear”.<sup>151</sup> Thus, true duration of change implies not this instant site but the duration of ‘consequences’.

Badiou states that there are three different degrees of change: ‘modification’, ‘the fact’ and ‘singularity’. He defines them as follows:

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 407.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 409.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 369.

We have called *modification* the simple becoming a world, seen from the standpoint of an object of that world. Since it is internal to the established transcendental correlations, modification does not call for a site.

We will call *fact* a site whose intensity of existence is maximal.

We will call *singularity* a site whose intensity of existence is maximal.

We now have at our disposal three distinct degrees of change: modification, which is ontologically neutral and transcendently regular; the fact, which is ontologically supernumerary but existentially (and thus logically) weak; singularity, which is ontologically supernumerary and whose value of appearance (or of existence) is maximal.<sup>152</sup>

As can be seen from the passage above, Badiou examines these types of change in accordance with both ontological and logical domains. Firstly, modification, for Badiou, is not a real change. Modification is only an intensive variation of the transcendental of a world.<sup>153</sup> It does not lead to any change in the ontological structure, thus it must be said to be ontologically neutral. Secondly, the fact is a real change. Badiou emphasizes the idea that ‘fact’ is ‘ontologically supernumerary’ but does not have a maximal existence. That is, it does not appear in a world. In other words, a non-represented multiple, which is previously not included in a world, is noticed or the excessive thing of a world is perceived. In spite of this comprehension, any change cannot really occur in this world. This is the fact. Finally, the last type of change is singularity. Badiou divides singularity into a weak and into a strong singularity.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 359.

In contrast to the fact, singularity leads to some existential changes in a world.<sup>154</sup> The weak singularity does not have any maximal consequences, while the strong one has at least one maximal consequence. ‘Event’ is the name of a strong singularity. It makes an inexistent exist. In other words, it “makes what did not exist in a world appear within it”.<sup>155</sup> Badiou gives the day of 18 March 1871 as an example of the strong singularity or ‘event’. This event was called the ‘Paris Commune’. The working class appeared in the space of politics in the period of the Paris Commune. This class has not been represented by the sovereign state structure before this period. That is, this class has been only a minimal existent or an inexistent in the state. Then, the working class had a maximal existent in the period of the Paris Commune. This is why, for Badiou, the Paris Commune is a strong singularity or an event. It must be added that an event, for Badiou, is not a kind of realization of something ‘possible’. Badiou explains what happened in the period of the Paris Commune as follows: “Like every veritable event, the Commune had not realized a possible, it had created one”.<sup>156</sup> The commune manifests a new

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<sup>154</sup> Badiou’s using the concept of universal, singular and particular should be understood to comprehend his philosophy. We can find a clear explanation of these concepts in his essay “Eight Theses on the Universal” in his *Theoretical Writings*. First of all, universal can only be a production of a thought (p. 143). Badiou uses the term of ‘thought’ in order to designate the subject only insofar as it is constituted through a truth procedure. The subject is the local level of universal, while an infinite procedure is its global level. That is, it can be said that universal, for Badiou, is only another name of truth. Badiou says that “universal is always an incalculable emergence, rather than a descriptive emergency. . . . I will call *particular* whatever can be discerned in knowledge by means of descriptive predicates. But I will call *singular* that which, although identifiable as a procedure at work in a situation, is nevertheless subtracted from every predicative description” (p. 144). He adds that every universal unfolds itself not as particularity but as singularity (p. 145). That is, a truth is a universal singularity and a truth procedure is that in which the subject is attached to the infinite. The subject localizes a universal singularity as a singularity, while the infinite emphasizes the ontologically being multiple of a truth (p. 151). Finally, we should say that particular is thought not in the realm of truth or in the process of realization of a truth but only in the realm of the encyclopedia of knowledge. It pertains to the sphere of the predictable appearances of the situation.

<sup>155</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 376.

<sup>156</sup> A. Badiou, *Polemics*, trans. S. Corcoran, Verso, London and New York, 2006, p. 288.

order, which makes the working class appear, thus there also appears a mutation of the logic of world.<sup>157</sup>

In contrast to Paris Commune, the attack of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 can be given as an example for what that is not an event.<sup>158</sup> In fact, this was a big and disastrous fact for its victims. It may be true to say that all people all over the world sympathized with these victims. The most important consequence of this fact is to strengthen the domination of North America over the rest of the world. This attack did not create a sharp split within the status quo. It did not force the structure of status quo to change. This is, according to Badiou, why the attack of 9/11 cannot be named as an event.

### **3.3. The Phenomenological Attitude**

Prior to the publication of *Logics of Worlds*, it may be claimed that Badiou misses out the questions concerning the appearances. But in *Logics of Worlds* Badiou explains what the existence is and when it appears. He deals with issues concerning appearances extensively. He is concerned with the realm of phenomena. In this section I will be dealing with Badiou's phenomenological attitude. In particular, I am going to clarify the meaning of his ideas that there are many worlds and that 'appearing' is equal to logic.

Badiou champions the idea that logic and appearing are identical. This means that 'logic' and 'appearing' are one and the same. In other words, the appearing in a world is not chaotic, thus there must be a logic, which articulates the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

<sup>158</sup> P. Hallward, "Introduction: Consequences of Abstraction", in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 7.

differences or identities between the phenomena in a world.<sup>159</sup> This logic, nevertheless, is not outside the world to which it belongs. It is immanent to its world, or it is identical with the appearances in it. The logic of a world and this world are the same.

The appearing, as already pointed out above, is thought by logic. This logic is, for Badiou, a '*Greater Logic*' whose task is to think worldly multiple.<sup>160</sup> The greater logic is a materialist theory of the appearing. Badiou states as a hypothesis of materialism that "every atom of appearing is real" and as a principle of materialism that "every world, being ontologically closed, is also logically complete".<sup>161</sup> What is Badiou's aim in his equation of appearing with logics? The reply to this question seems to be clear: an appearance can appear only under the sufficient conditions to appear. These conditions designate the consistent or logical becoming of non-existent to existent. Badiou's aim in his materialism is not to swerve toward any transcendental principle when he explains the appearing. The principle "every world, being ontologically closed, is also logically complete" is the key point to comprehend the relation between his understanding of '*onto-logy*' and '*onto-logy*'. There seems to be a symmetrical relation between the realm of being and appearances. The completeness mentioned in this principle does not signify the impossibility of change in the realm of appearing. It indicates that an appearance can exist only if it meets the criterion of sufficient condition to exist. Accordingly, an existent turns to be an inexistent, or such a transformation of an existent to an inexistent can occur in the realm of appearances if and only if the previous kind of sufficiency, or completeness, disappears.

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<sup>159</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

As I have already pointed out, in *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou tries to deal with issues concerning appearances systematically, which he left out in his previous works. He notices some of these issues by the way of criticizing other thinkers. One of the questions put to Badiou is concerning the counting operation of ‘one’: who counts-as-one this inconsistent multiple? For, Badiou insists that one is nothing other than a counting operation without a subject. Desanti, for example, formulates this question as follows:

... [Badiou says that] ‘In other words: there is no one, there is only the counting-as-one’. It seems to me that the project of a pure ontology (an intrinsic theory of being as being) would stumble here with its very step, were one ask oneself this ‘preliminary’ question: what is it to operate? Who operates here and in what realms? In this case, clarification of object-act correlation would at least have to be the (transcendental) propaedeutic required for any meaningful ontology, if we are to avoid postponing indefinitely a pure theory of ‘being as being’, or even annulling its object.<sup>162</sup>

Desanti argues that Badiou is one of the ‘*dikranoia* (two-headed people)’, who seek to elaborate the margins of the thought in their philosophy. There are two distinct things and there must be third one, which connects of these two. Spinoza and Hegel are given as examples of these two-headed people. There is a mediating factor in their philosophy such as God or Idea. Desanti states that the margin in Badiou’s philosophy, which originates all the possible changes, can be seen as the axiom of choice between the axiom of foundation and the axiom of separation. Thus the subject of Badiou must be two-headed. Only this subject by his choice can externalize an internal infinity of a situation. Though Badiou rejects this mediation of subject, Desanti argues that Badiou’s subject can only such a mediating factor in the process of the transformation of inexistent to existent.

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<sup>162</sup> J.T. Desanti, “Some Remarks on the Intrinsic Ontology of Alain Badiou”, in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 60.

Badiou states that there is no agent for the counting operation. He equates this operation with the situation itself, which, so to speak, acts as a counting operator. However, Badiou sees a useful point in this critique. In his last work *Logics of Worlds*, the focus turns from this operation to the exchange between the being and the being-there, though the counting operation continues to be used. The dominant problem becomes formulized as that of the localization of being as being-there. Badiou posits that “appearance is being plus its place”.<sup>163</sup> Then Badiou reorganizes his thesis in order to explain this localization and he introduces the other concepts of object, subject, body, point, and etc.

In *Logics of Worlds*, in addition to this problem of agent of the counting operation, Badiou deals with issues concerning ‘objectivity’. He thinks his materialism gives truth a true objective foundation. His aim is to justify that truths are not relative but objective. That is, truth is not grounded by the subject or does not change from one subject to another. To achieve this aim, he firstly explains what an object is. Further, he defines his category of ‘truth’ and determines the objective status of its existence. In this work, his main assertion is that appearing is thought by logic, while in his earlier work *Being and Event*, ontology or mathematics deals with ‘being as being’. That is, *Logics of Worlds* is about the appearance, while *Being and Event* is on ‘being’ itself. However, it should be noted that, according to Badiou in *Logics of Worlds*, there is a relation between these two distinct realms. Badiou states that the object is that which connects these realms with each other. Badiou’s new object is both an ontological category and a logical category. An object has its atoms belonging to it. This operation of belonging is a mathematical law. This is to say that the structure or nature of object is subjected to this law of mathematics or

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<sup>163</sup> A. Badiou, “Matters of Appearances: An Interview with Alain Badiou” [with L. Sedofsky], *Artforum International*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2006, p.250.

ontology. Besides this being ontological category, the object is also logical because of its designation of being-there. Badiou calls ‘atomic logic’ that which is concerned with the relation between the atoms, or element, of an object. That is, Badiou in *Logics of Worlds* connects the ontological foundation and the phenomenological realm with each other by introducing some new terminology and by using some new concepts. Let us look at some of them.

One of the most crucial assertions of *Logics of Worlds* is that there is no one world. Badiou states that there are many worlds. As already suggested above, the term ‘situation’ from *Being and Event* is replaced by the term ‘world’ in *Logics of Worlds*. The world exists also as the localization of an operation. Badiou explains what the world is as follows:

[w]hat indicates the place is the operation. But what localizes an operation? By definition, it is a world (for that operation). The place where operation happens without leaving it is the place where a being attains its identity – its relative consistency. Thus, a being is only exposed to the thinkable to the extent that – invisible, in the guise of an operation that localizes it – it names, within a world, a new point. In so doing, it appears in that world.

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We call ‘situation of being’ for a singular being, the world in which it inscribes a local procedure of access to its identity on the basis of other beings.<sup>164</sup>

That is to say that the world is the place for the localization of an operation. It is necessarily multiple as a consequence of its operational character. A world is only that of an element, or a multiple. This world does not designate the world we live in. It may be said that a family relation is a world for the elements of this family. A painting is a world for every points or colors in it. This is why

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<sup>164</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, pp. 113-114.

Badiou states that there are many worlds. It should be noted that the plurality of the world of the same multiple may pertain different worlds.

### **3.3.1. The New Content of Materialism**

In this section I am going to examine the distinct features of Badiou's materialism. I shall then examine what the transcendental scale, the objectless subject, the subjectless object and the points in a world mean in Badiou's phenomenology.

In the beginning of *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou makes a sharp distinction between 'the democratic materialism' and his 'materialist dialectic'. The democratic materialism is, for him, the essence of postmodern thought. Its main position is that "there are only bodies and languages".<sup>165</sup> This means that "there are only individuals and communities", as Badiou reads it.<sup>166</sup> In doing so, the postmodern thought reduces the meaning of the term individual to body. The terms of individual, body and existence are equated to each other. An individual or a body is seen as a machine for enjoyment. Consequently, humanity is reduced to mere 'animality'. The human rights are comprehended only as the rights of all the living bodies. There is no room for 'truths' in a theory based upon the democratic materialism. Truths, for the democratic materialism, are variable things and relative to different people, society or temporality. 'Minoritarianism' is an instance for a theory, which is based upon the democratic materialism. All the communities and cultures, for this minoritarianism, have the same right to be defended by law.

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

Contrary to the democratic materialism, the fundamental statement of the materialist dialectic is that ‘there are only bodies and languages except that there are truths’. Badiou is a supporter of this materialist dialectic, since it expresses the sufficient condition for the emergency of a truth by means of the phrase ‘except that’. Badiou explains the meaning of this phrase and the place of truths in his materialist dialectic as follows:

This syntax suggests that we are dealing neither with an addition (truths as simple supplements to bodies and languages) nor with a synthesis (truths as the self-revelation of bodies seized by languages). Truths exist as exceptions to what there is. We admit thereof that ‘what there is’ – that which makes up the structure of worlds – is well and truly a mixture of bodies and languages. But there isn’t only what there is. And ‘truths’ is the (philosophical) name of what interpolates itself into the community of the ‘there is’.<sup>167</sup>

Thus it can be said that there is a third term in his materialist dialectic such as in Hegel’s dialectic. This third term is truth, which ‘interpolates’ itself into the two. It signifies the void between the two. It should not be forgotten, however, that Badiou’s materialist dialectic differs from the Hegelian dialectic with its non-cumulative character. Badiou asserts that a novelty is not a cumulative consequence of some previous things. Further, the present is not that which becomes after the past. There is no cause-effect relation, or a being-serial relation between the past and the present. There is only a relation between what there is and what there is not. Also, Badiou criticizes Hegel by saying that there is no one universe, which Hegel stated.

As to the distinction that Badiou makes concerning the distinction between the conception of freedom of democratic materialism and that of materialist dialectic. According to Badiou there are two distinct understanding of freedom.

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Freedom, according to democratic materialism, has a relation with the absence of an authoritarian language. That is to say that if there is no language, which limits the singular bodies, there can be said that there is freedom. For this kind of language can prohibit an individual from actualizing his/her capacities. Badiou adds that this kind of freedom is the freedom of sexuality. Other forms of freedom follow the freedom of sexuality. Secondly, Badiou explains the understanding of freedom of materialist dialectic as follows:

[b]eing free does not pertain to the register of relation (between bodies and languages) but directly to that of incorporation (to a truth). This means that freedom presupposes that a new body appears in the world. The subjective forms of incorporation made possible by this unprecedented body – itself articulated upon a break, or causing a break – define the nuances of freedom. ...Reduced to a purely ordinary activity, it [the overthrowing of sexuality from its paradigmatic position] makes room for the four great figures of the ‘except that’: love (which, once it exists, subordinates sexuality to itself), politics (of emancipation), art and science.<sup>168</sup>

As can be seen from this passage, Badiou’s materialist dialectic makes a connection between the truths and freedom. Firstly, there appears a new body, or a break occurs in a continuous contingent situation. Then a subjective form, by deciding on whether this newness exists by continuing to be faithful to his/her decision, can achieve its freedom. The freedom, for Badiou’s materialist dialectic, follows from the relation of subject to the placement of ‘except that’, or the domain of truths.

What are the main arguments of Badiou’s materialist dialectics? What is the appearance for him? Badiou calls ‘the appearing of the being of beings’ ‘being-there’.<sup>169</sup> This phrase ‘being-there’ refers to the localization of a being

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

in a situation. In other words, the appearance is the belonging of a being to a situation. This localization conforms to a logical law. This is why Badiou states that the required explanation concerning the appearance must be rational. This is another reason for his equalization of appearing to logics. Also, this is the point where Badiou is more Cartesian than Platonist. The famous thesis of Descartes '*cogito ergo sum*' is really an important one for Badiou, since this explanation of the existence does not see it as a placement in the whole. This statement means that a subject exists only because of his/her activity of thinking. Descartes began to think the existentiality from the point of its rational domain. The relation, or the requirement, of the existences with God was the weakest point in his philosophy. The philosophy of Descartes requires the mediation of God in order to be certain concerning the existences of the other subjects. Badiou says that "Descartes' conceptual God . . . [is] the suture of mathematical truths to their being, or a guarantee of judgments in the shape of the Other".<sup>170</sup> Descartes divided the existence into two distinct realms: the spatial realm and the thinkable realm. Then, he could not successfully tie them. Badiou asserts that the rationality of the existence aimed at by Descartes must be adopted as the purpose of the contemporary philosophy.

In order to be faithful to this aim, Badiou wishes to give a rational explanation for the realm of the 'existence'. First of all, the existence, for Badiou, is that which must be thinkable. This is the rational side of Badiou's materialism. Appearance must also be thought in relation to a concrete situation. This is the materialist side of his rationalism. It may be claimed that Badiou's phenomenology is a rationalist empiricism. By his theory, the traditional opposition between rationalism and empiricism is rendered a meaningless one. Concerning the initial point of a true explanation of what the existence is, Badiou says following:

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<sup>170</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 23.

In order to argue that everything which exists possesses an idea, it is necessary to maintain that something exists. This existence is not empirical, it is a decision of thought. Therefore, an initial non-empirical existence is required. This requirement is more Cartesian than Platonist. For Descartes there is an absolutely initial point of existence. In my view, Zermelo's axiom is a Cartesian rectification of Platonism. The cogito is a pure point of existence, the first figure of an existence without qualities. For Descartes, 'I am' each time I think in or about this point. This point of existence is beset by a constitutive instability; it is a vanishing 'I am'. We encounter here the staging of modern rationality, for which the point of existence bears the name of 'subject'.<sup>171</sup>

As can be seen from the above quotation, according to Badiou, there is a rational existence earlier from the empirical existence. Badiou sees this rational existence as similar to Descartes' *cogito*. This initial existence must be only a declaration or an axiomatic decision concerning at least one existence. It can be said that this is a declaration 'existence exists'. This is only an axiomatic decision like Descartes' "*cogito ergo sum*". After this declaration, for Badiou, we can talk about the appearance. Badiou says that "the belonging of x to the situation is called its *appearance*".<sup>172</sup> That is, an appearance is the localization of a being in a situation. It must be added that an appearance is not identical with its being of which it is the localization. There exist duality in Badiou's philosophy, like in that of Kant's with regard to the distinction of *noumenon* and *phenomenon*. 'X' in question is in itself is a pure multiple as *noumenon*. It also exists insofar as it belongs to a situation as *phenomenon*. Badiou insists on the idea that *noumenon* also knowable by a mathematical ontology as differently from Kant's view of unknowable *noumenon*.

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<sup>171</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 180.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Badiou states that Russell's paradox logically demonstrates the inconsistency of absolute totality. It shows us that language does not always refer to the reality. That is, we can say "God exists" in language, but this can be wrong in reality. Russell's paradox justifies the necessity of focusing on existence. Russell in his *Principia Mathematica* formulates his 'theory of types'. This theory supports the idea that there are types, which have among them a hierarchical relation. The principle of this theory is that a predicate has different level in itself from its pertaining to the object, which is applied to. There appears a hierarchical relation in which each type is correlated with a number. An existent is thought as a total set of its predicates in Russell's theory of types. Badiou rejects this idea, since, for him, an existence cannot only be an activity of a combination of some concepts. Badiou wants to indicate the priority of existence to the actuality of a concept. It is necessary, for Badiou, to notice an existence without referring to a concept. This is why the inaugurating point for Badiou is the justification of the 'nothing'. This is why he states in the quotation above that "the cogito is a pure point of existence, the first figure of an existence without qualities".

Appearance, for Badiou, is "distinct from being".<sup>173</sup> If we follow Badiou, we cannot refer to the degree of identity or difference in being. The only thing to talk about appearance is the differences between the appearances. The principle of 'differentiation' works in the realm of appearance. In other words, the belonging of a being to a situation is evaluated or conceived by means of its degree of emergency which differentiates it from or identifies it with other belongings. Thus, there is a relation between the appearances in the situation. This relation is logical relation. That is to suggest that there must be different relations, which make possible to perceive what exist. The transcendental scale is the tool for this perception, or for thinking of what exists. This

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

transcendental, for Badiou, is not an idealist term but a rational and logical one. Whether this logical transcendental prevents Badiou from being a defender of idealism is highly questionable point. To reply this question, let us look at his conception of transcendental.

By ‘transcendental’ Badiou means “the entire apparatus which must be presupposed in order to be able to think difference within appearance”.<sup>174</sup> Each world has a transcendental organization, which is an ‘immanent operation’ to the world. This means that an appearance can be differentiated from another with respect to its degree of indexation by the transcendental or the logic of the world in which the appearance appears. This differentiation is not the act of a subject. The subject is only one who notices the difference between the appearances. This operation is not articulated by the intelligibility of human being. According to Badiou it can only be justified by the intelligibility of the phenomenological world. He puts it as follows:

The transcendental that is at stake in this book is altogether anterior to every subjective constitution, for it is an immanent given of any situation whatever. As we shall see, it is what imposes upon every situated multiplicity the constraint of a logic, which is also the law of its appearing, or the rule in accordance with which the ‘there’ of being-there allows the multiple to come forth as essentially bound. That every world possesses a singular transcendental organization means that, since the thinking of being cannot on its own account for the world’s manifestation, the intelligibility of this manifestation must be *made possible* by immanent operations. ‘Transcendental’ is the name for these operations.<sup>175</sup>

In other words, every world is transcendentially organized. It must be said that Badiou’s notion of ‘transcendental’ should not be conceived as being outside

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>175</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 101.

or over a world. On the contrary, it is conceived as immanent to the world. That is, the logic of a world is not transcendental to the world but intrinsic. This logic organizes whatever appears and disappears in this world. The transcendental indicates to the intrinsic order of a world.

As already mentioned, Badiou argues that there is not one singular world. There are several worlds, thus there are many transcendental organizations, each one of which pertains to a different world. Badiou states that an appearing is only a localization of a pure being in a world by being indexed to the transcendental of this world. To appear of a pure being means only its localization in a world, which Badiou calls ‘being-there’. Badiou explains the plurality of worlds by referring his term ‘being-there’ as follows:

[E]very singular being [*étant*] is only manifested in its being [*être*] locally: the appearing of the being of beings [*l'être de l'étant*] is being-there. It is this necessity of the ‘there’ which, for a being thought in its multiple-being, entails a transcendental constitution (without subject). This constitution authorizes us to think the being as localized, to include the ‘there’ in the thinking of being – something that the mathematical (ontological) theory of the pure multiple, despite *conveying* the whole being of the being, does not allow. In what follows, we will call *universe* the (empty) concept of a being of the Whole. We will call *world* a ‘complete situation of being (this will be gradually elucidated). Obviously, since we show that *there is no universe*, it belongs to the essence of the world that there are several worlds, since if there were only one it would be the universe.<sup>176</sup>

A world is the ‘logic of being-there’, or only a complete situation. There can be many worlds. The transcendental is a ‘structured order’. It is a schema of the degree of identities and differences in a world. It determines the identities or differences in the appearance. Every being appears in a world only insofar as it is indexed to the transcendental.

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

Badiou argues that there are three operations for this indexing of the transcendental: ‘minimum’, ‘conjunction’ and ‘synthesis’.<sup>177</sup> Firstly, minimum signals the ‘non-apparent’ in a determinate world. Minimum is a transcendental measurement of ‘the-non-apparent-in-this-world’.<sup>178</sup> This inexistent is the void, which is, as in *Being and Event*, an essential part of a world.

Secondly, there are three modes of conjunction, which is one of these three operators: ‘inclusion’, ‘intercalation’, and ‘disjunction’.<sup>179</sup> If there are two beings and one of them is more evident or more obvious, then this determined being appears, or is perceived more clearly. The other is less obviously included in this apparent. For, this more obvious apparent has more intensity in the scale of the degree of identity and difference of the transcendental. It signals the maximum value of appearing. Disjunction is the second mode of conjunction. It signals the minimal value of appearing. If there are two beings and they can co-appear, they appear at the same time. There is no, nevertheless, common part of them. That is, that which they have in common is the void, or has a minimal value of appearing. Finally, the last mode of conjunction is ‘intercalation’. This indicates the third being-there, which intervenes between two beings-there having existed previously. If the third apparent includes these two previous beings-there, it renders them inexistent, and begins to exist lonely. This intervening being shows the passage from the minimal value to the maximal value. It can be said that the operator of ‘conjunction’ articulates not only the minimal or the maximal intensity but also the intensities between these extreme intensities. Further, it demonstrates the possibility of the passage from one degree of intensity to another degree.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., pp. 126-128.

Finally, Badiou explains the third operator, ‘synthesis’, for the indexing of the transcendental. The effort of this operator is mainly to articulate the regional being of worlds. Badiou uses the term ‘envelope’ to explain this operator. A region of a world, for Badiou, has also a value of appearance in itself. It also contains some degrees of appearance for the beings there. Badiou asserts that the value of appearance of this region is superior to other degrees of appearance. ‘The *envelope*’ designates this kind of superiority.<sup>180</sup> It dominates all the values of its components. It is the synthesis of them. It may be said that it designates the area, in which the first two operators, the minimum and the conjunction, work.

Badiou draws a logical consequence from these three operators, minimum, conjunction and synthesis, or ‘minimality’, ‘conjunction’ and ‘the envelope’. He acknowledges ‘the existence of the reverse of a being’ as a logical consequence of these operators.<sup>181</sup> The operation of reverse works on every transcendental scale of degree of appearance. Badiou says that the reverse of the maximum is the minimum and that the reverse of this thesis is also true.<sup>182</sup> That is to say that the reverse of the minimum is the maximum. Further, it may be added that the conjunction of the maximum and its reverse is the maximum, or appears maximally in that world. Their disjunction however is the minimum and does not appear in that world.

He states that appearing does not depend on the concept of ‘space or time’ or ‘the transcendental field’ contrary to Kant’s philosophy.<sup>183</sup> An existent, for

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>183</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 162.

Badiou, does not appear for a subject. Badiou explains the appearing by means of his category of transcendental. The transcendental has ‘an order-structure’ or is a ‘structured order’. It is a schema of the degree of identities and differences in a world. It determines a being’s degree of identity or difference. Every being, which is indexed to the transcendental of a world, appears in this world.<sup>184</sup> A world is the ‘logic of being-there’.

There are some critiques concerning the question whether the transcendental can solve the problem of who counts as one. One of the critical readers in this regard is Adrian Johnston. More specifically, he asks how to arise phenomena from non-phenomenal being according to Badiou’s transcendental. He posits of his question as follows:

Badiou seems to be left with the unanswered questions of how and why being(s) give rise to worlds (the latter involving the transcendental as each world’s organizing state/regime). In isolation from Kant’s idealism, the broadest sense of his notion of the transcendental has to do with conditions of possibility. In this sense, Badiou’s transcendental begs the question of the conditions of possibility for its own surfacing out of the Real of being. Who or what catalyzes the coming into existence of the being-there of appearances? Badiouian transcendentalism, if there is such a thing, would thus require supplementation by a meta-transcendentalism, an explanation of that which makes possible this very catalyzing.<sup>185</sup>

There is a dynamic relationship between being as being and appearance. And the transcendental is that which organizes this relationship in a situation. Further, it is an intrinsic part of this situation. Johnston states that Badiou’s transcendental faces with the problem of actualization of possibilities. How can

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<sup>184</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 119.

<sup>185</sup> A. Johnston, “Phantom of Consistency: Alain Badiou and Kantian transcendental idealism”, *Contemporary Philosophical Review*, vol. 41, 2008, p. 349.

a transcendental actualize the inner possibilities of a world? Johnston argues that Badiou's explanation of appearance requires the existence of a meta-transcendental.

It can be said that appearing is that which connects an existent to its local place, or its site, or its place. This site is not similar to Aristotle's 'natural place' of a thing. The site at which a being is located is not its natural and accordingly necessary place. There is a contingent process in the appearing of this 'being-there'. This process operates in conformity with the laws of the transcendental as already pointed out. Accordingly, a thing does not appear to manifest its essence or its concept as in Hegel. This is why Badiou distinguishes the appearance from its being. In his philosophy, an appearance is only the localization of its being in a concrete situation. Contrarily, Hegel sees an appearance only as the manifestation of its concept or its being. Badiou accepts and wants to justify the idea that the "essence of appearing is the relation", which determines the difference of an appearance from another.<sup>186</sup> The site or the situation of an appearance has a particular being. Thus it does not have conceptual necessity. Badiou states that every appearance is a 'being-there'. It is the relation of being to its possible situation. In Badiou's ontology, there is no relation between multiplicities. There is no difference, which we can assign to pure multiplicities. However, we encounter with the concept of relation, or difference in his understanding of appearance.

To sum up, Badiou aims at theorizing an '*ontologization of the phenomenological*'.<sup>187</sup> He states that appearance is predicated only by its degree of identity or difference in the situation. It is evaluated by means of the transcendental scale. The transcendental is also an element of the situation.

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<sup>186</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 162.

<sup>187</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 187. (The emphasis pertains to me.)

That is, it appears in the situation and the situation is not a transcendental. This is why according to Badiou the transcendental of a situation is not a transcendent thing. It belongs to the situation. This transcendental is an apparatus, or an operation by which we can conceive how a multiple appearance enters into a composition with others. An experience is only a localization of a multiple being. A world is a local place of these localizations.

What kind of materialism does Badiou champion? First of all, Badiou wants to make a distinction between an appearance and its being in order to justify the idea that an appearance is not an actualization of its concept, or its being. Has Badiou differentiated them successfully? I think that he may be seen as victorious in this regard. For, to define what appearance is Badiou uses the operation of belonging, which cannot be a feature of being. Belonging and inclusion are operations only for the transformation of a being to an existence. Being as being is itself nothing, and is only an inconsistent multiplicity, or a subtraction from all the predications. A being can exist only by belonging to a situation, or by being included by a situation. Badiou adds that being is plural, thus there cannot be a unique inconsistent multiplicity. Can we say that each appearance has its different being because of this plurality? If we can, it would be possible to say that an appearance has its own special or natural being, which only appears as an actualization in this appearance. If not, there must be a total being, which would be a foundation for all appearances. Badiou rejects both of them. He wants to find a third way as an alternative to these two options. An appearance is of a being as situated in a situation. That is, appearance is rendered a type of localization in not a natural but a consistent site for its being. Also, differences pertain to the realm of appearance. I think that this means that there is an identity in 'being as being'. Each pure multiple does not differ from each another; because of that it is only nothing and that this nothingness identifies a pure multiple with another. It can be said that the first being, in Badiou's philosophy is logical or mathematical 'nothingness'.

How does ‘nothing’ turn to many different appearances? I think that Badiou does not attach an appearance to a pure multiple, which he has separated before. Or, not only being but also appearance turns into an idea in a human mind like that in Berkeley’s philosophy. Badiou’s transcendental is similar with God’s mind in Berkeley’s philosophy. Badiou admits the idea that a transcendental is immanent to a world, which it pertains to and that this transcendental exists thanks to the intelligibility of the world. For him, “the structure of order and the comparison of degrees simply exhibit the rationality of intensive measurement, the single law of appearing.”<sup>188</sup> This intelligibility or rationality works as God’s mind.

Further, Badiou equates the minimal appearance with a pure being. In other words, a being is an existence, which is undecided. An appearance appears insofar as it is indexed by the transcendental scale of a world. If it is not indexed, it cannot appear. That is, it is nothing for this world. This is the very similar with Badiou’s ‘being as being’. I think that there is a weak point in Badiou’s philosophy. Being as being, on the one hand, is nothing. It is inconsistent multiple, which does not have any predicate. We encounter, on the other hand, with another ‘nothing’ in the phenomenological level. This ‘nothing’ signifies the minimal existence. Can this nothing in the phenomenological level be identified with the nothingness of being as being? It seems to be not possible to identify them. However, it seems that Badiou uses the conception of nothingness only in order to emphasize the contingency in the reality. That is, if a change happens in a situation, this is not a necessary happening but contingent because of the nothingness of its being. There is no potentially natural character of a pure multiple, which we can only notice after its actualization.

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<sup>188</sup> Badiou, “Afterward: Some Replies to a Demanding Friend”, p. 235.

Though Badiou claims to be a materialist, in my view, his materialism is very questionable. He indeed rejects some fundamental principles of materialism. Adrian Johnston sees Badiou's philosophy as 'spiritualist metaphysics'. He sees Badiou's anti-naturalism and neglecting the empirical sciences as an evidence for Badiou's idealism. Badiou distinguishes the nature from the history or makes a distinction between the natural situations and the historical situations. The nature is not the realm of an event or a change because of its stable and homogenous structure. Contrarily, a historical situation is the place of the emergency of an event. By using this distinction, Badiou proves the idea that the natural sciences, such as biology or neurology, cannot be useful to decipher the mystic structure of the rare emergence of event in a historical situation. Johnston stresses the idea that "a materialist should be deeply suspicious of the cleanliness of any ontology of pure being in and of itself".<sup>189</sup> A materialist ontology, for him, must be in theoretical relation with the empirical results of such natural sciences. Johnston states his critique of Badiou's ontological acknowledgements as follows:

How on earth can one claim to be any stripe of materialist, let alone the most extreme and consequent materialist in two thousand years since Lucretius, if one equates being as such with intangibly abstract numerical structures (... Badiou, unlike the atomists and their philosophical progeny, refuses to grant a central place to corporeal bodies in his philosophy)? What becomes of the conception of matter when the inconsistent, infinite multitudes of the sets and sub-sets of trans-finite set theory are the exclusive revelatory windows opening out onto the very "stuff" of the Real of *l'être en tant qu'être*?<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> A. Johnston, "What Matter(s) in Ontology", *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2008, p. 28.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

In short, Johnston does not see Badiou's ontology as materialist one because of Badiou's equation of ontology with mathematical abstract formalization and his leaving out the empirical entities. I agree with Johnston in some degree. I think Lucretius is not a crude materialist, who gives more importance the appearances than the principles conditioning them. Further, Lucretius gives a special importance to the 'swerve of an atom' as the principle of change. Badiou also investigates the changing principle of a radical change throughout his theory. The point, I agree with the argument of Johnston, is that the equation of being with abstract numerical tool is against the materialist principle. By dismissing the category of time from his philosophy, mathematic is rendered ontology, which is always valid. Its laws cannot be change. It will continue to be valid everywhere and every time. Thus, the change is rendered an impossible thing in Badiou's theory. For a deeper analysis of what the exact meaning of a change, I will scrutinize Badiou's other categories in his objective phenomenology in the following section.

### **3.3.2. The Components of the World of Appearance**

Badiou proposes new contents for each one of the categories of object, subject and body. One of his crucial aims is to resolve the problem of duality of subject-object. That is, Badiou aims to demonstrate that 'subject' itself is an objective being without a requirement of a body, or an object, as a necessary condition. Further 'object' exists without a requirement of a subject. An 'object' must be understood as that which 'counts as one within appearing'.<sup>191</sup> Badiou seems to think that he has freed from the necessity to put the question concerning who counts as one by his limitation of this operation with the question of 'where'. The concept of object, for Badiou, is completely

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<sup>191</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 193.

independent from that of subject. That is, the subject is not one who makes an object appear by his/her counting act.

Let us examine Badiou's category of object. The object appears not only as a logical category but also as an ontological category in Badiou's philosophy. Badiou conceptualizes it twice.<sup>192</sup> Badiou states that the object is logical, since it ascribes the category of 'being-there' to the being. In fact, for Badiou, the 'appearing' is the becoming process of an object. To be an object in a world, an appearing must be indexed to the transcendental scale of this world. To be indexed to this scale means to 'exist'. Badiou declares that 'existence' is a logical concept and that a multiple firstly exists, and then becomes an object although existence does not constitute the subject.<sup>193</sup> But at the same time the object is a composition of atoms of an appearing in conformity with the ontological law of belonging. This is why it is also an ontological concept. That is, it is the pure multiplicity that which is the ontological part of an object.<sup>194</sup> It must be said that, in the light of these explanations, the category of object does not require any counting act of a subject to exist.

In contrast to Kant's view, in Badiou's philosophy, the subject does not play any role in the constitution of an object. In Kant's philosophy, there are two distinct realms: the realm of *phenomenon* and that of *noumenon*. Kant's subject, on the one hand, does not have any capacity of knowing anything concerning the *noumenon*. In Kant's philosophy, *noumenon* is thinkable but unknowable. On the other hand, the realm of *phenomenon* is open to the knowledge of subject. In order to express more explicitly, it should be said that an object appears only as a result of the cognitive action of a subject. The

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., pp. 220-221.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

phenomenological conditions of such an appearing, in Kant's philosophy, pertain to the understanding of subject. The categories of time and space are seen as the categories of the subject. I think that it can be said that Kant does not say anything concerning being, or his issue is not 'what is' but 'what appears'. 'Being' itself as the main problem of ontology remains as unknowable in Kant's philosophy. Badiou sees this untouched problem of Kant's philosophy as a consequence of his misunderstanding of the concept of subject. The distinction of *phenomenon* and *noumenon* is Kant's contribution to the further development of philosophy. With this distinction he has formulated a problem which is still under dispute. Badiou sees Kant's explanation of object and subject as a misleading. He elucidates his different attitude from Kant's one in this regard as follows:

For Kant, the object is the result of the synthetic operation of consciousness. . .

For me, the object is the appearing of a multiple-being in a determinate world, and its concept (transcendental indexing, real atoms...) does not imply any subject. But the question is far more complicated. Why? Because the notion of object crystallizes the ambiguities present in Kant's undertaking. In brief, it is the point of undecidability between the empirical and the transcendental, between receptivity and spontaneity and between objective and subjective. Now, in my own undertaking, and under the condition of the postulate of materialism, the word 'object' also designates a point of conjunction or reversibility between the ontological (belonging to a multiple) and the logical (transcendental indexing), between the invariance of the multiple and the variation of its worldly exposition.<sup>195</sup>

That is to suggest that the object is that which connects an appearing to its being. It is the point of fusion of being with appearing. An object appears only by having the sufficient logical condition for the appearing of a pure multiple being. This condition is to be indexed in the transcendental degree. This

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

transcendental scale is the logical apparatus, in Badiou's *Logics of Worlds*, to explain how to appear an object. Further, the object is that in which the ontological side and logical side interconnect.<sup>196</sup> Finally, 'phenomenon' and 'noumenon' are not distinguishable with respect to the concept of object.<sup>197</sup> There is a reciprocal relation in an object between its logical side and ontological side. It can be said that Badiou's concept of object proposes an object without a subject.

The universality of an object, in Kant's philosophy, is based upon the subjective constitution of 'experience'. This condition is the 'transcendental ego', which is beyond all the finite subjects, but includes every finite subject. It is a subjective category. Only such a transcendental ego makes possible an object to be experienced by each subject in the exactly same way. In contrast to such subjectivity, Badiou argues that the transcendental is not subjective and does not create such universality. There are many worlds, for Badiou, and so there are many transcendental. He returns to the Platonic solution to solve the problem of the universality of sensible object. The universal part of an object, for Plato, is its relation to the Idea. An object is only a participation in an Idea. Badiou argues, by the guide of Plato's solution, that the universal part of an object is its relation to the thinkable and mathematical multiplicities.<sup>198</sup> Plato's Ideas are replaced by the transcendental operators or logical apparatuses such as conjunction, minimum or the envelope. These operational relations, in the ontological realm, are universal. There are also relations between the objects of a world. That is, Badiou examines two kinds of relation in his theory. He states as follows:

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

In a very broad sense, we will say that there is a ‘world’ to the extent that it is possible to identify a configuration of multiple-beings who appear ‘there’ and of (transcendentally regulated) relations between these beings. A world is ontologically assignable by the relations between apparents.

. . . [W]e must think two types of relation, in order to secure an intelligible answer to the question of what a world is:

- a. The constitutive relations (or operations) of theory of the pure multiple, or theory of being-qua-being; in effect, every world is constructed on the basis of multiple-beings . . .
- b. The relations between apparents of the same world, that is to say the relations between objects.<sup>199</sup>

These second relations, for Badiou, are also universal ones. He declares that “a relation is universal, if its intra-worldly visibility is itself visible”.<sup>200</sup> That is, if a relation between two objects is indexed to a degree of transcendental scale, it becomes visible. And, this is why for Badiou it is universal. Thereby, any doubt regarding the existence of an object seems to disappear in Badiou’s philosophy. To achieve this result his conception of relation on the basis of transcendental scale seems to be very helpful.

After having clarified his category of object, we can analyze shortly Badiou’s category of subject. Badiou’s objectless-subject renders subject as an end of the post-evental truth without object. A subject can appear only in a truth process. It is, in Badiou’s philosophy, not the subject that is the condition of the object. In this regard, Badiou states as follows:

I maintain the problem of subject without object as central as regards a possible renaissance of philosophy, just as disobjectivation, disjoining truth from knowledge, founded the Age of Poets, hence the decisive critique of the positivist and Marxian sutures. Moreover, I maintain that one sole concept, the generic procedure, subsumes the disobjectivation

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

of truth and of the subject, making the subject appear as a simple finite fragment of a post-evental truth without object.<sup>201</sup>

That is to say that Badiou sees subject only as the finite figure, which appears through and at the end of a truth process. This means that objectless-subject can only be captured by his term ‘generic procedure’. The genericity of a truth procedure comes from its not based upon any already presented situation. It causes a new presentation or a novelty or a hole in ‘the encyclopedia of knowledge’. This procedure forces not-presented thing to be presented by a situation. This is the procedure that throughout which a subject appears. It is enough here to explain Badiou’s category of subject, since it will be deeply elucidated in the following chapter titled “The Theory of Truth”.

There are left two more conceptions which need to be explained: the point and the body. A subject, for Badiou, is constituted in a truth process, and there is a reciprocal relation between a becoming subject and the appearing of a truth. There are two kinds of consequences of a truth procedure, so two types of subjects: an opening and a point.<sup>202</sup> An opening finds new possibilities, which are akin to the earlier possibilities of the world. Thus it leads to a consensus between the old world and itself. The subject, at the moment of opening, is a weak one. The other, a point, is one of the main terms of *Logics of World*, which distinguish this work from *Being and Event*. A point presents a discontinuity in a situation, while an opening presents continuity. The point signifies some singular choices, or decisions involving ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in a global situation. It is a necessary condition of a sharp change in a world. Badiou

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<sup>201</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 93.

<sup>202</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 82.

argues that “a new world is subjectively created, point by point”.<sup>203</sup> In other words, not continuities but discontinuities create a new world.

By introducing the conception of point, Badiou introduces a topological space for appearing a truth. ‘The two’ was one of the essential concepts of *Being and Event*. It indicated the set such as  $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}$ . Its elements were the void and the name of the void. This set signaled the infinite possibility of the novelty for a situation and so for the state of this situation. In *Logics of Worlds* the two shows also a set with two elements: a maximal element and a minimal element, or an existent and an in-existent. A point is a function, which connects “one of the values of a set” with these two elements.<sup>204</sup> A point, by doing so, “concentrates the appearing of a truth in a place of the world”.<sup>205</sup> It signifies the possibility or power of localization of a truth. Badiou explains the role of the category of point in his theory as follows:

With the notion of point we have the wherewithal to think the co-existence of these two determinations within the general logic of what allows pure being to attain its intrinsic appearing. In other words, the transition between ontology and logic is made visible when we consider the points of a world. That is why points are metaphorically the indices of a decision of thought. This anonymous decision carries out the caesura of the word onto-logy. It makes that which is appear in the interlacing of logic. To put it another way, it indicates the latent topology of being.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 407.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p. 409.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p.410. Badiou wants to make a topological room for not only being but also truth. Topology gives a timeless space for a universal truth in Badiou’s philosophy. What is topology? Juliet Flower MacCannell explains this branch of mathematics as follows: It is “that bypasses the customary numerical means of measuring even invisible space via algorithms. This new way of ‘measuring’ the immeasurable, the algorithm, is made up not of numbers with assignable values but of *letters*. (Topologically speaking, there is no ‘1’: there is only a leap from nothing to all, from (0) → to (an ‘infinite’) 2, thereby rendering the number system that starts with one fallacious.” (“Eternity or infinity? Badiou’s Point”, *Environment and Planning*

That is, the point is a topologically intrinsic subset of the set, which it belongs to. Badiou argues that if there is not any point in the transcendental of a world, there cannot be any truth, and there are only objects and bodies. Badiou calls such a world an ‘atonic world’.<sup>207</sup> This world is of the democratic materialism. Badiou adds that if there are many possible points in a world, this is called ‘tensed world’.<sup>208</sup> Further, decision or choice is possible in this tensed world. In this world, there are not only objects and bodies but also truths. This is the postulate of Badiou’s materialist dialectic. In his theory, there appears a space for the appearing of a truth by means of his concept of topological ‘point’. A subject can make a truth appear through his/her decision on such a point of a world.

I have elucidated Badiou’s philosophy in terms of his understanding of being and appearing in general. Now I am turning to his theory of truth.

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*D: Society and Space*, vol. 27, 2009, p. 840). Additionally, only topology is useful to show whether two different spheres are identical. By using the method of topology, Lacan gives a topological explanation for the unconscious. Badiou, under the influence of his fidelity to Lacan’s theory, tries to provide a timeless space for truth, which is universal. Lacan’s unconsciousness is replaced with the term universal truth. The process of a truth follows from a nothing to an infinite. (The void is nothing, while a truth is infinite.) Further, Badiou developed the theory of points. He says that “the points of a transcendental constitute a topological space” (Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 452). Why are they topological? For, a point is the very condition for the transformation from a ‘nothing’ to an ‘infinite’ by a truth process. The points are identical with each other every time. They are that which make possible a truth process by submitting themselves for a subjective decision. Subject is another topological space for a truth procedure for Badiou.

<sup>207</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 420.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 422.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE THEORY OF TRUTH

Before entering into the analysis of Badiou's theory of truth, I would like to point out his distinction of knowledge and truth. Badiou makes a sharp distinction between knowledge and truth. Truth is not a kind of knowledge, which corresponds to what is. Badiou says that "the encyclopedia is a dimension of knowledge, not of truth, the latter creating a hole in knowledge".<sup>209</sup> It might be claimed that there is always an encyclopedia of a situation which may explain what the world is. A right statement of this encyclopedia can only describe an already known feature of a situation. The encyclopedia determines the differences between one part of a situation and its other parts by means of linguistic predicates. Badiou explains his distinction between knowledge and truth as follows:

The idea is that being in a situation, you have predicative diversity in the encyclopaedia of knowledge and the difference between parts of a situation is always seized by predicative difference; the language of the situation is the medium of knowledge. From the point of view of knowledge, it is the source of difference. But finally the true differences are the differences of the sets themselves, of the multiplicities. So the text is only saying that in the knowledge of the situation we have an access of predicates. So difference in knowledge is predicative. Naturally, it is not my thinking that language constitutes differences. There is an access via language to difference in knowledge – first point – but language doesn't constitute the ontological differences, not at all. And when we have the capacity of having the point of view of truth we understand that the differences which are ontological differences are absolutely distinct from predicative differences. 'Idealinguistry',

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<sup>209</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 37.

linguistic idealism, on the other hand, consists in thinking that language constitutes differences. From my point of view this is to fuse knowledge and truth. We always have to separate truth from knowledge or, in Marx's language, truth from ideology, or in Plato's language, truth from *doxa*, to have an access to the real and when we don't separate truth from knowledge we don't have access to the real and then we have the possibility of declaring that language constitutes differences. But the key point is the difference knowledge and truth, and I have to insist that this is the crucial point of philosophical discussion today. I am more and more convinced of this.<sup>210</sup>

Any description of what may be true, for Badiou, cannot be seen as a truth. This can only be knowledge of a situation. A truth is 'an indistinct subset' which is not identifiable by knowledge. Badiou introduces this indistinct subset as having distinct character from knowledge as follows:

A truth is a subset of the situation but one whose components cannot be totalized by means of a predicate of the language, however sophisticated that predicate. Thus a truth is an indistinct subset; so nondescript in the way it gathers its components that no trait shared by the latter would allow the subset to be identified by knowledge.<sup>211</sup>

That is to say that a truth is subtracted from the determination of the encyclopedia of knowledge. It is included in the situation as a void set. This is why a truth is not a transcendental but an immanent production of the situation.

The realm of truth is that of a novelty or a creation. In other words, a truth is concerned with an undecidable, an indiscernible, and an unnamable thing in a situation. A truth is nothing other than the process of localization or comprehension of the void in a situation. In fact, according to Badiou, the subject does not know truth, since truth is not in the domain of knowledge as already worked out. A subject makes a truth appear by his/her

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<sup>210</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>211</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 124.

decision/fidelity/forcing. One may assert, as Badiou seems to think, that a truth appears subjectively. This does not mean, however, that from Badiou's point of view truth has a relative meaning. This assertion shows only that there is a vital relation between being a subject and the appearing of a truth. One becomes a subject only when he/she makes a truth appear. Reversely, a truth can appear only by the triple of decision – fidelity – forcing of a subject. All truths are established through a subject who constitutes himself/herself by deciding, being faithful and forcing at the same time.

Additionally, every truth procedure, for Badiou, is random and interminable. It is aleatory, since a subject forces a situation to admit the existence of a new thing by his/her random choices. And, it is endless, since the void in a situation has an infinite character to be defined and to be forced to exist. In fact, the essence of a truth cannot be completely named. It can only be axiomatically declared. There always remains an unnamable point in a truth at the end of a truth process.

The realization of a truth causes a hole in the encyclopedic domain of a situation. It causes a radical change in the situation. The situation after the realization of a truth is completely different from the situation before. A truth brings forth firstly a kind of destruction of the situation. Badiou emphasizes that a truth cannot be seen only such as destruction. It also leads to a novelty in the situation. The encyclopedia of the situation changes throughout the process of the realization of a truth.

According to Badiou's view, "truth has no need of the concept of object"<sup>212</sup> as it appears as a result of an infinite procedure. Truth is not an ideal conformity between a reference of a language and a real object, which the language refers

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<sup>212</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 95.

to. A true description of an object can only be knowledge. This description can only be a true judgement about an object. Truth is a multiple, which appears as a consequence of an infinite process. Badiou subtracts the form of knowledge from that of judgement. He explains this distinct character of truth and its multiplicity as follows:

The whole point is to maintain, as far as possible, and under the most innovative conditions of thought, that, in any case, truth itself is nothing but a multiplicity. In the twofold sense that both its coming (a truth elicits the advent of a typical multiple, a generic singularity) and its being (there is no Truth, there are only truths, disparate and untotalizable) are multiplicities.<sup>213</sup>

In his theory of truth, Badiou insists on the idea that truth is multiple. There is not one single Truth. There are many truths. In other words, truth is multiple. Besides this plurality, a truth is also multiple in itself. It is a consequence of the actualization of a generic part of a situation. This generic part is that which is undecidable or unpredictable. A truth appears at the end of an infinite process of the transformation of this generic part towards a decidable part; because its source is only an undecidable part of a situation; because there remains an unnamable element of the rest at the end of a truth process. In short, a truth cannot be wholly said.

In this section of my thesis, I will firstly examine some features of Badiou's theory of truth. I will analyze the infinity and plurality of truth. I will also clarify what is 'truth procedure' and what happens in the process of this procedure. Secondly, I will clarify the place of subject in a truth procedure. Finally, I will examine what is Badiou's invention in the realm of political philosophy as a consequence of his understanding of truth.

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<sup>213</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 102.

#### 4.1. The Truth

Badiou's theory of truth aims at saving truth from being relative, while it stresses the plurality of truth. The most important feature of Badiou's truth is its immanency. Badiou argues that truth is not transcendent but immanent. It is not beyond the experienced world. It does not signify something which may organize particular changes in the world. It can be experienced in any singular situation. The more there are situations the more there are truths. A truth can only be a truth of a situation. The truth cannot be described by the predicates of a language. One can only force a truth to be known by his/her anticipation. It is an infinite multiple. A truth cannot be wholly described. This is because there is an unnamable point in a truth. Badiou introduces a scale to explain what truth is as follows:

1. The disjunction between transcendence and immanence. Truth is not of the order of something which stands above the givenness of experience; it proceeds or insists within experience as a singular figure of immanence.
2. The disjunction between the predicable and the non-predicable. There exists no single predicative trait capable of subsuming and totalizing the components of a truth. This is why we will say that a truth is nondescript or generic.
3. The disjunction between the infinite and the finite. Conceived in its being, as something that cannot be completed, a truth is an infinite multiplicity.
4. The disjunction between the nameable and the unnamable. A truth's capacity for disseminating itself into judgments within the field of knowledge is blocked by an unnamable point, whose name is forced only at the cost of disaster.<sup>214</sup>

As can be seen from this measuring of truth in terms of four disjunctions, any effort to say a truth wholly creates a tragedy. For this act forces the unnamable to be the nameable. Truth, as Badiou maintains, is infinite not only in its being

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

but also in its result. It is infinite because of its genericity in its being. Since it cannot be said wholly even at the end of a truth process, truth remains infinite in its result. It may be said, according to Badiou, that there is no ending point for a truth process because of this unnamable point of truth.

In other words, truth cannot be totalized by a single statement or theory. This means that one can only anticipate what will happen at the end of a truth process. This anticipation must be always an axiomatic utterance. A truth can be expressed only hypothetically by its axiomatic utterance. The subject of a truth forces to turn this hypothesis into a kind of certain knowledge. This is the point at which a truth is powerful. In other words, there is the unnamable or enforceable point of a truth, which resists the transformation of this truth towards being nameable, or knowable. This point is the limit of a truth. Badiou explains this forcing act of a subject as follows:

What happens is that 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.<sup>215</sup>

That is to say that a truth, because of its generic character, forces its subject to declare the truth only in a hypothetical way. In other words, the potency of a truth comes from this hypothetical forcing. Badiou states that there is a desire to know a truth wholly. This desire is the root of evil. Such an evil, for Badiou,

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<sup>215</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 65.

can be seen with scientism, or with totalitarianism.<sup>216</sup> To avoid evil, the potency of a truth should be gauged. This is the real task of philosophy. Badiou sees his ethic of truth as “that by which we take the measure of what our times are capable of, as well as what our times are worth”.<sup>217</sup> Only a true measurement made by ethic can protect an individual from participating in the emergency of an evil. It can be said in this regard that Badiou determines his view of truth in an affirmative or positive way. Truth process, for Badiou, is not the annihilating process of an evil. On the contrary, evil can only be a destruction of a truth procedure.

I would like to provide a detailed analysis of the features of Badiou’s understanding of truth. After having analyzed the plurality and infinity of truth, I am going to critically assess what, according to Badiou, happens in a truth procedure. The aim of these analyses is to show whether the supposed infinity and plurality of truth helps Badiou not to lapse into relativism.

#### **4.1.1. The Plurality and the Infinity of Truth**

There is not one single world, but there are worlds and there are infinite truths in a world. Badiou stresses the idea that this plurality of truths does not lead to relativism, because a truth does not change from an individual to another. As already pointed out, each truth has its own objective and special conditions to appear. Badiou articulates the objective and the ontological conditions of truth without reducing truth to an ontological term. He creates a space for the non-foundational element or the void element in his understanding of ontology by the help of the axiom of foundation and the axiom of separation. This void is

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

not that which constitutes being as being, but it signifies 'being as being'. The essence of a particular being comes from a conceptual void, which is subtracted from all its determinate predications. According to Badiou, an existent has not only its foundational elements but also its separate element, which Badiou calls the void. A truth procedure operates on such a separate element in a world. This point is that by means of which truth achieves its ontological condition without plunging into the domain of ontological determination. By relying on this explanation of truth, on the one hand, Badiou argues that the truths are plural and many. He declares, on the other hand, this plurality of truths does not lead to any relativity concerning their validity.

I have pointed out many times that there is not one single history according to Badiou's philosophical theory. There is no history, which includes all the moments or instantaneous points in a possible one unique world. The acknowledgment of such a unique history would make an inconsistent point in Badiou's philosophy. For, Badiou rejects the idea that there is no continuity in a world. In other words, he asserts that the change comes only from the discontinuous points in a world. This means that a radical change is a kind of irruption of the continuous order of a world.

Badiou does not completely exclude the terms 'history' and 'process' from his philosophy. Though there is no one single history, in Badiou's point of view, it can be claimed nonetheless that there are histories. Each truth has its own history. In fact, it can be suggested that by relying on this understanding of history Badiou tries to eliminate the concept of process. It must be said that the term of process, which Badiou wants to eliminate, is that which includes each and every occurrences and helps to constitute causal relations between these occurrences. Also, such a historical process has an end, which it aims to achieve at its ending moment. This kind of end is that which Badiou wants to get rid of from the realm of philosophy. In Badiou's theory of truth, a truth

appears also in a process which is called ‘truth procedure’. However, this truth procedure does not have a certain or natural aim in itself. The history of a certain truth process is not a particular point of a huge history. It is singular and infinite in itself, which is independent from the other histories of other truth procedures. By this removal of an overall concept of history from Badiou’s theory of truth, the plurality of a truth achieves more meaning than a particular or quantitative multitude. Let us look more closely at what truth procedure is and what constitutes the singular history of a truth in Badiou’s theory of truth.

While in *Being and Event* the truth procedure inaugurates and ends only by the act of nomination, this idea disappears in *Logics of Worlds*. Badiou admits that there are some consequences of an event or an evental statement. He adds that a truth procedure should be related with these consequences and the fidelity of a subject to them. That is to say that in *Logics of Worlds* a truth procedure turns into a kind of process. This process, however, is that which is also plural and does not have a causal relation to another process. In short, there is no one history or historical process in Badiou’s philosophy, but only histories of truths.

As I have already pointed out above, the conception of subtraction is one of the most essential ones in Badiou’s philosophy. Badiou states that truth is a kind of subtraction from all the predicative determinations. In Badiou’s view, a truth procedure has four figures of subtraction: the undecidable, the indiscernible, the generic and the unnamable. Each one of them is only a part, or a stage of a truth process. Only a total evaluation of these stages can give us a true definition of what a truth is. As we will discuss below, the fundamental argument of Badiou is that a truth is not only an infinite but also a finite thing, and that a truth is not only universal but also singular.

Let us look at the first figure of subtraction in a truth process. The undecidable is singular and it is subtracted from any kind of norm or from the lawfulness. Only a single statement appears suddenly such as ‘this event belongs to the situation’. Badiou gives the statement “a country’s illegal immigrant workers must have their rights recognized by that country” as an example for this sudden emergence of a singular statement.<sup>218</sup> It cannot be evaluated whether this statement is true or false. It is a sudden appearance and then it again suddenly disappears. Badiou explains the valuelessness of this undecidable statement as follows:

The undecidable is thus that which subtracts itself from a supposedly exhaustive classification of statement, realized according to the values ascribed to them by a norm. I am unable to decide any assignable value for this statement, in spite of the fact that the norm of assignation exists only on the assumption of its complete efficacy. The undecidable statement is strictly *valueless*, and this is what constitutes its price, through which it contravenes the laws of classical economy.<sup>219</sup>

This is the starting moment of a truth procedure when an undecidable statement appears. It appears only to disappear. The moment of the undecidable supplements one more statement to the language of the situation without any certainty of its being true or false. It cannot be evaluated by the juridical criteria of the situation.

The second figure of subtraction in a truth process is the indiscernible. This figure is a subtraction from a determination of a difference. There appear the two, which can be expressed by the phrases ‘either true or false’. There is not any objective difference between the two. It is also finite and singular similar

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<sup>218</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 144.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

to the undecidable. There appears a two, which does not have a characteristic of duality. Badiou explains this characteristic as follows:

The indiscernible is what subtracts itself from the marking of difference as effected by evaluating the effects of a permutation. Two terms are indiscernible when you permute them *in vain*. These two terms are two in number in the pure presentation of their being. There is nothing in language to endow their duality with a differentiating value. They are two, granted, but not so that you could re-mark that they are. Thus the indiscernible subtracts difference as such from all remarking. The indiscernible subtracts the two from duality.<sup>220</sup>

This means that there are two, but no one can distinguish one from the other. Its existence can be a result of a chance. This is the act of a subject who nominates the undecidable or decides whether the undecidable statement is true or false. It is only a wager on what has happened. Deciding whether the undecidable is true or false is only an axiom, since the undecidable has already disappeared. In other words, this decision cannot be objectively demonstrated or calculated. This indiscernible subject makes a rare decision. In other words, the decision can be true or false, since it is impossible to justify its truthfulness or falseness. This is why Badiou states that a decision of a subject can only be an axiomatic one. It should not be forgotten that this indiscernible part is relevant to the subject of a truth. The subject is only a finite part of a truth process. He/she decides concerning the undecidable part of a truth, which produces this indiscernible two without duality.

The unnamable may be dealt with as the third figure of subtraction of truth from the name. Truth as the unnamable is not infinite but singular. As already worked out in the second section of this thesis, this feature of truth reminds of one of Lacan's statement about truth. Lacan states that "there lies a chance for

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

us to be in touch with the real pure and simple – as that which prevents one from saying the *whole* truth about it”.<sup>221</sup> Similar to Lacan, Badiou states that a truth cannot be wholly said. A truth does not have a ‘proper name’. Badiou this as follows:

The fact that an expression names a term means that it provides a schema for its proper name. As always, the ‘proper’ presupposes the unique. The named term is unique because it gives to the expression that names it the fixed nominating value.

Accordingly, a term in the universe is ‘unnameable’ if it is the only one in that universe that is not named by any expression.<sup>222</sup>

In other words, the predicates of a language can be assigned only to the particularities in the world, which this language pertains to. The totality of these assignations constitutes the encyclopedia of knowledge. Only a knowable particular can be named properly. That is to say that only a knowable has a proper name because of its uniqueness. In other words, the uniqueness of a particular is constituted by the operation of ‘count-as-one’. A truth is that which has not counted as one and thus has not its own certain uniqueness. This is why it cannot be named properly. It does not have a proper name. It cannot be expressed in words. The truth itself is not the proper name of the names. It cannot explain the whole situation, in which it appears. It is a singular, but this singularity does not originate from its being a totality of particularities, which are counted as one by the situation. As already examined above, the singularity means to be not-being-represented by the state of situation. Thus, it signifies the void point in the structure. A singular truth can only be expressed hypothetically. This is why if we consider the undecidable, the indiscernible and the unnamable, we encounter only with the singularity of truth. But then as

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<sup>221</sup> J. Lacan, *Television*, trans. D. Hollier, R. Krauss & A. Michelson, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 1990, p. 31.

<sup>222</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 108.

contrast, we encounter with the infinity of truth in the sense that truth is generic.

The term of generic signifies a subtraction from any predicative description or from any representation of the state. We can use the axioms of foundation and separation to explain the category of generic. The known components of a situation are foundational elements of the structure. There are also some separate elements in this structure, which do not constitute the current and known feature of the structure. There is the place of the void in Badiou's philosophy. And the genericity of truth is based upon this place. As already explained, an event or truth occurs on the edge of the void. That is to say that the generic is a subtraction from the power of one or being counted as one. It signifies a kind of uncertainty. Because of this genericity, truth can only be axiomatically announced. This is the only context in which we can talk about the infinity of truth. Truth is infinite because it can only be represented by an anticipating hypothesis of a finite subject.

The hypothesis of a truth requires being formulated "in the future perfect". Badiou explains this perfectness by the concept of forcing as follows:

Forcing is the point at which a truth, although incomplete, authorizes anticipations of knowledge concerning not what is but *what will have been if truth attains completion*.

This anticipatory dimension requires that truth judgements be formulated in the future perfect. Thus while almost nothing can be said about what a truth is, when it comes to what happens *on condition that that truth will have been*, there exists a forcing whereby almost everything can be stated.

As a result, a truth operates through the retroaction of an almost nothing and the anticipation of an almost everything.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

This seems to explain why a finite subject little by little axiomatically pictures what the undecidable is. After having done so, the subject begins to anticipate the consequences of his/her decision. That is to say that his/her axiom is followed by his/her hypothesis. This hypothesis pictures what will happen to the situation after the supplementation of the undecidable to it.<sup>224</sup> This hypothesis does not also have objective certainty. It shows the generic power of truth. Truth is necessarily infinite because of its being only predictable. I would like also to add that due to the unnameable part, a truth cannot be known or declared completely. There always remains an undecidable point.

By the hypothesis concerning the future happenings, the subject forces the situation to change of its form of knowledge. This point of forcing is a critical moment of a truth procedure. A truth in its being is incomplete. This is why a truth is under the risk of turning a disaster by forcing or anticipating everything. If the subject names the unnamable or completes the incomplete, this forcing of the subject brings forth not the appearance of a truth but a disaster. In other words, there is an ‘unforceable’ point in a truth procedure, which he calls ‘the unnamable’.<sup>225</sup> This unforceable term, for Badiou, indicates the impossible or the real. That is, the unnamable is the real, which cannot be achieved by any anticipating hypothesis of the subject.

In short, the truth is not only singular but also infinite. It is infinite, on the one hand, since it cannot be completed and there is no single predicate to describe it. On the other hand, it is a singularity, because it is not a transcendental but “a singular figure of immanence”, and it is not namable or domination over the

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

all<sup>226</sup>, because the subject of a truth is finite. Badiou gives the following examples to explain this duality of truth as follows:

Tragedy itself, as an artistic truth, continuous to infinity. The work of Sophocles is a finite subject of this infinite truth. In the same way, the scientific truth decided by Galileo is pursued to infinity. But the laws of physics which have been successively invented are finite subjects of this truth.<sup>227</sup>

As I have already worked out above, according to Badiou, truth is singular because it is not namable. Also it is infinite because of its being generic. It is infinite both in its being and in its results. It cannot be predicated by the words of a language. It is that what is not represented by the state of situation. The first moment of the truth, that is the event, occurs not in the situation but in its eventual site. The phrase ‘on the edge of the void’ is supposed to be expressing the fact that the truth occurs in the eventual site. This void is the very ground of the genericity of truth. The generic is a subtraction from the power of one or being counted as one. This is why truth is infinite in its being. Truth is also infinite in its consequences, since it can only be represented by an anticipating hypothesis of a finite subject. A finite subject firstly decides what the undecidable is. After having done this, the subject begins to anticipate the consequences of his/ her decision. That is to suggest that his/her axiom is followed by his/her hypothesis. This hypothesis endeavors to show the generic power of truth. The consequences of a truth can only be expressed hypothetically. It is necessarily infinite just because it is inconsistent for the exact determination and it is therefore merely predictable. It cannot be expressed by the words of the current language. This expression in a hypothetical way is seen as the forcing act of subject. This is the limit of an infinite truth.

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>227</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, pp. 63-64.

The limit of a truth is explained by the help of the unnamable side of truth. If one tries to name the unnamable, for Badiou, then there would be a disaster, since this naming means to singularize the infinity of truth. Badiou asserts that “the constraint that the infinite . . . may give rise to the desire the name the unnamable, to appropriate the proper name of the proper through naming”.<sup>228</sup> In fact, Badiou argues that a truth cannot be generalized for all things in a world. It cannot be dominated over all the situations. It can be only a singular truth for its own situation. This is the limit of a truth. This is the own weakness of truth. There is no single term to name a truth. Badiou gives for this the following explanation:

Consequently, in the register of the Matheme, it is perfectly consistent to maintain that one term and one term only in a given situation remains unforceable for a generic truth. It is thus that, in the situation supplemented by its truth, the real of that supplementation is attested to. No matter how powerful a truth is, no matter how capable of veridicality it proves to be, this power comes to falter upon a single term, which at a stroke effects the swing from all-powerfulness to powerlessness and displaces our love of truth from its appearance, the love of the generic, to its essence, the love of the unnameable.<sup>229</sup>

A theory is not only powerful because of its being generic but also powerless because of the impasse of its unnamable part. In other words, a theory, on the one hand, makes appear the generic point of a situation or its hidden element. This is the essence of its power. It causes a sharp change in the form of knowledge of the situation. On the other hand, truth is powerless to explain everything because of its two features: there is a singularity (the unnamable part) in its infinity (its generic being) and there is not such a gigantic truth that includes everything.

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<sup>228</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 115.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

Badiou presents the infinity of truth only as ‘a non-temporal eternity’. As I have pointed out many times, from Badiou’s point of view, there is no transcendental truth. There can only be truth that necessarily occurs in a concrete situation. There is no single truth, which includes all the other truths. These truths, however, are infinite, since it can only be a result of a creative action of an aleatory decision and this action produces an infinite truth because of its generic character. A truth cannot be completely deciphered due to its being generic or undecidable, or unpredictable. Also, a truth is infinite, since after this aleatory decision of a finite subject or particular subject, a truth inaugurates to call for the all human beings. I think that it is now the right place to work out the meaning of the term ‘generic’.

The term ‘generic’ is an essential term in Badiou’s terminology. It does not signify a discernible thing. In other words, it nominates what is not discernible. The term generic indicates that what is not discernible is the general truth of a situation. This does not show the foundational elements of a situation but only non-foundational elements of a situation. Knowledge is not concerned with this ‘generic’. What is discernible in a situation can be known by the guide of ‘the encyclopaedia of the situation’. This encyclopaedia is a static state of knowledge. The operations of the domain of knowledge are discernment and classification. The first is about presentations and the second representations. The event, however, cannot be known in the domain of knowledge. It cannot be explained by an encyclopedic determinant. The statement of an event cannot be veridical but ‘true’. It can be controlled only by the procedure of fidelity. Thus, ‘true’ can be attached only to the event or to the ‘intervention’<sup>230</sup>, namely a truth procedure attaches a new thing to the situation. This novelty causes a

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<sup>230</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 332.

change in the previous knowing form of this situation. This is to say that a new form of knowledge appears as a consequence of such a generic procedure.

Badiou defines the concept of ‘generic multiplicity’ as “a subset of the situation that is not determined by any of the predicates of encyclopedic knowledge”.<sup>231</sup> This category of generic multiple allows us to think a truth as an infinite result of a singular truth procedure. A truth is infinite, since it is originated from this generic multiplicity, which cannot be described by the valid form of knowledge. This category is also that which allows us to think a truth as a hole in the encyclopedia of the presented situation. Badiou explains the genericity of truth as follows:

A truth shall thus be a generic part of the situation, ‘generic’ designating that is any part whatsoever of it, that it says nothing in particular about the situation, except precisely its multiple-being as such, its fundamental inconsistency. A truth is the minimal consistency (a part, a conceptless immanence), which certifies in the situation the inconsistency from which its being is made. . . . the generic part that a truth is shall have to be produced. It shall constitute the infinite multiple-horizon of a post-eventful procedure, which shall be called a generic procedure.<sup>232</sup>

A truth is generic because it designates the inconsistency of a multiple. It is not interested in the consistent parts or the parts of counted-as-one or the represented elements of parts. This is why truth is not in the realm of knowledge. However, as a result, it makes a hole in the encyclopedia of knowledge. It is indifferent to the maximal appearing in a situation. Its foundational interest is on the minimal appearing or the indiscernible. A truth appears after an event, i.e. it is ‘post-evental’. This is why there is no structural or objective truth. Badiou declares that “the trajectory of a truth begins with an

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<sup>231</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 151.

<sup>232</sup> Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, p. 107.

undecidable event. It finds its act in a finite subject confronted by the indiscernible".<sup>233</sup> A truth is also not transcendental but immanent to the situation. It is a part of the early situation but its indiscernible part. It makes this indiscernible part discernible. It adds a new element to the situation not from the outside of situation. It forces a situation to present a non-presented multiple of this situation itself. The unknown part of a situation turns thereby little by little into to be known. But this unknown part is infinite and there remains always an unnamable part. It may therefore be said that a truth does not directly follows from the structure of a situation but from the void point in the structure. There is therefore a structural explanation of truth in Badiou's philosophy, thus it can be said that his philosophy has a tendency towards structuralism. His explanation does not seem to go beyond the arguments of structuralism. I think that Badiou oscillates between two traditions: structuralism and post-structuralism like between the analytic and the continental. He wants, in my view, to overcome the opposition between them. I will be dealing with this aim of Badiou in the last chapter. Now, I would like to examine what 'truth procedure' is and what the distinct features of the four truth procedures are.

#### **4.1.2. Truth Procedures**

Badiou thinks that the types of truth are infinite. But, paradoxical enough, we can know only the four of these infinite truths. There are four domains in which a truth procedure may occur and these are love, science, art and politics. He asserts that:

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<sup>233</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 64.

The fact is that today – and on this point things haven't budged since Plato – we only know four types of truths: science (mathematics and physics), love, politics and the art. We can compare this situation to Spinoza's statement about the attributes of Substance (the 'expressions' of God): without doubt, Spinoza says, there is an infinity of attributes, but we humans know only two, thought and extension. For our part, we will say that there are perhaps an infinity of types of truths but we humans only know four.<sup>234</sup>

Badiou examines all of them in his works. Each one produces truths in its own way and in its own realm. Love operates between two distinct individuals. The first term or the departure point of love is one. The amorous procedure goes from one to infinite by the mediation of the two (sexual difference). Before a truth procedure of love, there are two distinct genders: the woman and the man. Some egalitarian regulative thoughts can be declared concerning the status, hierarchy or social roles of them. However, they cannot represent a truth insofar as they are predicative, since a truth is only a subtraction from any predication of the language. Love is a declaration of the equality of two distinct sexes. Badiou explains the truth process in love as follows:

For this to be the case, there has to be the suddenly emerging singularity of an encounter or declaration; one that crystallizes a subject whose manifestation is precisely its subtractive experience of sexual difference. Such a subject comes about through an amorous encounter in which there occurs a disjunctive synthesis of sexuated positions. Thus the amorous scene is the only genuine scene in which a universal singularity pertaining to the Two of the sexes [. . .] is proclaimed. This is where an undivided subjective experience of absolute difference takes place.<sup>235</sup>

An event, as already pointed out, is the decision about the undecidable. This is the inaugural statement of a truth that which appears as a singularity. The

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<sup>234</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 71.

<sup>235</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 146.

opening statement in love is “I love you”.<sup>236</sup> The subject of love, one between the two, can only be constituted only after the statement “I love you” and by his/her fidelity to this statement.

Science works on scientific truths. An unknown is rendered a known one by the means of a scientific truth procedure. Badiou states that the first term of a truth procedure of science is the void, which signifies the unknown up to now. Science is the comprehension of “the void and the infinite by the letter”.<sup>237</sup> The only subject of this scientific truth procedure is only a scientist. A scientist is not concerned with the subjective infinity of situation.

The artistic truth procedure is similar that of science. Badiou declares that the departure point of a truth procedure of art is a finite point. Of course, an artistic work is a finite thing. An artist tries to reveal the infinity by means of this finite work. This finite work functions like letter in a science. The subject of art, for Badiou, is not an artist but his/her work.<sup>238</sup> What has remained for us today is not Goethe but his work *Faust*. The artist is only particular being, and, in a truth procedure of art, this particularity is abolished. There remains only a finite work and its reference to a singular infinity.

I would like to claim that Badiou’s view of artistic truth is essential to understand what a truth really means in his theory of truth. Badiou points out that the poetic creation is more than the creation of a poet. The poetic creation is itself is a singular event. The importance of this creativity is its enigmatic representative feature. Badiou says this enigmatic point as follows:

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>237</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 143.

<sup>238</sup> Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, p. 151.

The poem is neither a description nor an expression. Nor is it an affected painting of the world's extension. The poem is an operation. The poem teaches us that the world does not present itself as a collection of objects. The world is not what 'objects' are to thought. For the operation of the poem, the world is that is that thing whose presence is more essential than objectivity....

The rule is simple: To enter into the poem – not in order to know what it means, but rather to think what happens in it. Because the poem is an operation, it is also an event. The poem takes place. The superficial enigma points to this taking place. It offers us a taking place in language.<sup>239</sup>

That is to say that a truth in art also begins with an enigmatic emergency of an event. In a poem, there appears an event, and the poet is not creator of this event but only one who is faithful to this enigmatic occurrence. This feature of artistic truth shows us more clearly that a truth is not a true description of the world. The emergency of a truth is not a creation of a new something. Indeed, it signifies a new place in language, which is not finding but taking by a finite poet. That is to say that a finite poet invents a topological place of an infinite truth by his/her finite poem. The infinity of a truth in a finite poem does not come from its being effective over human forever. It has an intrinsic infinity without time. It shows all in itself a topological place of a poetic truth, which is infinite. A finite poem can be only a local place of this topological place.

Only politics, for Badiou, has the infinity as its first term. This infinity signifies a collective act of thought. This means that an event can be political only if its inaugurating point is the collective. I am going to present the truths in the political realm at the end of this chapter entitled "The Emancipatory Politics".

Now, I would like to clarify what Badiou means by truth process. Badiou gives importance to the constitution of a network theory of conditions in the truth

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<sup>239</sup> A. Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. A. Toscano, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2005, p. 29.

procedures, which can occur in art, science, love or politics. Culture, however for him, is not this kind of network. It can be “the network of various forcing” at a certain moment in time.<sup>240</sup> That is, culture is not other than what changes by the effects of the consequences of the truth procedures at a certain time. In other words, the encyclopedic knowledge of a current culture changes under the various conditions of art, science, politics and love. Badiou adds that any kind of cultural study has to work on these conditions. The relation between these conditions has to come into the light in this kind of cultural study. Badiou sees the works of Foucault as a successful instance for the cultural study. He does not see, nevertheless, these kinds of works as philosophical. For him, philosophy is concerned not with cultural conditions but directly with truth procedures themselves.

#### **4.2. The Subject**

Badiou argues that the subject is not an organic being or cognitive being. It is the creator of a truth. However, this explanation alone cannot be true to express Badiou’s understanding of the subject. It must be added that a man/woman is not a subject immediately and can become to be subject only via his/her participation in a truth procedure. That is, the subject is only that of a truth procedure.<sup>241</sup> That is to suggest that the subject is constituted throughout and at the end of a generic truth procedure. This notion of subject is similar to Sartre’s

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<sup>240</sup> Badiou, A., “Can Change Be Thought? A dialogue with Alain Badiou [with Bruno Bosteels]”, in G. Riera (ed.), *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2005, p. 259.

<sup>241</sup> We should note that the notion of subject had a highly different status in Badiou’s *Theory of Subject*. In this earlier work, we encounter only one kind of subject: the political subject. Badiou believed in the idea that “every subject is political” (Badiou, *Theory of Subject*, p. 28.). This idea disappears in his later works and he acknowledges the idea that a subject can be a scientific, political, artistic or amorous. There cannot be a subject, for Badiou, but only an individual out of these realms of truth procedure.

understanding of the subject. Sartre thinks of the subject as not given in the beginning, but as a production of his/her own action. Further it must be added that Badiou's subject is singular and there is no superior, or one single subject, or the subject of the unique history. He explains this thought as follows:

There is no super subject. A subject is a subject of a definite subject, the Occidental situation from the Roman Empire and so on. There is a particularity of the situation and the subject is a particular subject. The philosophical category of the subject has very different referents. In the situation of political organization there can be a subject, in another situation there is a subject of love which is different, in a third situation the Christian subject, it's another thing, and so on. So, there is great complexity in the category of subject and the semantics of this category is very diverse.<sup>242</sup>

This means that there can only be a subject of a truth process in a concrete situation. There can be as many subjects as there are truth procedures.

Badiou states that what the subject is can only be axiomatically comprehended. This axiomatic explanation of the subject is also in accordance with his understanding of what is philosophy. Any descriptive explanation of the conception of subject does not determinate it, least of all absolutely. This is according to Badiou the reason why the theory of subject cannot be descriptive. Badiou sees Althusser's reduction of the subject to an ideological apparatus as the result of this type effort of descriptive explanation. Althusser describes what is, but does not see what a real subject is. He misses to conceive the relation of subject with a contingent happening of a truth. This is why Althusser's subject having an ideological structure according to Badiou is false. Further the subject cannot be explained by the supporters of the democratic materialism. Badiou explains why the subject of democratic materialism does not designate the real meaning of the subject as follows:

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<sup>242</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 175.

[t]he theory of subject is axiomatic. It cannot be deduced, because it is the affirmation of its own form. But neither can it be an experimented. Its thought is decided on the horizon of an irrefutable empirical dimension which we illustrated in the preface: there are truths, and there must be an active and identifiable form of their production (but also of what hinders or annuls this production). The name of this form is subject. Saying 'subject' or saying 'subject with regard to truth' is redundant. For there is a subject only as the subject of a truth, at the service of this truth, of its denial or of its occultation. Therefore 'subject' is a category of the materialist dialectic. Democratic materialism only knows individuals and communities, that is to say passive bodies, but it knows no subjects.<sup>243</sup>

As can be seen from what has been quoted above, Badiou denies all the possible deterministic and descriptive explanation of the subject. The subject can be understood only in an axiomatic theory. Badiou introduces an active subject contrary to the subject of democratic materialism as 'passive bodies'. As I will further explain below, the subject is a form of a truth. It is not a singular form. It can be in the form of acknowledgement, refutation or occultation of this truth. But it is a form of truth.

In *Being and Event*, Badiou sees 'the naming' as a crucial moment of a truth procedure. In his *Ethics*, he sees Marx as the subject of a truth because of his nomination of 'proletariat' as an unrepresented element, or as a void element in the capitalist world. Later, Badiou renounces this idea that the naming is the only moment of the process of becoming subject. In fact, after his *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism*, Badiou begins to constitute his current understanding of the subject. After having produced *Logics of World*, he achieved a different view concerning the actions of subject in a truth procedure. The notion of fidelity becomes more important than the act of naming.

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<sup>243</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 50.

Let us examine now what Badiou says concerning the subject in *Being and Event*. In this work, the fundamental feature of event is its ‘undecidability’.<sup>244</sup> Therefore, ‘decision’ is an important point in the process of the event. Badiou uses the axiom of separation in this regard. ‘Decision’ is a kind of procedure, which requires a separation from the situation. By the procedure of decision, one can decide on whether a multiple is an event in a situation. Badiou calls such a procedure ‘*intervention*’.<sup>245</sup> A subject must intervene between the previous situation and the becoming of a novelty by his/her decision. In fact, the act of intervention has two aspects: recognition and decision. The moment of recognition is about the evental form of an event. A subject recognizes that some novelties begin to appear in a situation. The moment of ‘decision’ is a moment of intervention of a subject. He/she decides whether an event belongs to the situation or not. Such a decision is a wager one because of the undecidability of the novelties.

As already pointed out above, according to Badiou, there is no causal relation between two events. Badiou, however, says that there must be a sequence of the ‘events’ that have happened. There must also be two events: an event and an evental intervention. It can be said more clearly that an intervention can be only a consequence of another event. Interestingly, ‘time’ is supposed to be an intervention itself. The two requires the intervention of time: there must be one who sees oneself as a consequence of another event. This is evental intervention of a subject. This requires a previous event. Then, there appear a temporary circulation. Badiou explains this circulation as follows:

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<sup>244</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 198.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

This is to say that the theory of intervention forms the kernel of any theory of time. Time – if not coextensive with structure, if not the *sensible form of the Law* – is intervention itself, thought as the gap between two events. The essential historicity of intervention does not refer to time as a measurable milieu. It is established upon the situation by grounding itself on the circulation. . . . Time is here, again, the requirement of the Two; for there to be an event, one must be able to situate oneself within the consequences of another. The intervention is a line drawn from one paradoxical multiple, which is already circulating, to the circulation of another, a line which scratches out. It is a *diagonal* of the situation.<sup>246</sup>

As can be seen from this quotation, the consequences of an event cannot be immediately and certainly discerned. An event is possible only if there is a continuous conservation of its consequences. Or, it is so, only if there appears a subject who creates a true time, which is duration of subject's fidelity to the previous event. There is a connection of the consequences of a previous event and the time of intervention. There must be one who discerns the event and its consequences. Badiou calls this duration '*fidelity*'.<sup>247</sup> Thus, Badiou states also that 'subject' is "the process itself of liaison between the event (thus the intervention) and the procedure of fidelity (thus its operator of connection)".<sup>248</sup> Fidelity is always particular and a functional relation to the event, or an operation.

There is a dangerous ground in the theoretical status of fidelity, since it can turn into an operation of representation. That is, its status can face with the danger of turning to the operation of representation. It is as an operation similar to that which is of the state of situation. For, the subject by his fidelity tries to re-count as one of the uncounted elements of a situation. The subject can

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

present his/her counting operation as a unique one. He/she can appear also as an excess of the structure. This type of subject can insist on the idea that “we are the whole of the structure”. As Badiou argued, this insistence can appear as a consequence of the proximity of the fidelity to the ontological connections: the counting operations of belonging and inclusion. Then, there might appear a dogmatic fidelity. This is why Badiou insists on the idea that there are two: the operator of fidelity and an eventual multiple. The role of subject by his/her fidelity is not to re-count the element of a situation. Badiou explains this difference as follows:

The degree to which fidelity is removed as far as possible from the state is thus played out, on the one hand, in the gap between its operator of connection and belonging (or inclusion), and, on the other hand, in its genuinely separational capacity. A real fidelity established dependencies which for the state are without concept, and it splits – via successive finite states – the situation in two, because it also discerns a mass of multiples which are indifferent to the event.<sup>249</sup>

There can be different criteria for the same event in the same situation. These different criteria define different fidelities. For Badiou, it is possible to determine the true one of them. First of all, true fidelity is that which is at a distance from the counting operation. That is, it must not work as an operation of belonging or inclusion. It must be between the two, or between these operations and its own creative thus infinite capacity. I think that Badiou’s two signifies a kind of situation of opacity. This opacity can only be a ground for the fidelity of subject towards the void. In fact, the two is defined in many different ways in Badiou’s philosophy. One of them is that the two signifies a split or connection between the event itself and its multiple elements. The other is that the two signifies a split between a previous event and subject’s intervention or fidelity. Thus it can be said that true fidelity is not only to the

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

event but also its multiple elements. The subject can only name these elements by the blurred words without any restrictive meaning. For, if he/she gives them a determinate name, it would have worked as the state of situation.

In other words, subject must be faithful to both to the undecidability of an event and to its own indiscernibility. The subject, for Badiou, discerns that there is an undecidable thing in a situation and decides what is. This is not enough for a truth to appear. The undecidability of an event exactly means its not having a certain value. To decide concerning its truth value must be a 'wager' made by the subject. This decision appears in the form of axiom. It is an unjustified decision. The subject is constituted by this rare axiom such as: "This event has taken place, it is something which I can neither evaluate, nor demonstrate, but to which I shall be faithful".<sup>250</sup> Then a subject endeavors to verify the consequences of his decision in the situation. That is to say that he/she begins to examine the consequences of his axiom, which decides upon an event. The subject, as Badiou argues, must also be faithful to the consequences of his/her own decision by such an axiom to complete a truth process. In doing this, the subject forces the situation to accommodate this undecidable event, or to realize the truth. A truth is nothing other than the process of localization of the void of a situation. In fact, subject does not know truth, since truth is not in the domain of knowledge as already analyzed. "The subject only believes that there is a truth and this belief occurs in the form of knowledge".<sup>251</sup> However it is not knowledge, only belief, since the subject deals with only "the generic indiscernibility of a truth".<sup>252</sup> This is because the decision of the subject does not have any truth value. It can be only a wager choice. This choice cannot have any infinity in it. This is why Badiou sees the

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<sup>250</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 62.

<sup>251</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 396.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 399.

subject as the finite moment of a truth. Badiou explains the subject being finite as follows:

This means that the subject of a truth demands the indiscernible. The indiscernible organizes the pure point of the Subject in the process of verification. A subject is what disappears between two indiscernibles. A subject is a throw of a dice which does not abolish chance, but which accomplishes chance through the verification of the axiom that founds it as a subject. What was decided concerning the undecidable event must pass by *this* term, indiscernible from its other. Such is the local act of a truth; it consists in a pure choice between two indiscernibles. Such an act is thus absolutely finite.<sup>253</sup>

The subject himself/herself is not infinite, although the result of its action can be infinite, or make a singular a universal. It can be said, from Badiou's point of view, that the subject also works as an operator. There are three operations of a subject: "forcing decision", "disqualifying the unequal" and "saving the singular".<sup>254</sup> Every truth procedure is random and interminable. It is aleatory, since a subject forces a situation to admit the emergency of a novelty by some random choices. And, a truth is endless, since the void in a situation has an infinite character to be defined and to be forced to exist by the act of a subject.

In *Being and Event*, event is supposed to be not in the realm of 'being'. After having distinguished them from each other, Badiou does not successfully relate them to one another. This irrelevancy is criticized by many thinkers. Badiou also admits the rightfulness of these critiques. Then, he wishes to overcome this problem in his later work *Logics of Worlds*. The first issue of this book is the concept of the subject. First of all, Badiou sees the subject as a category of the materialist dialectic. Badiou also states in this work, like in *Being and Event*, that there are truths and that the subject is the name of the form of

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<sup>253</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 63.

<sup>254</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, p. 409.

production of these truths.<sup>255</sup> That is to say that the subject is only a subjective formalization of a truth process. The subject, however, does not have any static formal structure in his *Logics of Worlds*. It unfolds its form in a determinate world, or a determinate situation. It constitutes itself through its own actions. There is no one type of subject as different from that in his *Being and Event*.

In his *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou endeavors to illuminate what a subject is by the help of different definitions: destination, operation and his new understanding of present. An action of a subject can lead to a kind of “production”, “denial”, “occultation” or “resurrection”.<sup>256</sup> Badiou calls these conclusions “destinations”. The figure of this action can be a “bar”, a “consequence”, an “erasure”, or “negation”. Badiou calls them “operations”.<sup>257</sup> He defines three different subjects: “faithful subject”, “reactive subject” and “obscure subject”. He names “the set of the consequences of the evental trace” as “*present*”.<sup>258</sup> The faithful subject, for Badiou, is the name of the creation of this present. The present is active with respect to this faithful subject. There is a type of fidelity of this subject to the consequences of the occurred event. The action of a faithful subject will lead to a production of a novelty. The faithful subject is defined as follows:

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<sup>255</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 50.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>257</sup> In order to understand Badiou’s definition of subject and three kinds of subject in his *Logic of Worlds*, we must conceive more clearly the meanings of his three terms used in this definition: the trace, the consequences of an event and the present. Badiou says that an event leaves a trace in the world. He signifies the term ‘trace’ by the signifier ‘ε’. A trace takes the form of egalitarian statement such as “all people are equal” in the political domain or “I love you” in the domain of love. This kind of egalitarian statement opens up a space for a new and unprecedented possibility in the world. This space is called ‘the present’, which is signified by ‘π’. Lastly, the consequence of an event is that which affirms a new present.

<sup>258</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 52.

Such a subject realizes itself in the production of consequences, which is why it can be called faithful – faithful to and thus to that vanished event of which  $\varepsilon$  is the trace. The product of this fidelity is the new present which welcomes, point by point, the new truth. We could also say that it is the subject in the present.<sup>259</sup>

An event suddenly appears in a situation and marks a trace in the situation. This is because to be faithful to an event is not enough for being a faithful subject. He/she must be faithful to the trace of the event too. Only by the mediation of this faithfulness to the trace, a subject can be faithful to an event itself. In other words, to be faithful to an event requires the subject's fidelity to the traces of the event. By this fidelity, there appear some consequences of the event. The faithful subject appears only in this production of the consequences of an event. In other words, the faithful subject is only the formalization of this production of consequences. The present, which is a producing process of the consequences of an event, is active only with respect to this subject. There is a type of fidelity of this subject to the consequences of the occurred event. Only as a consequence of this fidelity, there appears a novelty. This is the only subject type, which we can observe in Badiou's *Being and Event*.

The second type of subject, in Badiou's *Logics and Worlds*, is reactive one which extinguishes the present. Badiou insists on the idea that the reactive subject is not a pure negation of the faithful subject, since the reactive one does not only negate the trace of an event. Or, to put it in other words, this is because the reactive subject also creates a different form of time. Badiou explains this production as follows:

It [the act of the reactive subject] is not a pure negation of the evental trace, since it also claims to produce something – and even, frequently under the cloak of modernity, to produce some kind of present.

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

Needless to say, this present is not the affirmative and glorious present of the faithful subject. It is a measured present, a negative present, a present ‘a little less wrong’ than the past, if only because it resisted the catastrophic temptation which the reactive subject declares is contained in the event. We will call it an extinguished present.<sup>260</sup>

Badiou gives as an example for this subject François Furet, the historian and the author. Furet, according to the reading of Badiou, ignores the influence of French Revolution over the social developments after this event. That is to suggest that, if we put it in Badiou own words, Furet is faithful to the consequences of the event of French Revolution, but without being faithful to the event itself. Or, he creates his time without being faithful to the present, which is the set of the consequences of the traces of an event. This subject can lead to a denial of the old structure and produce only reactionary novelties. These reactionary novelties can only be a little better than the old features of the structure. This reactive subject cannot produce a novelty in the situation, because of its ignorance of the destructive and creative event itself. This is why a reactionary subject can only be a bar or an obstacle for a possible novelty.

The last kind of subject, in Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds*, the obscure subject is the concealment of the present. This subject cannot recognize what happened in the present, but he/she ignores also what happened in the present. It negates or erases the consequences of an event. Badiou explains this subject as follows:

Without question, the obscure subject crucially calls upon an atemporal fetish: the incorruption and indivisible over-body, be it City, God or Race. . . . But the goal of the obscure subject is to make this fetish the contemporary of the present that demands to be occulted. For example, the sole function of the God of conspiratorial Islamism is to occult the

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

present of the rational politics of emancipation among people, by dislocating the unity of their statements and their militant bodies.<sup>261</sup>

That is to say that the obscure subject is a formalization of the insistence on the past, by his/her fetishist decision. He/she reduces the possible bodies of a truth to a whole body. Badiou sees that the oppressive God of the political Islamism and the elevation of German race by Nazism as instances for this kind of fetish of obscure formalism. Badiou states that the main term of Nazism is the unnamable part of a truth.<sup>262</sup> The main thesis of Nazism is that the German race signals the single truth in the world. There is, for this type of political understanding, a hierarchical structure in 'being'. In the eyes of the obscure subject, the emergency of a new fortune can occur only by the help of an absolute body. This whole body must be nurtured everywhere and all the time. Badiou insists on the idea that this obscure subject aims in reality at extinguishing the productions of living thought. This subject creates a transcendental body such as God or race by his/her fetishist decision. This transcendental body is a type of universal body, which has no beginning and an end in time.

Badiou endeavors to make a topological space for his understanding of the subject. The components of this subject are the existences of other types of subject. A faithful subject must enter into a relation to these other forms of subjectivization. This relation, for Badiou, is the point, which his fidelity opens up. One of the functions of this faithful subject is to measure the gap between the reactive subject and the obscure subject. What does it mean in Badiou's philosophy? A faithful subject should show who is the reactive subject and the

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>262</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 68.

obscure subject. He/she also should indicate a present how to create by being at a distance from the situation of these two forms of subject.

In short, to be faithful to an event, for Badiou, provides a subject to live in a present. The duration of fidelity, in Badiou's philosophy, is relevant to his understanding of present. This conception is not a part, or a cut of a whole time. It is not a 'now' after the past and before the future. It has a relation to the events, the consequences of which continue to effect to the present world whenever they occur. True fidelity cannot only be towards an event itself but also must be towards its consequences. Badiou gives Lenin's fidelity as example of his understanding of 'present' and 'fidelity':

Lenin explained that he was faithful to the Commune of Paris. There is always an event for faithfulness and we know that when the Russian Revolution lasted longer than the Paris Commune, Lenin danced on the snow! The constitution of Lenin as a subjective revolutionary depends on the fact that, in contrast to Trotsky and others, he was not faithful to Marxism – he was a Marxist, naturally – but he was faithful to the French Revolution and the Paris Commune – it's another thing. It's a very important point and it is the same question. Knowledge is important, but the faithfulness which constitutes the subject – the revolutionary subject, the political subject – is not made of knowledge but made of other things than knowledge. In the case of Lenin it is very interesting. On the one hand, Lenin was in the middle of the people who were Marxists in the first years of the twentieth century yet, on the other hand, he refers systematically to events and not exclusively to the doctrine or theory.<sup>263</sup>

This paragraph also shows that the fidelity of a subject from Badiou's point of view cannot be towards a theory. It must be towards an event. Badiou points out that Lenin's faithfulness is not to the theory of Marx but to the event of Marx. The faithfulness of Lacan is not to the theory of Freud but to the event of Freud. It can be said that the personality and the theory are not the matter with

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

respect to the faithfulness of a subject. Badiou admits the idea that there are events in thinking from the point of view of the events of Freud and Marx. Let us examine what the statement ‘all the events are in thought’ means for Badiou.

Badiou sees subject as “an indirect and creative relation between an event and a world”.<sup>264</sup> There is no one unique world, for Badiou, there are worlds and there are the plurality of truth in a world. It can be said that the ontological components of a subject are the event, which causes to start a truth process, and the world. The event suddenly appears only to disappear. It makes a trace in a world in which it appears in the form of statement. To become a subject, first of all, there must be an event in a world, which functions as a trace for a becoming subject. That is, there must be a new statement, which is not in conformity with the all said statements before. For instance: ‘The immigrants must be seen as the citizens of France’, or ‘the workers are the real owner of the fabric in which they work’.

The world functions as a body for a becoming subject. In Badiou’s terminology, the world as a body for a becoming subject signifies a real existence or an appearing of the effect of this evental trace. An insurrection of the immigrants in France, or an occupation of a fabric by the workers who works there leads to appear something, which Badiou calls a body. A becoming subject is constituted by means of a relation between such a statement and body. Badiou declares this constitutive relation as follows:

*A subject is the general orientation of the effects of the body in conformity with the demands of the trace. It is therefore the form-in-trace of the effects of the body.*

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<sup>264</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 79.

*The real of a subject resides in the consequences (consequences in a world) of the relation, which constitutes this subject, between a trace and a body.*<sup>265</sup>

In other words, a subject is constituted only as a form of the consequences of the relation between the trace and the body. Badiou sees ‘body’ not as an organic or physical part of a subject. Besides, a new content is assigned to the concept of body. Badiou posits the idea that a body is a singular object and it organizes the appearing of a subject. It prepares the objects of a world in accordance with the requirements of a truth. That is to say that Badiou states that a body is “the materiality of a subject of truth”.<sup>266</sup> He explains the conception of body as follows:

[T]o be able to answer the question ‘what is a body?’ – insofar as a body is this very singular type of object suited to serve as a support for a subjective formalism, and therefore to constitute, in a world, the agent of a possible truth. We will thereby obtain the physics adequate to our materialist dialectic: the physics of subjectivizable bodies...

[A] subjectivizable body is efficacious to the extent that it is capable of treating some points of the world, those occurrences of the real that summon us to the abruptness of a decision.

Since a body is the bearer of the subjective appearance of a truth...<sup>267</sup>

Badiou enumerates some conditions, which are necessary for “the existence of a subjectivizable body”. These are: the existence of a tensed world, which has many points; “the maximal becoming-existent of an inexistent”; a “decision on the point”; a “new concept”, which the subject produces as a consequence of his/her new evaluation of a world.<sup>268</sup> It cannot be said that a communist party

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., p. 483.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 474.

or a trade union is the body of the working class. Or, *L'Organisation of Politique* is not the body or material condition for the truth, which is edited by Badiou and his intellectual friends.

There are two kinds of consequences, so two types of subjects: an opening and a point.<sup>269</sup> In other words, a trace creates the set of effects, which are plural. Badiou distinguishes them into two kinds. One of them finds new possibilities, which are akin to the earlier possibilities of the world. Thus it leads to a consensus between the old world and itself. Badiou calls this an opening. The subject, in the moment of an opening, is a weak one. He/she does not produce any destructive and creative effect on the old world. This type of subject can be reactive or obscure, as already worked about above. There can be some changes as the effect of this subjective form, which are not radical. The other group is called a point by Badiou. This is one of the main concepts of *Logics of World*, which distinguish this work from *Being and Event*. A point presents a discontinuity in a situation, while an opening presents continuity. It is a necessary condition of a sharp change in a world. This is because a point signifies some possibilities, which are wholly distinct from the earlier ones. Badiou argues that “a new world is subjectively created, point by point”.<sup>270</sup> In other words, not continuities but discontinuities create a new world. The subjective form, which creates a new world by its creative relation with these points, is called the faithful subject. Truth is made appear only via this type of subjective form. More clearly, for Badiou, truth is this type of ‘subjective construction’.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

In short, a subject as Badiou argues is constituted in a truth process, and there is a reciprocal relation between a becoming subject and the appearing of a truth. The subject achieves its form in a ‘world’ in which a truth appears. He/she constitutes himself/herself throughout a truth procedure via his/her activity. A subject is a reactive one, if he/she ignores the importance of an event and its trace, which is a declaration of this event. This subjective form aims only some modification of the old structure. A subject is an obscure one, if he/she is in the form of occultation of the truth. He/she only saves the old structure without any change. The faithful subject is the form of radical change. That is to say that Badiou insists on the ideas that there are many truths and that the subject is the only name of the form of production of these truths. The subject can appear only in the emerging of a truth process in many forms. A subject is only a political, an artistic, a scientific or an amorous one, since a truth can appear only in one of the domains of politics, art, science and love.

Badiou argues that the true life is that of the faithful form of subject. Let us examine the conceptions of death and life in Badiou’s philosophy. Badiou sees not only death but also life as conceptions of appearing. This is because they are, for him, logical concepts. Death is a minimal existence, which signifies the void relative to the world in question.<sup>272</sup> In other words, death is the passage of a multiple being from the apparent element to the void one.<sup>273</sup> In contrast to the non-existence of death, life can be seen as the maximal existence. Badiou uses the term ‘present’ to elucidate what life is, and especially what the true life is. Present is not a moment of time before the future or after the past. As already emphasized, ‘present’ is the name which Badiou gives to “the set of the consequences of the evental trace”.<sup>274</sup> Additionally, the life is a prolonged

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>273</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 128.

<sup>274</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 52.

creation of a present.<sup>275</sup> That is to suggest that the life is continuously producing truths and producing the continuous fidelity to the consequences of a truth. If event, which is the inaugurating point of a truth, is to subtract the existent from the inexistent, and if life is the duration of this creation, it cannot be false to say that for Badiou the ontological support of life is also the inexistent. This support is akin to the ontological support of being: the void. Further, Badiou emphasizes the idea that “the true life is present”.<sup>276</sup> The faithful subject, for Badiou, is in the present.<sup>277</sup> Thus it can be said that the true life is the life of faithful subject. The action of this kind of subject will lead to a kind of production of life. Badiou explains the true life in the following passage:

To live is thus an incorporation into the present under the faithful form of a subject. If the incorporation is dominated by the reactive form, one will not speak of life, but of mere conservation. It is a question of protecting oneself from the consequences of a birth, of not relaunching existence beyond itself. If incorporation is dominated by the obscure formalism, one will instead speak of mortification.<sup>278</sup>

In fact, the true life means to live as an immortal by participating of a subject in a truth process. The life is the creation of a present. This statement amounts to say that a present is only a creation of a subject. Additionally, Badiou asserts that to live is also “to experience in the past the eternal amplitude of a present”.<sup>279</sup> He gives a new explanation of the past by this assertion. ‘Past’ is

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 508.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 507.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., pp. 508-509.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 510.

also a creation. Once a present is created at any moment, for him, the past also receives a new meaning there.

It must be said that a truth and its subject are eternal not because of the universal inclusion of this truth, but because of the fact that a universal truth is the very ground for the human creativity. In fact, the infinite creativity of human can achieve its true formalization only by its relation with the infinity of truth. A subject can be eternal or immortal, if it is a part of a truth process. The point or the experienced void, which expects to be chosen or anticipates to be named, is the phenomenological condition of a becoming subject. By deciding on this point, a subject, for Badiou, becomes immortal and enters into a truth process. Badiou adds that there is in no way a requirement of any other concept to explain possible immortality of subject. If we follow Badiou, the present is also infinite, since it can be created in infinite possible ways because of the generic character of truth. This is why to experience this eternity in the present amounts to experience an 'idea'. Thus, it is true, for Badiou, that to live is exactly similar 'to live with an idea'. As already explained, Badiou thinks that his materialist dialectic creates space for truth by the phrase 'except that'. Badiou states that if there are only bodies and languages, which bodies are submitted to, 'to live for an idea' renders a meaningless phrase. For, this idea can only designate an ideal conformity between a body and a language. In other words, an ideal life is defined only as to live of an individual without an authoritarian language. The phrase 'except that', or truth itself, or idea, which begins to be experienced by the guide of the points, for Badiou, is the ground for the infinite creativity of human being. Badiou explains this hidden emphasis over the infinite creativity of human in his concept of idea as follows:

If we agree to call 'Idea' what both manifests itself in the world – what sets forth the being-there of a body – and is an exception to its transcendental logic, we will say, in the line with Platonism, that to experience in the present the eternity that authorizes the creation of this

present is to experience an Idea. We must therefore accept that for the materialist dialectic, ‘to live’ and ‘to live for an Idea’ are one and the same thing.<sup>280</sup>

That is to say that ‘live without an idea’ is incoherent for Badiou’s objective phenomenology. Badiou justifies the ‘mathematical heroism’ of the creator of the life “point by point”.<sup>281</sup> This mathematical heroism rejects any affirmation of the life through sacrifice. The only condition of this kind of heroism is to create ‘life’ in the present, or to bring forth the presentation of a truth to be immortal.

Let us recapitulate Badiou’s understanding of event-truth-subject. The only movement in a situation is merely a repetition.<sup>282</sup> This repetition can be known and the accumulation of these types of knowledge constitutes a kind of encyclopedia. A truth is not explained in the realm of knowledge. It signals a novelty, thus there must be a supplement to the situation out of the store of knowledge. This supplement does not come from the outside of the situation but it is completely intrinsic or immanent to the situation. This supplement interrupts, or breaks off this repetition of the situation. This interruption cannot be calculated objectively, since it can only occur by chance. It is not predictable. This unpredictable or undecidable is called an event.

An event occurs suddenly. Then, a statement appears: this event belongs to the situation. A subject makes a truth appear by his/her decision on whether this statement is true or false. It can be said that a truth appears subjectively. This argument includes the idea that there is a vital relation between being a subject and the appearing of a truth. One becomes a subject only when he/she makes a

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., p. 510.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., p. 514.

<sup>282</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 62.

truth appear. Reversely, a truth can appear only by the decision and also the fidelity of a subject.

There appears an undecidable statement claiming the belonging of this supplement to the situation. After this appearance, there must be a subject to decide whether this statement is true. This decision cannot be made objectively but only axiomatically. Here is the moment in which a subject is constituted by his/her own decision in the form of wager. This axiomatic decision, which cannot be demonstrated, is the opening of the process of both the constitution of subject and the creation of truth. The decision of subject produces many consequences, which require fidelity from the subject. These consequences of the axiom are examined by this fidelity. This examination is that which Badiou calls truth procedure. Every choice of subject in this procedure is only a “pure choice”, which does not have any support to correct objectively.<sup>283</sup> It is chosen only by chance. This pure choice is the act of subject and it is finite. It is only a certain moment in the process of truth. It can be said that a truth as being infinite can only be localized in a finite thing such as a finite artistic work. In short, the subject, according to Badiou, is only the name of the form of an appearing of a truth in a world. True subject is only faithful one. There are also other types of subject: the reactive and the obscure, which are not the form of the creation of truth.

A subject by his/her finite work tries to name the truth completely. However, this completion, for Badiou, is impossible, since a truth is infinite in its being. A truth designates an unknown subset of the situation. As already explained, this subset is the void. A truth process is not that which ends up with the investigation of what the situation actually is in its reality. There will always be a generic subset in every situation. Every decision or act of a finite subject to

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

fill this blank can be concluded as an emerging of a truth. This means that an artistic truth as an infinite will continue to be exhibited in the future works of art. A past political truth can continue to influence the present time, or the creation of present. In other words, it is at the present. This is the point at which a truth is infinite. Badiou constitutes his theory of emancipatory politics as a consequence of his theory of truth. I will scrutinize what is the meaning of such an emancipatory politics at the following section.

### **4.3. The Emancipatory Politics**

In the realm of politics, the infinity of a truth is also emphasized by Badiou. In fact, it should be said that, I think, the unique purpose of Badiou's philosophy is to demonstrate the impossibility of a total explanation of the components of social life. No single theory, for Badiou, can conceive or explain the single truth for the whole human being. Like in the finitude of Galileo, 'physics' appears as an infinite scientific truth, or like in the finite work of Sophocles, 'tragedy' appears as an infinite artistic truth, 'the revolutionary politics' appears as an infinite political truth in the French Revolution or in the Bolshevik Revolution. Badiou emphasizes the plurality of political truth as follows: "there is no single political formula which totalizes these revolutionary politics. The set called 'revolutionary politics' is a *generic* truth of the political".<sup>284</sup> This utterance can be said as follows: there is no single revolutionary politics that includes all the possibilities of its finite localizations.

Badiou tries to make clear the formal components of a possible emancipatory politics. He states that politics refers a singular action of a singular subject. An infinite truth appears at the end of this singular action. The emphasis on 'a

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid., p. 65. The term of generic, as already mentioned, refers to the infinity of truth.

politics' means that there is no politics that is able to resolve all the problems in a society. I will start to this section with an explanation of what is this emancipatory politics in Badiou's philosophical system. Firstly, I will analyze Badiou's aim of annihilating any possibility of totalitarianism, which can appear as a departure point of a revolutionary politics. Secondly, I will elucidate his thoughts concerning the human rights and 'the respect for diversity/minority'. Then I will clarify his categories of equality, justice and revolution. Having done this, finally, I will turn to examine his understanding of 'we-subject' in an emancipatory politics.

Badiou rejects using the term 'political philosophy'. He formulates a fundamental critique of political philosophy as discipline of philosophy. This discipline has a distinct place, and it is seen as a sub-discipline in philosophy. Its aims in general can be defined as follows: to investigate the best political regime for human nature (Plato, Aristotle, even John Stuart Mill), to research the principles of the constitution of society (Hobbes), to determine who is sovereign and who are the citizens (Carl Schmitt and Agamben). However, according to Badiou, the domain of philosophy cannot be divided into different disciplines. This division can be only a fiction or an illusion, which shadows the task of philosophy. The real task of philosophy is only to contemplate the truth procedures of its time. This does not mean that philosophers should ignore what happens in daily politics. On the contrary, philosophers should examine a truth, which appears as a consequence of a political action. They must look for the appearance of a truth not only in the realm of politics but also in the other realms such as love, science and art. Badiou calls the philosophical contemplation of politics '*metapolitics*'.

Badiou fundamentally opposes to the reduction of philosophy to politics. More importantly, his '*metapolitics*' ignores the objective conditions and does not aim at finding a political programme for a political struggle by an analysis of

these conditions. Badiou wants to indicate that there is no causality between two social events. I would like to point out that Badiou's politics, like his ontology, is subtractive. According to Badiou, politics should subtract itself from all daily experiences. It should aim to elucidate whether something new or novelty happens/happened in a society. If there is something new happened, then, politics should investigate what this novelty is and how it came into existence.

In order to comprehend Badiou's conception of politics, we need to have a closer look at his critique of various political philosophers. I would like to present his critique of Immanuel Kant's and Hannah Arendt's political theory.<sup>285</sup> Both Kant and Arendt champion revolution. But they seem to have very low opinion of the subjects of the revolution and regard the militants of the evolution as shameful. They approve the revolution without subject. They agree with the idea that there is a clash between the principle of action and the principle of judgement. On this basis, as Badiou reads their works, they reduce politics to a public exercise of a judgement, since the subject is reduced to a mere 'world-spectator'. There is no action of the subject. Then, politics renders only the name of the process of agreement of different 'public opinions'. In Kant's and Arendt's political theories respectively, as Badiou reads there is no place for truth in the domain of political philosophy.

In fact, the contradiction between opinion and truth is Platonic. However, the assigning of the political life to the realms of opinion is not Platonic. Accordingly, for Badiou, by such a distance from the realm of truth, the politics of opinions can only approve the parliamentary politics.<sup>286</sup> In Arendt's political philosophy, the 'debate' is the essence of politics. There is, for Arendt,

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<sup>285</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, pp. 12-24.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

a public plurality of opinions thanks to the plurality of parties. The men/women, for her, are political beings. They exist in a plurality and this plurality is the very condition of their faculty of judgement. Her main conception ‘*community*’, ‘*consensus*’ or ‘*common sense*’ is based upon the idea that each man/woman shares the world with the other. This sharing is the ground for achieving a consensus between many individuals. This achieved consensus based upon a plurality of opinions dominates, according to Badiou, “the ideology of contemporary parliamentary States”.<sup>287</sup> These terms, for Badiou, signal a simple and abstract plurality, however there is no such a single plurality. There is a plurality of pluralities or infinitely many pluralities. Badiou says concerning the essence of politics as follows:

Real plurality is characteristic of instances of politics; the plurality of opinions in only the referent of a particular politics (parliamentarianism). . . . The essence of politics is not the plurality of opinions. It is the prescription of a possibility in rupture with what exists. . . . But not exclusively. More important still are the declarations, interventions and organizations. . . . neo Kantian philosophy is no less than a philosopheme suited to the prescriptions which sustain the parliamentary State.

This is why placing philosophy under the emancipatory politics requires a break with ‘political philosophy’ in Arendt’s sense; . . . politics itself is, in its being, in its doing, a thought.<sup>288</sup>

As can be seen from this quotation, Badiou states that the principle of traditional political philosophy is the idea of common sense. There is a qualitative plurality of opinions and the philosophers seek to show how this plurality might be governed. Badiou supports an emancipatory politics at a distance from the principles of political philosophy. Finally, it can be added in this regard that a true judgement of the common sense, for this mentioned kind

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

of political philosophy, requires an earlier radical evil. For Arendt, a political judgement is the resistance of this kind of radical evil. Badiou sees this attitude, which presents every figure of evil as a background of a political judgment, as theological. He adds that this attitude aims at achieving an “authentic being-together”.<sup>289</sup> This being together must be understood from Badiou’s point of view as an abstract or transcendent being. This kind of transcendental being cannot be (or must not be) a central argument for an emancipatory politics. Badiou emphasizes that the subject of an emancipatory politics can only be the actor of what happened and not its spectator as suggested in Kant’s and Arendt’s political philosophies.

Though Badiou sees the conceptions of equality and justice as illusions because they conceal the real drives of the acts of the imperialist countries, these two terms have very essential place in his emancipatory politics. They occupy a very crucial place in his theory of emancipatory politics not in the sense that he relies on them to develop his theory. Rather, in the sense that he establishes his theory of emancipatory politics by criticizing them radically. His conception of equality does not share any common origin with his conception of ‘democracy’. Democracy, according to Badiou, can only be a feature of a state. Badiou states that the withering away of all kinds of state is the ultimate and unique aim of an emancipatory politics. This disappearance of all forms of state is also emphasized by Marx. Lenin and Mao, for Badiou, conceive of the necessity of this disappearance in conformity with Marx’s emphasis in this regard. Politics is the realm of some appearances of novelties. The militants of an emancipatory politics do not endeavor to have the already destroyed parts of the state repaired. They do not try to make their state more democratic. This can be the task of a revisionist movement. The ultimate aim of an emancipatory politics is the withering away of the state. This means that

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

its final aim can be the idea of “communism”.<sup>290</sup> Further, democracy cannot be a notion or a principle of emancipatory politics, if it is only a political form of state.

‘Communism’ is the place at which the state power disappears. Badiou equates this term to that of ‘equality’ and says that “the only adequate *philosophical* word for evaluating the political is possibly the word ‘equality’ or communism”.<sup>291</sup> The notion of democracy is used as a philosophical term in a great deal of philosophical systems to refer a characteristic of state. It is generally used to determine ‘a good state’. Badiou states that it can appear as a normative principle in such a philosophy and “if the ultimate aim of politics is the good state . . . then the emergence of a norm is inescapable”.<sup>292</sup> The utterance of the superiority of the regime of democracy includes such a normative form. Badiou adds that this kind of norm is only external and transcendental to the situation. Further, a norm, which evaluates the status of a state, should be subjectively preferable. Badiou emphasizes the existence of three criteria to judge what a contemporary state is: the economy, the nationality and democracy. This is also the reason why ‘democracy’ cannot be a philosophical term, which evaluates the character of politics, but it can only be a term of a particular politics such as ‘capital-parliamentarianism’.<sup>293</sup>

Politics, Badiou argues, is a singular collective activity of thought. The task of philosophy is “to seize the conditions for the practice of thought” in the politics’ singular activity of thought.<sup>294</sup> In short, Badiou’s emancipatory

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

politics is a thought and is not programmatic but prescriptive. Only if so, democracy can be a philosophical term of seizing the universal capacity of a political prescription. That is to suggest that philosophy can bind a particular instance of politics to its own universality only by the conception of democracy. Then democracy is no longer a form of state. Politics needs to be an emancipatory process. Badiou explains how the conception of ‘democracy’ may be a philosophical one:

Politics can be defined sequentially as that which attempts to create the impossibility of non-egalitarian statements relative to a situation, and as what can be exposed through philosophy, and by means of the word ‘democracy’, to what I would call a certain eternity. Let us say that is by means of the word ‘democracy’ thus conceived, and through philosophy alone, that a politics can be evaluated according to the criteria of the eternal return. Then politics is seized by philosophy, not simply as a pragmatic or particular avatar of the history of men, but by being connected to a principle of assessment that upholds without ridicule and crime the fact that the return is foreseeable.<sup>295</sup>

The act of such an emancipatory politics reveals the impossibility of any kind of ‘non-egalitarian statements’ concerning the situation. Badiou’s understanding of the real can be comprehended only in this regard. The real is that which works on the impossibility of the situation. Only this impossibility, for Badiou, “verifies that equality is not at all realized, but real”.<sup>296</sup> There is no act of prohibition, since the prohibition can only be the action of a statist state. In this sense, democracy can be a philosophical conception only on the conditions that it presents or designates equality. Thus, the conception of immigrant or Jew, for Badiou, cannot be a political conception because of their non-egalitarian determination and their relation to the state.

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<sup>295</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

A politics, Badiou declares, cannot be limited by the historical, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural constraints. This is the most important point because it signals what is novel in Badiou's political theory. There is not any constraint, for Badiou, since a politics does not expect the revision of the concepts of the situation at hand. It seeks to completely transform all the categories of its own situation. There is not any ultimate aim of the subjects of a politics valid for each situation. 'The collective subject' introduced by Badiou does not have a common interest in the situation, which motivates his/her to be active in an emancipatory politics. Indeed, a political truth process does not follow from the relationship based on interests. The collectivity does not signify the common interests of a group of men. It signifies only the capacity of thought of human beings. In Badiou's view the concept of equality does not refer to any kind of equality of means, status or income.

Badiou subtracts politics from social and economic mediation. This means that a politics in the worker struggle cannot, or should not aim at setting the dictatorship of the proletariat. It should aim to produce, for Badiou, a 'prescription', which purposes a radical transformation of social contradictions. These prescriptions are not thought as programmatic. A '*programme*' can only be the aim of a political philosophy, which Badiou criticizes.<sup>297</sup> This is why philosophy is rendered a kind of thinking of the programme. Such a programme, for Badiou, is the only consequence of the idea that politics is concerned with the objective datum of a social situation. Badiou asserts that a politics does not have "a paradigm" of a state, and it cannot be normatively constituted.<sup>298</sup> He, in contrast to this programme, states that a politics by these prescriptions illustrates the inconsistency of the old social statements. In this

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>298</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 135.

way, the bounds of ordinary common sense are extended by declaring the new statements of such a prescription. The aim of the statement concerning the impossible is to initiate turning it into a thinkable possible for common sense. It may be said that Badiou does not make a distinction between the possible and the actual. Instead of this one, he makes a distinction between the impossible and the actual. Badiou wishes to affirm the idea that a revolutionary politics is not finished but is still possible. More explicitly, it is meaningless to support the idea of the end of the revolutionary politics. Badiou himself endeavors to establish such a revolutionary theory by his theorizing of an emancipatory politics.

One of the most controversial topics disputed on in contemporary political philosophy is what and who the subject is. The postmodern thinkers in general reject the idea that the proletariat is the subject of an emancipatory politics. While some of them see the immigrants or other radical groups as the subject, Badiou refuses such a determination of who the subject is. He wants to investigate the topological space for the subject and prefers an ambiguous term, the mass, to emphasize the plurality of possible subjects. The mass, in Badiou's emancipatory politics, signifies the void, or an inconsistent multiple. There is a dialectical relation between this void and the state. The mass as a void exists only if there is a state, and the reserve. The mass appears as an inconsistent multiple only as a consequence of not-being represented by the state. The state conceptually is an excess point in the structure, for its function is to represent its elements, and the excess necessarily appears throughout this act of representation. Badiou's idea that politics must be at a distance from the state can be truly understood in the light of this dialectical relation between the void and the excess. This is why Badiou supports the idea that the aim of an emancipatory politics of the mass is only to create a novelty in the situation. He explains the role of the masses as follows:

. . . the mass movement is a specific mode of the ‘inconsistent consistency’ of the multiple insofar as it is historically presented. It is a multiple on the edge of the void, a historical event site. The mass movement, being presented but not re-presentable (by the State), verifies that the void roams around in presentation, which interests politics only to the extent that it is interested in the void itself as a point of being only because its task consists in remaining faithful to a dysfunction of the ‘counting as one’, to a flow in the structure, quite simply because it is there that it uncovers the wherewithal for prescribing new possible.<sup>299</sup>

The mass signifies the plurality of singularities. Each mass movement is one that is the subjective determination of an ignorant group such as the immigrant in France.

There is, for a non-emancipatory politics, a universe or a totality in which all existences are included. For instance, according to Nazism, the world is composed of races, and the supreme race is German. Accordingly, there is an existent that which has more value than all the other existents. Badiou rejects the possibility of this kind of totalizing statement. That is, Badiou wants to obstruct any possible appearance such a totalitarian state in his view of emancipatory politics. Badiou summarizes the features of political truths, which aim at the conditioning of an emancipation of humanity, in *Logics of Worlds* as follows:

1. All these truths articulate four determinations: will (against socio-economic necessity), equality (against the established hierarchies of power or wealth), confidence (against anti-popular suspicion or the fear of the masses), authority or terror (against the ‘natural’ free play of competition). This is the generic kernel of a political truth of this type.
2. Each determination is measured up against the consequences of its inscription in an effective world. This principle of consequence, which alone temporalizes an instance of politics, knots together the four determinations. . . .

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<sup>299</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 72.

3. There exists a subjective form which is adequate to the different instances of the generic kernel of truths. . . .
4. The singularity of instances (the multiple of truths) accounts for their appearance in a historically determinate world. They can only do this to the extent that a subjective form is 'carried', in the phenomenon of this world, by an organized material multiplicity.<sup>300</sup>

By analyzing these conclusions concerning the features of truths of an emancipatory politics, we may see what kind of emancipatory politics Badiou champions. Firstly, Badiou subtracts politics from the determination of socio-economic necessity. There are, for Badiou, four figures of an emancipatory politics: the will, equality, confidence and terror. The 'will' is a will not only to destruct the old situation but also to constitute a new one. Thus the 'will' cannot be seen as the will to power. Badiou replaces the structuralist explanation of Althusser with the voluntarist explanation of Sartre in his theory of revolution. Secondly, the other two determinations of a revolution are the 'equality' of each individual, and the 'confidence' of the masses to themselves. 'Equality' means to say that each individual is identical with his/her choice or decision. The value of an individual cannot be measured by the means of his/her wealth or power in a process of an emancipatory politics. This equality, or the moment of decision can be established only in a concrete situation. Finally, Badiou's politics has a negative definition of 'terror'. He states that it should be seen as the negative moment or determination of a revolution. This is why he advocates Hegel's idea of terror in a revolutionist movement. This period of terror, for Badiou, is inevitable but must be temporary.

Any knotting of these four determinations, for Badiou, would be false. The dictatorship of the workers is an instance for this kind of knotting. There exist different subjective forms for these distinct determinations of truths. The time of Robespierre is an example for what terror is, while that of Spartacus for the

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<sup>300</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 27.

confidence of the masses. Both of them are the subjective figure of a truth process. These singular instances of the subjective form show that a truth can only exist in a concrete world and it can be made appear only by a ‘material multiplicity’ such as ‘Leninist Party’ or ‘Red Army’. These material multiplicities signify the visible bodies of a truth process. These bodies do not signify the subject itself but its material ground to appear. To determine who the subject in Badiou’s theory of truth is more clearly, I will analyze his category of ‘we subject’ at the following section.

#### **4.3.1. The Category of ‘We Subject’**

It may be suggested that Badiou’s ‘we-subject’ has some similar features with Rousseau’s subject. Badiou declares that the political philosophy of Rousseau can be defended in some respects.<sup>301</sup> The social contract in Rousseau’s political philosophy, for Badiou, is not an historical event but only has an evental form. Rousseau views, as Badiou reads, his social contract in contrast to that Hobbes’s contract theory. However, from Badiou’s point of view, this contrast is not a necessary one. The social contract is made by a chance, though it sustains to be rational in Rousseau’s philosophy. The contract, which Badiou calls the event, supplements something new to ‘the state of nature’ by chance. The state of nature is the void of politics, or the situation of non-being politics. People, ‘the body politics’, interjects itself between ‘the two’: the state of nature, or the void, and itself. The general will works as an operator of fidelity. Each person participates in the sovereignty of the general will in this process. A citizen and a sovereign, according to Badiou, are identical in Rousseau’s philosophy. Thus, the principle of the general will, for Rousseau, is ‘equality’.

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<sup>301</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, pp. 344-354.

Also, thanks to this general will, there appear 'we subject' in Rousseau's understanding of social contract.

The sovereign appears as a collective being in Rousseau's political state. It cannot be represented other than by itself. Accordingly, politics becomes free from any kind of representation. Rousseau, for Badiou, rejects any form of parliamentary political system. This rejection is based on the general will's belonging to itself. Contrary to Hobbes, Rousseau argues that people does not transfer their rights to a sovereign by the social contract. People have equal rights after the contract. This kind of equality is provided by the 'quasi-divine' character of the legislator and the right of suffrage in Rousseau's politic states. Badiou, nevertheless, states that neither the legislator nor the right of suffrage can sustain the equality in a state. The equality, for Badiou, should be the major principle of politics.

Badiou uses Rousseau's political philosophy to elucidate his category of equality, while he gives Hannah Arendt's political philosophy as a negative example in terms of this conception. In Arendt's political philosophy, 'the debate' and 'consensus' are essential for politics. The achievability of a consensus is articulated by the idea that 'sharing the world with the other'. In society, there appears a consensus upon a controversial topic as a consequence of the debate conducted by the people who live together in the same world. Human being, for Arendt, is a political being. This characteristic of human being and the plurality of opinion are the very condition of judgement. A debate between these particular opinions must be ended up in a consensus. Such a consensus, for Badiou, is not possible. He explains this impossibility as follows:

Every thought is polemical. It is no mere matter of conflicting interpretations. It is about conflicts in existential judgments. This is

why no real conflict in thought reaches a full resolution. Consensus is the enemy of thought, for it claims we share existence. In the most intimate dimension of thought, however, existence is precisely what is not shared.<sup>302</sup>

‘Existence’ is seen as a particular construction of a linguistic contract as in Arendt’s political theory.<sup>303</sup> Each existence is placed within a totality by a supposed consensus between the opinions of particular existents. This, for Badiou, is the politics of the parliamentary democracies. As can be concluded from these explanations, Badiou’s ‘we-subject’ are not those who have a shared existence. The collectivity does not signify that of a number of people or their common interests. Badiou states that the collective “refers to its agents to the strictest equality”<sup>304</sup> and that this equality “means that a political actor is represented under the sole sign of his or her specifically human capacity”<sup>305</sup>. That is to suggest that the political truths are the creation of human’s collective capacity. The common or generic human capacity, which this creation is based upon, is ‘thought’.

Badiou points out that politics is a creation of collectivity, or that of the ‘we-subject’. The meaning of this collective is described by Badiou as follows:

‘Collective’ is not a numerical concept here. We say that the event is ontologically collective to the extent that it provides the vehicle for a virtual summoning of all. ‘Collective’ means immediately universalizing. The effectiveness of politics relates to the affirmation according to which ‘for every x, there is thought’.  
By ‘thought’, I mean any truth procedure considered subjectively.  
‘Thought’ is the name for the subject of a truth procedure. The use of

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<sup>302</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 56.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>304</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 70.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

the term ‘collective’ is an acknowledgement that if this thought is political, it belongs to all.<sup>306</sup>

The collective does not refer to a group of people. This does not mean that a political truth procedure addresses to all. This is the common feature of all types of truth procedures. The distinctive feature of political truth procedure is that “universality is intrinsic” in politics.<sup>307</sup> In Badiou’s terminology, to say that there is a thought means that there is a subjective form of a truth procedure. In a political truth procedure, thought is available for all. Each human can be a subject in a political truth process. Thought is the common and generic feature of humanity. The political event is collective under the condition that politics is thought (has a subject) and this thought is available for all. This being available signifies the infinity of a political truth process. This is why the material condition of politics is being collective.

One may claim that Badiou’s we-subject signifies the collectivity only in its being created in a common statement declared as a consequence of an event. Madarasz points out this feature of collectivity as follows:

...But in Badiou’s view the body ‘we are’ (i.e. ‘this body’) in the nonreflected presubjective extension of a situation, is the ‘what there is’ devoid of sense. Accordingly, sense is predicated upon the formation of a truth theory, preferentially of a generic truth theory. It is primarily reactive as it recognizes the ruptures surface through which the production of a truth creates a new dependency. This itself, predicated upon an indirect emergence of a subjective procedure, is an act of naming the radically other. It is only after this naming has been launched that the subject acquires reflectivity, selfhood, becoming its relation to the truth of the event and, consequently, to its body. It is only through the naming of the indiscernible essence of an event that the subject may reach awareness of the split feature of the uttered ‘we’, part

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<sup>306</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 141.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

‘individual’, part ‘collective. A subject is self-constructed, indeed, but forever relative to an event and collective in its semantic determinations.<sup>308</sup>

That is to suggest that for Madarasz the subject of a political truth procedure is rendered only the form of the utterance of a truth. Extension as a thought is not the matter of the sensation in Badiou’s philosophy. Badiou supports a non-physical understanding of space. He introduces a topological space with three configurations: the void, the rupture and the emergence. A new appearance follows from the void, destroys the old structure and then enters into experience. A possible subject notices or experiences this rupture by his/her sensation. Then he/she names this newness. This point is the inaugurating point in the becoming process of a subject. He/she becomes a reflective one after this naming act. This reflexivity of a subject is upon a truth procedure and its components: an event, a subject and a truth itself. Only by this reflexive thought, the subject notices itself as collective. Though this act of reflexivity is a self-act of the subject, it is always relative to a truth process, especially to an appearing event. Because of the non-physical understanding of space, all the figures appearing in a truth process has not any physical entities. Thus, it is fair to say that the subject is only a conceptualization and does not signify any sign of physical living in Badiou’s theory of truth. Moreover, the subject is rendered only a logical or topological point in a truth process. The appearance of a subject depends on the appearance of an event. That is, the former is relative to the latter. ‘We subject’ of Badiou appears in the form of the declaration of an event. I think that Madarasz is right to say that the subject has only a “semantic determination” in Badiou’s philosophy.

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<sup>308</sup> N. Madarasz, “The Regularity of non-Being: Space and Form in Alain Badiou’s System”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2009, p. 809.

Politics immediately exhibits the infinite character of a situation. The subject of a political event can be expressed “for all”.<sup>309</sup> Because of the collective character of a political procedure, politics reveals the infinity of a situation. Further, politics has a relation of the state of situation. This relation is seen as the second infinity of a political event. As already mentioned, the state is the excess of the situation. It is the mechanism, which represents the parts of the situation. The power of state is always superior to the power of situation. More importantly, the excess of the power of state is not measurable. It can be measured only by a political activity. It should be remembered that singularity signifies that which is not represented by a state but only presented. On the other hand, politics is concerned with the parts of the situations which are represented only by the state. This is a kind of intervention to the domain of state. Then the state immediately shows its hidden power over the militants of this political attitude. This is the moment when the militants of a politics encounter the power of state. By this encountering, politics attributes a certain measure to the power of state, or it measures the power of state. Badiou calls “*political prescription* the post evental establishment of a fixed measure for the power of the State”.<sup>310</sup> This fixed measure, for Badiou, is the trace of political event in the situation. The power of state is measured and fixed, and consequently interrupted, by the post-evental prescription.

It should be emphasized that an egalitarian politics must be at a distance from the state. The obstacle of an emancipatory politics is not the excess of the state but only the measurelessness of this excess. This is why politics must begin its process by bringing to light the excessive power of the state. Badiou explains this necessity of the measuring as follows:

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<sup>309</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 147.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

For the egalitarian maxim is effectively incompatible with the errancy of statist excess. The matrix of inequality consists precisely in the impossibility of measuring the superpower of the liberal economy – a necessity without measure or concept – that every egalitarian politics is deemed to be impossible and declared absurd. But what characterizes this blind power of unfettered Capital is precisely the fact that it cannot be either measured or fixed at any point. All we know is that it prevails absolutely over the subjective fate of collectives, regardless of who they are. Thus, in order for a politics to be able to practice an egalitarian maxim in the sequence opened by an event, it is obviously necessary that the state of the situation be put at a distance through a strict determination of its power.<sup>311</sup>

Only after the fixation or being measured of the power of state, for Badiou, an egalitarian maxim can be practicable. Only after this fixation, politics can produce the same, or the one, or it can experience the equality of each one. What does it mean? After the egalitarian or emancipatory politics is realized, there can be only ultimately equal ones. There cannot be any superiority of power. Badiou gives the Soviets as a result of this kind of process under the condition of the disappearance of state. Politics produces such a generic equality and the real. As can be seen, the real is not what is now but what will have happened by means of the egalitarian maxim. Also, the path of political truth procedure is from the infinite to the one. This is why a political truth procedure is also a singular one.

Badiou sees, as already examined, the political subject only as the militant for an emancipatory politics. This militant subject is one who is not the reactive or obscure subject but only the faithful subject. Badiou's "metapolitics seeks to politicize, beyond the accepted limits of political theory, philosophical practice".<sup>312</sup> It supports in no way the parliamentary democracy. Badiou does not see any form of party as the creative subject. The source of real politics, for

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>312</sup> J. Barker, Introduction to A. Badiou's *Metapolitics*, pp. xi-xii.

Badiou, does not consist in finding a more justly representative model of party or forcing some reforms in the capitalist world. One who wants to make a certain reform in this current world, for Badiou's metapolitics, can only be reactive subject.

#### **4.3.2. The Categories of 'Equality' and 'Justice'**

Two categories of equality and justice are two of the most crucial conceptions in political philosophy. What is the meaning of the expression 'two distinct beings are equal'? Which situation can be called a just one? Badiou uses these conceptions in an entirely different sense. There are four essential figures in Badiou's explanation of subject: 'terror', 'anxiety', 'courage' and 'justice'. Badiou uses them to indicate a human how to become "a subjective truth-process".<sup>313</sup> Two of them are positive and the others are negative. Terror and anxiety produce some evil while courage and justice produce some good. Firstly, 'terror' signifies the desire for a unique discontinuous point to create a new world.<sup>314</sup> This new world will be singular not universal, since it ignores the other possible discontinuities. In politics, for Badiou, any kind of dictatorship cannot avoid producing a kind of 'terror', since it designates the reality as a single truth and thereby it overlooks the other truth-processes. Secondly, 'anxiety' does not indicate any desire for a discontinuous point. It shows a stable position because of the fear to choice between two propositions.

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<sup>313</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 86.

<sup>314</sup> As already explained, the discontinuous points signify a new in a situation, while the continuous points the old things. One who operates on the discontinuous points can be a subject, since he/she can create a new world by means of his/her actions. Badiou states that if there are infinitely many discontinuous points in a world, this world is a tensed world and that if not, the world is an atonic world. This atonic world is that of one who is in an anxiety.

It shows a desire for continuity, which is the desire for living in security without any fear.

Thirdly, ‘courage’ allows accepting the plurality of the discontinuities, or of the points. However, in the state of courage, a subject ignores the importance of negotiation. He/she sees constantly some antagonisms in his/her world. Finally, ‘justice’ indicates the equation not only between the continuities and the negotiation but also between the discontinuities and antagonism. A subject in a state of justice can see the whole ‘points’ or ‘novelties’ in a world and knows the true way of the realization of them. All of these states, for Badiou’s ethics and the formal theory of subject, are necessary moments to become a subject. These affects authorize the continuation of the process of change. Badiou argues that the aim of ethics is to find the order of these affects.<sup>315</sup>

While these four categories are necessary moments of a political truth process, an emancipatory politics, for Badiou, should be grounded mainly by an egalitarian maxim. As already mentioned, this maxim signifies the human’s equal capacity of participation in a political truth procedure. Badiou explains this type of egalitarian politics as follows:

In other words, any politics of emancipation, or any politics which imposes an egalitarian maxim, is a thought in act. Thought is the specific mode by which a human animal is traversed and overcome by a truth. In such a subjectivization one goes beyond the limits of interest, such that the political process itself becomes indifferent to interests. It thus follows, as demonstrated by all political sequences which concern philosophy, that the State is incapable of recognizing anything appropriate to it in such a process.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 88.

<sup>316</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 73.

The source of the real politics consists of unbinding the current social bonds. It can be said that all the social bonds is a kind of form of representation, and any form of representation can be in no way just. The unbinding of these social bonds, for Badiou, must not be in a form of anarchism. A political breakdown from the current form of community provides the right condition for the creative act of subject. A subject, for Badiou, breaks with the regular circularity of his/her social life under the condition of his/her unbinding of social bonds and there appears a kind renouncing of all the outside interests of a subject. The interest, for Badiou, is exterior to the politics and a political act should be constituted outside the relation of interest.<sup>317</sup> Only by this way, the subject can appear as a collectivity.

Badiou's collective subject and his emphasis on the egalitarian maxim in a political truth procedure are the crucial points in his theory of subject. We must analyze whether there is a similarity between this overcoming the social limits in Badiou's philosophy and the passage from the natural state to the social state in the social contract theorists. In my view, there is a profound similarity between them. In fact, Badiou does not reject the existence of this similarity. He always praises the contract theory of Rousseau by emphasizing the equality of each person in a society even after a sudden or unnecessary contract in his philosophy. This suddenness is similar to Badiou's rarity of the emergence of an event. Consequently, in my opinion, by an emancipatory politics, or by a thought, a subject goes beyond his/her unequal sides such as natural or physical power of people. However, this equality can be only in imagination.

Justice is also not a conception, which designates a status of state. It is a philosophical term, which is conditioned by politics. The conception of 'equality' in politics is equal to that of 'justice' in philosophy. That is to

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<sup>317</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, pp. 39-42.

suggest that a politics in its every instance has a relation to a truth. As already mentioned, truth signifies a rare and discontinuous development. Further, they are the creation of a collective capacity in the realm of politics. Each political sequence represents this collective capacity of humanity based upon the equality of its militants. It does not represent any particular interests. Badiou declares that the common or generic human capacity is its thinking capacity and that human is able to appear in a truth procedure only by his/her capacity of thought.<sup>318</sup> Philosophy enables to grasp this common character of these rare and discontinuous truth procedures of politics. Badiou says that “political sequences are *singularities*: they do not trace a *destiny*, nor do they construct a monumental history. Philosophy, however, can distinguish a common feature among them”.<sup>319</sup> This is why Badiou states that philosophy only thinks a thought in a truth procedure. In philosophy, the principle of justice designates the equality between human beings such as that ‘people think, people are capable of truth’.<sup>320</sup> This equality does not refer to that of social status. It is not a principle of a political programme. Saint-Just’s concept of *public consciousness*, for Badiou, signals this kind of equality of human capacity.<sup>321</sup>

To sum up, the notion of equality is subtracted from the concrete social conditions in Badiou’s philosophy. We encounter the concept of equality abstracted from the historical meaning. Badiou admits the idea that the notion of equality precedes an emergence of truth as the ground of this emergency. Accordingly, it can be said that Badiou’s notion of equality includes both its

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>319</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 70.

<sup>320</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 98.

<sup>321</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 71.

rationalist definition and the existentialist definition. Nina Power declares this idea as follows:

For Badiou, the equality of thought is central because it is the only thing that both separates us from the animality that otherwise characterizes our existence, and allows truth to take hold. Here Badiou fuses a classically rationalist proposition (Heraclitus ‘thought is common to all’, or Spinoza’s axiom ‘Man thinks’) with the subjective upsurge we might usually associate with Sartre’s notion of the ‘project’ (especially in its later collective incarnation in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* with the ‘group-in-fusion’).<sup>322</sup>

It is fair to say that the concept of equality is a presupposition rather than a goal for the subject of a truth in Badiou’s philosophy. “Political equality is not what we want or plan”, Badiou maintains, “but what we declare under fire of the event, here and now, as what is, and not what should be.”<sup>323</sup> Also, the concept of equality is that which can only be expressed in an axiomatic declaration. This axiom of equality appears in a political truth procedure in the form of ‘we are equal’.

In the light of these explanations, it can be said that ‘justice’, for Badiou, is the philosophical term, which refers to the egalitarian maxim of politics. Thus, justice is a subjective and axiomatic figure due to the structural character of truth.<sup>324</sup> It does not involve anything which can be related to the state. Philosophy seizes the undeveloped or dormant axiom of equality by the category of justice. A statement of such an emancipatory politics can be produced only without a static order. Badiou declares that the end of socialist states, especially the USSR, has revealed that an emancipatory or egalitarian

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<sup>322</sup> N. Power, “Which Equality? Badiou and Rancière in Light of Ludwig Feuerbach”, *Parallax*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2009, p. 65.

<sup>323</sup> Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, p. 54.

<sup>324</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 72.

politics cannot be realized in or by the state power.<sup>325</sup> Politics is a matter of not community but subjectivity. Thus, it, for Badiou, cannot be dictated by a state power. Further, politics can be conducted only by the axiomatic statements of a collective being. The stress over the axiomatic character of politics, in Badiou's philosophy, highlights the idea that politics, or revolution, is only a thought not a severe mass movement.

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<sup>325</sup> It should be necessarily added that Badiou does not admit the meaninglessness of the idea of communism. He especially explains his views in this regard in "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'" in his *Infinite Thought*. He states that the collapse of the Soviet State is not the death of communism. The ideal of 'communism' in the USSR was already dead before this collapse, since there cannot be a state of communism. 'Communism' is the only place in which there is no representation of a state. Thus, it can only be said that this collapse is only "a second death" (p. 128). Further, 'death' is not an event. It does not create a novelty but only an existential loss. Badiou exactly says that "any event, which is politically foundational of truth, exposes the subject that induces to the eternity of the equal. 'Communism', in having named this eternity, cannot adequately serve to name a death" (p. 131).

## CHAPTER V

### THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVISM

As pointed out in the ‘Introduction’ above, I think that Badiou’s theory of truth faces a danger of lapsing into relativism, though its explicit overall aim is to overcome relativism. In fact, he himself argues that a theory, which admits the plurality of truths, would render a defense of relativism, if it could not establish an objective foundation for the infinity of a truth. Only this infinity confirms the validity of a truth for everyone, everywhere and for all the time. Otherwise, according to Badiou, a truth, without being infinite, renders only a particular being, which has only linguistic or cultural difference from other particularities. The defense of this type of particularity of truth can lead to mere “minoritarianism” such as that in Deleuze. Gilles Deleuze is a philosopher who is concerned with ‘difference’ and ‘the many’. He attempts to articulate both ‘difference’ over and against ‘identity’, and ‘multiplicity’ over and against ‘unity’. Badiou criticizes Deleuze in his *Gilles Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*. Badiou declares that Deleuze’s philosophy is a thought of the one in spite of its emphasis on the multiplicity and the difference. He asserts that Deleuze’s philosophy is about the one rather than the many. Badiou asserts that Deleuze’s problem is “to submit of thinking to a renewed concept of the One”.<sup>326</sup> Badiou suggests that his ontology is one of the multiple and that his ontology is mathematical. Deleuze’s philosophy, Badiou maintains, is not derived from a mathematical discourse. In fact, Deleuze also tries to show being as being as having no property. He produces two categories: the virtual and the actual.

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<sup>326</sup> A. Badiou, *Gilles Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. L. Burchill, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p. 11.

Badiou states that Deleuze reveals the being without any property only by ‘virtualization’ of these properties.<sup>327</sup> There are, for Deleuze, many communities, which have different virtualities. Each one actualizes its own virtuality and has distinct value, which cannot be evaluated in a scale of hierarchy. Each one has the right to actualize itself. Deleuze supports this plurality without any hierarchical evaluation contrary to the sovereignty of the one. Badiou declares that this kind of minoritarianism cannot avoid facing the problem of relativism, because of its being grounded on the realm of particularities. Truth, according to Badiou, is indifferent to these particularities. It must be evaluated in terms of its infinity in its being. What is the true ground of the infinity and what are the objective conditions of truth for Badiou’s philosophy? Is it possible for Badiou to avoid the problem of relativism when he develops his theory of truth?

Let us first look at Deleuze’s understanding of truth. This may help us to put Badiou’s theory of truth into an intellectual context. The couple of virtual and actual seems similar to that of noumenon and phenomenon. The actual and the virtual are distinct in kind. The relation between them nonetheless is flexible. There are technologies such as cinema, which actualizes the virtualities. That is to say that the actualization of the virtualities depends on these technologies. In these technologies, there is a reciprocal relation between the actual and the virtual. The virtual is also as real as the actual. The virtuality is seen as Bergsonian time. There is also different understanding of time in Deleuze’s philosophy. He defines the present and the past as follows: “the present exists, but the past alone insists and provides the element in which the present passes and successive presents are telescoped”.<sup>328</sup> The first passive synthesis is the

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<sup>327</sup> Badiou, *Briefing on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, p. 64.

<sup>328</sup> G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994, p. 85.

existence of the present. This is all the habits defining organism. The second passive synthesis signifies the virtuality, which is the ‘pure past’ coexisting with the present. It can be said that the virtuality provides the very ground for the actuality. The actualization of a virtual produces some differences through repetition. That is, in Deleuze’s theory, this actualization is possible only via the ‘differentiation’:

The actualization of the virtual, on the contrary, always takes place by difference, divergence or differentiation. Actualization breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle. Actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. In this sense, actualization or differentiation is always a genuine creation. ... Difference and repetition in the virtual ground the movement of actualization, of differentiation as creation.<sup>329</sup>

As we may see from the quotation above, in contrast to that of Badiou, the conception of subject put forward above is a combination of its body and its brain. Body is the ground for the actualization of the virtualities. It can be said that these bodies can be seen as a group of man/woman. The actualities are not other than the actualized virtualities. The actualities float within the deep water of the virtualities. The subject is not other than the center of this actualization or virtualization. The subject is one who actualizes a virtual in his/her body via one of the many technologies such as cinema. The virtual does not signify as being possible or impossible contrary to Badiou’s conception of real. It is also real but is not actualized yet. This is why the virtual is accessible for a subject in Deleuze’s philosophy.

Simon O’Sullivan states that there is no relation between the subject and truth in Badiou’s philosophy. This is because Badiou sees the real as impossible and because truth achieves its infinity from this impossibility or nothingness.

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

Further, the subject stated merely as a finite moment of a truth without a relation to this real. That is to suggest that O’Sullivan suggests that Badiou cannot correlate the finite to the infinite. Contrarily, however, Deleuze can effectively connect them thanks to his ‘actual/virtual couplet’.<sup>330</sup> In Deleuze, subject can directly experience the virtuality or an open word for his/her creativity. In contrast, Badiou’s subject can have hardly any direct link to the infinity. As O’Sullivan maintains, this is because Badiou, contrary to Deleuze, makes a distinction between the possible and the actual. In fact, Badiou does not admit the existence of this distinction in his theory. According to Badiou there is only actuality. As O’Sullivan points out, because of this disconnection of finite and infinite, Badiou is not able to connect the infinity of a truth to its finite subject.

Peter Sohlberg uses a similar argument, as O’Sullivan, to say that “Badiou’s ‘subtractive ontology of truth’ . . . seems to have more in common with the solipsistic view of postmodernism”.<sup>331</sup> The solipsist argument is that the only knowable for one is one’s own existence. By using the concept of God, Descartes tries to overcome the solipsist point of view in his theory. There is also a discussion on whether Wittgenstein’s private language argument leads to lapse his theory into solipsism. In fact, each philosopher tries to not face with the problem of solipsism. Each one wants to have a certainty in their theoretical arguments in terms of linguistic, conventional or objective. Though Badiou’s main endeavor is to falsify the idea that truths are relative, I argue that he also produces a relativist theory of truth. There are no objective criteria to distinguish truth from non-truth, but only a kind of subjective reliance to an

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<sup>330</sup> S. O’Sullivan, “The Strange Temporality of the Subject: Badiou and Deleuze between the finite and Infinite”, *Subjectivity*, vol. 27, 2009, p. 165.

<sup>331</sup> P. Sohlberg, “Is There Nothing Beyond Postmodernism and ‘the Theoretical Other’? The Need for Balancing Universalism and Diversity in Social Work”, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, vol. 18, 2009, p. 321.

evental occurrence, or subjective fidelity to the consequences or prescription of a truth procedure. This is the reason why I think that Sohlberg is right when asserts that Badiou's theory is a solipsist one. Thus, it may well be claimed that Badiou has not overcome the problem of relativism in his theory of truth. Badiou states that the distinctive feature of truth from any fact is the occurrence of a radical change in the situation. Sohlberg asks who is able to decide whether a radical or real change has occurred. He adds that Badiou's theory has a similarity with "the conventional postmodern stance".<sup>332</sup> Contrary to Badiou's insight, one may see the attack of 9/11 as an evental occurrence of a truth, while he/she does not see the Paris Commune as the appearance of a truth. For, there is no new kind of philosophical principles, valid for everyone and in everywhere. However Badiou affirms some axiomatic statements to determine what the truth is.

In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou develops a conception of transcendental. This is the law of appearing in a world. Badiou claims that a transcendental signifies the intelligibility of the world. That is to say that there is the intelligibility to organize what appears, but this does not mean that it is relevant for human beings. It might be valid under the condition that there is a huge supra natural subject, which might organize all the happenings in the world. In that respect it is not a matter whether there are many worlds and each one has its own transcendental. This thought, which has a capacity of organization, is beyond human capacity. It is a transcendental being, which also controls the thinking capacity of human. For, a human notices or experiences an object only as a consequence of the activity of this transcendental. I think that it can only be an ideal being. All the appearances render an appearing consequence of the activity of this ideal being. (I will examine the question whether there exists an ideal being in Badiou's philosophy further down.)

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid., p. 322.

Badiou states that there remains an unnameable point in a truth at rest, or at the end of a truth process. This is, according to Badiou, a truth is not wholly knowable again thanks to his distinction between truth and knowledge. The infinity of a truth is justified by the help of this unnameable part of a truth in Badiou's philosophy. I think that this part may be seen as the mystical side in Badiou's theory of truth. The infinity of truth is deduced from its mystic part. This means that the concept of infinite is reduced to the being unknowable. By this reduction, Badiou places the concept of truth beyond the domain of knowledge. I think that it can be said that Badiou idealizes the nature of truth by means of his understanding of infinity, which is based upon his concept of 'genericity'. In doing so, because of the fact that the term of genericity designates the undecidable or unpredictable, Badiou turns truth into an unknowable ideal thing.

Badiou wishes to overcome the problem of relativism by returning to idealism. However, since he reduces truth to a mere particular mystification, he falls back into the same problem of relativism as many idealist philosophers before. How does one declare whether the statement is true, which appears as an effect of an event, or how one can be faithful to the consequences of this decision without knowing it wholly? These acts of a subject can only appear as a consequence of irrational evaluation of this subject. Similar to Freud's and Lacan's unconscious, there appears also an irrational cause for the activity of a subject. However, Badiou does not accept the effect of this irrational cause on the constitution of the subject. More interestingly, Badiou relates this unknowable side of a truth process to the intelligibility of the world in which it occurs. Having arrived at this point, I think that there are two possible directions for Badiou's philosophy to follow. Firstly, if Badiou accepts the existence of such an intelligibility of a world, he would render a supporter of idealism by his theory. By this he is forced to admit the existence of an ideal

control mechanism in a world, which is beyond or over this world. Second, the other possibility is that if he does not accept this type of intelligibility of a world, he would be forced to admit the relativity of truth because of its being wholly contingent. It can be said that a theory, based upon a thought of contingency, does not directly leads to relativism. However, I think that Badiou's theory does, since he connects the appearance of a truth to the contingent decision or again contingent fidelity of subject. The conception of decision and fidelity are only semantic concepts, which cannot be justified without a linguistic consensus. I will deal with this argument further down.

Badiou argues that there is no need for "a philosophy of the structure of things".<sup>333</sup> What does this assertion mean? In fact, this is one of the negative expressions of what is the fundamental impulse of Badiou's philosophy. Badiou does not see 'being' as a static or unchangeable. He does not see the change in the world only as a phenomenal change. He wants to show the structural or ontological conditions of change. This condition as a void element, for Badiou, is that which is hidden in a current moment of the situation. However, there is no historical cause or dialectical determination of this change in Badiou's philosophy. The new can occur only by chance. Philosophy should create a space for this chance. Badiou declares this work of philosophy as follows:

What is thus demanded of us by the world is a philosophy of singularity, a philosophy of contemporary rationality, and a philosophy of the event. This is a programme in itself. To accomplish this programme we must go beyond the three principle tendencies of philosophy I have described. We need a more determined and more imperative philosophy, but one that is, at the same time, more modest, more remote from the world and more descriptive. A philosophy which is a rational intertwining of the singularity of the event and of truth. A

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<sup>333</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 55.

philosophy open to chance, but a chance submitted to the law of reason; a philosophy maintaining unconditional principles, unconditional but submitted to a non-theological law.<sup>334</sup>

As can be seen in this paragraph, Badiou wants to establish a rational philosophy. He tries to found a non-descriptive, programmatic and axiomatic philosophy. He states that truth is plural or universal and that it has a singularity. He, on the one hand, attempts to demonstrate the unconditional character of truth and its rarity. On the other hand, he endeavors to show the ontological and rational conditions of truth without using any transcendental or theological apparatus. I think that Badiou is very successful to show the plurality of truths. However, he abstracts the action of subject and renders truth an unnameable thing.

### **5.1. Monism or Pluralism?**

Whether ‘substance’ is plural or singular is one of the most controversial issues in philosophy. Badiou wishes to explain ‘what is’ and ‘what happens’ by ignoring the whole debate on substance and by relying on his claim that ‘being is plural’. In particular, he does not take into account the debate on the question whether substance is one or multiple. Nonetheless, I think that Badiou’s ontological arguments remind of some debates of substance. Further, in my view, Badiou has a monistic ontology, which is similar to that of Spinoza’s, while he seems to subscribe to a Leibnizian plural substance theory. In order to make clear Badiou’s position, I shall examine the metaphysical and ontological understanding of ‘being’ in the works of Spinoza and Leibniz.

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

Leibniz rejects the idea that there is only one substance such as God and that the created things are only the modes of God. Contrary to this, Leibniz states that there are many individual substances. He calls these substances ‘*Monads*’.<sup>335</sup> These monads do not have a relation with each other. They must have some qualities, which make them different from each other.<sup>336</sup> The monads are also subject to change. This change is continuous in each monad. This change of the monads comes from an internal principle. Thus, an external cause can have no influence upon their being. Badiou sees Leibniz’s understanding of multiple monads as more familiar to his view than Spinoza’s concept of single substance. Also, the interiority of the principle of change seems to be similar with Badiou’s idea that the void is included in each multiple as a principle of change. However, Leibniz’s emphasis on the distinct character of each monad is not acceptable for Badiou, in particular from Badiou’s ontology’s point of view; because from Badiou’s point of view, being does not differentiate in itself at the ontological level.

In Leibniz’s ontology, there is also a multiplicity in simple substances.<sup>337</sup> This is the result of their perceptions. Badiou also points out that not only a set but also the elements of this set are multiple. That is to say that there is not one single multiplicity but multiplicities of multiplicities. This might be seen as another similarity between Badiou’s and Leibniz’s approaches respectively. In Leibniz’s metaphysics, the activity of the internal principle produces change or passage from one perception to another. This activity is called ‘*Appetition*’.<sup>338</sup> Thus, all the acts of the simple substances are perceptions and their changes.

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<sup>335</sup> G.W., Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics and The Monadology*, trans. G.R. Montgomery, Dover Publications, Mineola and New York, 2008, £.1.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, £.8.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, £.13.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, £.15.

Leibniz calls all simple substances ‘*Entelechies*’, since they have in themselves a certain perception.<sup>339</sup> However, it needs to be pointed out that they are not called souls, because the perception of the soul must be more distinct and must be accompanied by the memory. Thus, soul is something more than a simple monad.

Leibniz argues that there must be a particular series of changes in addition to the inner principle of the change in monads. The final cause, he argues, must be outside of the sequence of particular contingent things. This substance is God, which is single, universal and necessary.<sup>340</sup> Leibniz adds that God must contain in his nature all the possible realities. The existence of God as a universal substance, or the connection between the particular beings of infinite substances and this eternal substance, for Badiou, is the point in Leibniz’s ontology which needs to be critically avoided. It can be said that Leibniz is a defender of one single substance because of his perfect monad or God.

In Leibniz’s philosophy, it should be added that the understanding of God is the realm of eternal truths.<sup>341</sup> To be possible in God means to be actual. God is the primary unity or original simple substance. All created monads are the products of God. Contrary to Spinoza’s starting point of eternal substance, Leibniz inaugurates with the idea of multiple substance. These created monads have the imitations of God’s infinite attributes: power, knowledge and will.<sup>342</sup> A monad is active insofar as it has distinct perceptions, and it is passive insofar as its perceptions are confused. One created thing is more perfect than another

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid., ¶.18.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., ¶.38.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., ¶.43.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., ¶.48.

if and only if it has more perfect perceptions. One monad can influence another individual monad only through the mediation of God. There can be a relation between these finite monads only by the mediation of God. It may be added that Leibniz refers to the conception of God as eternal truth. In fact, such a place is alien to Badiou's philosophy. A truth cannot have its actuality only by the mediation of God's thinking. It does not attain its infinity from this thinking of God. Badiou gives an importance to the singular and finite side in the constitution of a truth. Thus, it can be said that Badiou's ontology shows more familiarity to Leibniz's ontology than that of Spinoza's, as both Leibniz and Badiou stress the multiplicity of being. It may be said that Leibniz's metaphysics is also a monistic one because of its need for the mediation of God.

According to Leibniz, the universe is ruled in accordance with a perfect order. There must be an order in the body, since each individual monad is only a mirror of this perfect universe. Leibniz states that an individual substance consists of soul and body. There is the mutual agreement of the soul and the body. The soul follows its own laws and the body follows its own laws.<sup>343</sup> They are only representations of one and the same universe. This is why they agree with each other or their acts are in a harmony, which is already established between all substances. The souls act in accordance with the laws of final cause via their *appetitions*. The bodies act in accordance with the laws of efficient cause or motion. These two realms are in harmony with each other. This view of ruling or perfect order, Badiou maintains, is not appropriate to the existent reality. In fact, this kind of distinction and harmony between the soul and the body seems to be similar with that of Spinoza's ontology. There is also a parallelism between the happenings in distinct realms of body and soul.

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid., §.78.

If we follow Leibniz, this is the world we live in, and it is the best possible world. In God, there is infinite number of possible worlds. Only one of them can be actual world. God chooses one rather than another because of the degree of perfectness of its perceptions. Thus, this world we live in is the most perfect one. It is the result of God's goodness, not of the necessity of his essence. All the events, which occur in the realm of individual substances, are contingent. God produces them without necessitating, since they are based on the free will of God and of the created things. Though this contingency of the events is similar with Badiou's idea that an event occurs by chance, they are not exactly the same. In Leibniz metaphysics, whatever occurs must be possible in the reason of God. Only the most perfect thing in God's reasoning can actualize in the real world. Contrarily, Badiou argues that the most real is not the most possible but that which is impossible.

Spinoza's ontology is a monistic one wherein 'mind' and 'body' are merely two attributes of the one and the same substance. This substance includes and determines every occurrence in both of these parallel domains. Spinoza points out that God comes first in the order of things and everything else flows from and depends on God. God is the only substance in Spinozist determination. Spinoza says that "God is absolutely the first cause".<sup>344</sup> In Badiou's ontology, I think that it is not wrong to claim that the conception of 'evental site' is similar to Spinoza's conception of God. All the radical alterations are seen as a transformation of an inconsistent multiple of this site to a consistent multiple. In other words, the nothingness or the void is the first cause. It is the first principle, which all the existent beings are based upon. By substance, Spinoza understands that what is "in itself and is conceived through itself".<sup>345</sup> Substance is the cause of its existence. It is infinite and the unique cause of itself. Badiou

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<sup>344</sup> B. Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White, Wordsworth, London, 2001, p. 18, *Corollary 3*.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3, *Definition 3*.

also explains the concept of infinity by using his conception of void. Further, in a similar way as Spinoza's substance, there is not any other cause, which can determine the presence of the void. The void is that which is necessarily included by all the existent multiples (thanks to the law of set theory: the void set is universal subset of every set). By being universally included, it is, or exists in every situation without any determination of this situation. And, it is the unique cause of a change in this situation.

Concerning substance Spinoza explores a monist theory. According to Spinoza's metaphysics the substance possesses infinite attributes.<sup>346</sup> Thanks to the fact that the substance is the most real, it must have all the attributes, which exist in the world. Though the attributes of God are infinite, Spinoza adds that only 'thought' and 'extension' can be known as its attributes. The nothingness or the inconsistent multiplicity is the ground for Badiou's viewpoint of the real. In Badiou's philosophy, the conception of the real signifies the undecidable and unpredictable void. That is to say that he points out that the real is impossible. Another idea of Badiou is that all the novelties, all the appearances of truth and all the existences are caused by these void components existing in every situation. That is to say that the void is the cause for a change in the existent world, and thus, it is the most real. I think that concerning 'substance' Badiou is in many ways similar to Spinoza and that he expresses the same idea with Spinoza.

In Spinoza's ontology, modes are the 'affections' of a substance or of its attributes.<sup>347</sup> They form a complex three-fold structure. This structure is explained by R.S. Wollhouse. In *The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth*

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p. 10, *Proposition* 11, 19.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., p. 3, *Definition* 5.

*Century*<sup>348</sup> he states that the first and the second level modes, in Spinoza's metaphysics, are eternal and infinite. They directly follow from the absolute nature of one of God's attributes.<sup>349</sup> The first one directly follows from God's attributes and it may be referred by the term immediate. Absolutely infinite understanding is the immediate mode of the attribute of thought, whereas motion and rest are the immediate modes of the attribute of extension. The second one follows from God's attributes indirectly, or via some mediating modification. This is why they can be referred by the term mediate. The body of the whole universe is seen as the mediate infinite mode of extension in Spinoza's metaphysics. Before explaining the third modes of substance, let us look at the similarity between the category of infinity of Spinoza and Badiou. As can be seen from these explanations, a thing is infinite, in Spinoza's ontology, only if it is directly caused by God, or the universal substance. With a similar direction, the infinity of a truth, Badiou argues, only comes from its genericity. This means that if a truth occurs as a consequence of a direct effect of the void, it is infinite because of the undecidable or generic character of this void. The other happenings, which are not caused by this void, are not infinite. They can be only particular things in Badiou's ontology like in Spinoza's ontology.

Finally, at the bottom of the structure in question in Spinoza's ontology, each one of mode is finite and determinate existence.<sup>350</sup> They are not infinite or eternal. They in no way follow from the attributes of God but only from the modes of their own sort. They follow from an attribute of God insofar as they are modified by a modification which is finite and has a determinate existence.

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<sup>348</sup> R.S. Wollhouse, *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth Century - century metaphysics*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 50-51.

<sup>349</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 23, *Proposition 21*.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26, *Proposition 26*.

There are many of them for each attribute. Spinoza calls them ‘singular things’. Individual human minds are finite modes of thought, whereas bodies of man and the material things are finite modes of extension. In the realm of these finite things, the substantial necessity, or causality does not work. There also appear some changes. However these changes do not follow from direct relation with the substance. A finite thing effectuates another thing in the material world. That is to say that the cause of a change in the material world can be only another material and finite thing there. It is the same in the finite spiritual realm. A spiritual finite thing cannot a cause of a material thing. There is also a parallelism between these finite worlds. There is not a necessary causality but a contingency. It should be said that, Badiou wishes to find and to explain such a consistency in the realm of infinite. Contrary to Spinoza, Badiou states that there is also no a strict causality in the realm of infinite. A thing must be caused by the void to be infinite, while this causality is not necessary but contingent. Such causation occurs not necessarily but contingently by the mediation of a finite subject. Further, a truth does not lose its feature of infinity by this mediation. In other words, Badiou’s substance of the void is the unique substance of not only the realm of singularity but also that of the infinity. It can be said that Badiou establishes a theory, which combines Spinoza’s understanding of infinity and singularity in the same point. He can do thanks to his formalization of truth by which truth is rendered as having both infinite side and singular side in itself.

Spinoza’s distinction between ‘*natura naturans*’ and ‘*natura naturata*’ is one of his important arguments.<sup>351</sup> The first is nature as active and creative. That is to suggest that it is God insofar as he is seen as a free cause. The last is nature as passive and created. Namely, it is all the modes of God’s attributes insofar as they are seen as things in God. The corporeal world is a part of *natura*

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

*naturata*. It is a mode of the attribute of extension. John Milbank states that if the event is admitted to have the primacy in Badiou's philosophy, not only *natura naturata* but also *natura naturans* also would appear there. He posits of this thought experiment as follows:

If one read Badiou's philosophy from the vantage point of the event rather than from the vantage point of the void, then the void appears to be only the negative shadow that the event works with, like God working with nothing in order to create. Similarly, appearances become the deposits of the event, laid down in the past from a future anterior, as *natura naturata*. For we know that Badiou does not ascribe the latter to the working of a Spinozistic virtual *natura naturans*. But if phenomena are the deposits of the event before they are the manifestations of the mathematical *noumena* (reduced to the raw material that is pure potentiality), and if the event is what produces the human rather than being commanded by the human, then how can there not be a "divine shaping" or a kind of "world soul" at that work here?<sup>352</sup>

Milbank insists on the idea that the coming a new from the void has a similar role with Spinozist celestial configuration of everything. Even the subject achieves its existence by means of an event operating on the void. I think that it may be said that Badiou's concepts of event and truth, which is caused by the void, can be seen in the realm of Spinoza's *natura naturans*. They are placed in the realm of creativity and activity. The subject can be seen in the realm of *natura naturata*. It can only be a result of an event. Although this is not the whole story of the appearance of the subject, the emergency of an event is the necessary point for the subject formalization. However, one can argue that contrary to Spinoza, Badiou tries to relate these two realms. A truth cannot appear without the assistance of the finite subject in the realm of *natura naturata*, though it appears as the effect of an event in the realm of *natura naturans*. Indeed, this relation can be seen also in the Spinoza's philosophy.

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<sup>352</sup> J. Milbank, "The Return of Mediation, or the Ambivalence of Alain Badiou", *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2007, p. 137.

*Natura naturata* is created by *natura naturans*. But the only relation between them is not this one-sided relation. Also *natura naturans* cannot be actualized by the mediation of *natura naturata*.

Spinoza's causality can be summarized as follows: all things happen only through the laws of God's infinite nature. They follow from the necessity of God's essence. According to Spinoza, it is God which exists and acts from the necessity of his nature alone. God is the free cause of all things. God is the unique cause of not only essence but also existence of everything. Further, all the things are in God. They depend on Him. They can neither exist nor be conceived without Him. All things have been predetermined by God from his absolute nature or infinite power. God is seen as the logical ground for the regular causality in the world. This is similar with Leibniz's view of the perfect world. Spinoza claims that the reason for this determination is not 'the freedom of the will' or 'absolute good pleasure'. He states that good and evil are only prejudices that develop at the human level. They are not metaphysically meaningful terms that can be applied to God. At this point, Badiou seems to differ from Leibniz as well as from Spinoza.

It can be claimed that if one subtracts the notion of God from Leibniz and Spinoza's ontology, we would encounter with a similarity between Badiou's philosophy and not only Leibniz's plurality but also Spinozist monism of substance. This notion renders a theory to a teleological one, since it has transcendental implications.

## 5.2. 'Coherence' or 'Correspondence' Theory of Truth?

Truth, for the thinkers of the coherence theory, is based upon the coherency of a set of belief.<sup>353</sup> If a set of belief is coherent, it may be claimed that it signifies a truth. Otherwise, it cannot be talked about the truthness of this set. The thinkers of the coherence theory of truth want to develop the criterion for what is truth. Badiou's theory of truth seems to be similar to the coherence theory of truth, because in his theory of truth he tries to find some criteria for truth to appear. However, Badiou's understanding of what may be called coherence differs from that of coherence theorists of truth fundamentally. Indeed, Badiou argues that there is always coherence between the appearances in a world or in a situation that organizes all the appearances. This is the current transcendental law of a world in question. This type of law is changeable by means of some radical changes in this world, which signify the appearing of a truth. Badiou wishes to show a coherence of an appearing of a novelty in a world. This means that the coherence of a world is not stable but flexible. By the time of a change, for Badiou, a previous coherence in a world renders a different coherence after a truth process. That is to suggest that Badiou tries to give a coherent explanation for a new appearing. However, this does not mean that Badiou champions a coherence theory. For, a truth does not signify only the coherence between the statements appearing after an event. There must also be a change in the counting law of the structure by the time of a radical change. In this regard Badiou's theory seems to be more similar to correspondence theory than to coherence theory.

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<sup>353</sup> Here I am relying on Susan Haack's classification of the theories of truth. In *Philosophy of Logics* she provides an insightful exploration of the theories of truth and works out what the distinction between the coherence theory and the correspondence theory is. See: S. Haack, *Philosophy of Logics*, Cambridge University Press, New York and Cambridge, 1978, especially pp. 86-135.

In the correspondence theory, which goes back to Aristotle, the truthfulness of a proposition is based upon its relation to the world. Contrary to the coherence theory, the correspondence theory attempts to supply the definition of truth. Badiou talks about the existence of coherence not in a group of beliefs in itself, but in a coherence between a world and the correspondence of a statement with this world. Thus we may claim that his theory of truth is more similar to the correspondence theory than the coherence theory. One may, however, claim that Badiou's theory of truth is also developed against the correspondence theory of truth. Or rather one may claim that Badiou's theory of truth is a negative version of the correspondence theory, because according to Badiou's view the correspondence is not between the declaration of an event and something but 'the void'. The void refers to a minimal existence. The new comes from the non-represented part of the structure.

Before launching into an analysis of Badiou's similarity to the correspondence theory, we may need to explore some aspects of Etienne Balibar's theorizing in this regard. Balibar rejects the idea that Badiou's term fidelity seems to admit a communication. He states this rejection as follows:

This movement [the universalization of truth] is one of extrapolation, because we have to take into consideration the fact that the subjective movement which is inseparable from the truth, since it results from the fact that truth exists only as the choice and forcing of the indiscernible, in fact begins before the truth and takes us beyond it, and that between this 'before' and this 'beyond', we have, if not a dialectic, perhaps a negative correspondence, which it is tempting to call a correspondence 'on the edge of the void', to use an expression dear to Badiou's heart.<sup>354</sup>

Balibar also compares Alfred Tarski's theory of truth and that of Badiou. He states that because of semantic remarks and Thomist distinction between the

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<sup>354</sup> E. Balibar, "The History of Truth", in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 36.

object language and meta-language, Tarski's theory is more neo-Aristotelian than Aristotelian. He adds that Badiou is not a Platonist but a neo-Platonist because of his view of event, which is placed beyond the knowledge. He stresses the negative side of Badiou's understanding of correspondence. This is why Balibar thinks Badiou's term fidelity and decision cannot refer a communicative act. This negative refers the void, which Badiou calls an unrepresented point in a situation. Though I agree with Balibar on how he classifies Badiou's theory of truth, but in contrast to Badiou's idea, I think that Badiou's conception of 'fidelity' depends entirely upon a communication.

As I read, the cause of a new appearing in a situation, if we follow Badiou's theory, is also the previous structure itself. This causality has a negative meaning. The previous void point or 'nothing' is the cause of a novelty. Nevertheless, there is not an objective criterion to know exactly whether there is a new among appearings. This is the point at which Badiou is forced to introduce the role of the subject in a truth procedure. There must be a 'decision' and 'fidelity' of the subject. The correspondence between the proposition and the world seems to be constituted by the decision of a subject and his/her fidelity in Badiou's truth theory. That is to say that Badiou's theory of truth holds this correspondence with some subjective and semantic criteria. Thus, his theory of truth, in my view, is only a quasi-correspondence theory and a semantic theory of truth. These moments seem to have conventional characteristic. Because of this character, Badiou's theory becomes close to the analytic thinkers of the correspondence theory, though there may be some differences if we in detail. Similar to Tarski's theory, Badiou's theory can be called a 'semantic theory of truth'. Let us examine in general what correspondence theory is, and let us see in what ways Badiou's theory is similar to correspondence theory of truth.

Indeed, since Freud developed his conception of ‘unconscious’, there has been appeared a discussion against the correspondence theory. Lacan, Badiou and Agamben are three most prominent ones, who criticize the correspondence theory. Lacan uses also Freudian conception of ‘unconscious’. Agamben and Badiou, following Schmitt, prefer using the conception of ‘exception’. Agamben reads Badiou’s use of this conception as follows:

Badiou’s thought is ... a rigorous thought of the exception. His central category of the event corresponds to the structure of the exception ... according to Badiou, the relation between membership and inclusion is also marked by a fundamental lack of correspondence, such that inclusion always exceeds membership (theorem of the point of excess). The exception expresses precisely this impossibility of a system’s making inclusion coincide with membership, its reducing all its parts to unity.<sup>355</sup>

By using his concept of ‘exception’, Agamben argues, Badiou aims to disprove the acknowledgements of the correspondence theory of truth. Agamben uses the concept of ‘exception’ for a different reason in his philosophy. He wants to show the possibility of a reconfiguration of the social structure by using the external space of the current order. Contrary to Agamben, Badiou points out that the point of exception is imminent to the structure. I think that Badiou comes close to the correspondence theory of truth because of this immanency of the exception.

Haack states that the Aristotelian theory of truth is the first example for the correspondence theory. Haack summarizes the main thought of Aristotelian theory of truth as follows: “to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false; while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is

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<sup>355</sup> G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford and California, 1998, p. 25.

true.”<sup>356</sup> That is to say that Aristotle sees truth as the correspondence between the existence and its reflection in thought as expressed in language. Though Badiou sees this relation as atonic, he also supposes a different correspondence theory of truth. He supposes a more complicated correspondence. Badiou assumes that an appearing of a truth is relevant to the justification of this appearance by a subject. This justification is made only by the mediation of his/her statement about this appearing. That is to suggest that as I have already pointed out the decision of a subject is concerned with his/her fidelity to his/her decision to the occurrence of an event. These mediators seem to be similar to the conception of ‘satisfaction’ in Tarski’s theory of truth.

Tarski interrogates the satisfactory definition of the concept of truth. He states that the definition of truth must be ‘materially adequate’ and ‘formally correct’. That is to suggest that there are two conditions to appear a truth. The first one sets the limits on the possible content, while the second on the possible form. Before going into the details of Tarski’s theory of truth, there should be asserted that there is a similarity between Badiou’s theory of truth and that of Tarski’s. In Badiou’s theory, there is not only material condition but also formal condition to talk about truth. An eventual occurrence is the material condition, while the subjective formalization of a truth procedure is the formal condition of a truth.

In Tarski’s theory of truth, to be materially adequate, the content of truth must correspond to the fact. Tarski labels this condition T as “T: X is true if, and only if, p”.<sup>357</sup> P is a sentence and X is a name of this sentence. He gives the following example: “The sentence “Snow is white” is true if, and only if, snow

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<sup>356</sup> Haack, *Philosophy of Logics*, p. 88.

<sup>357</sup> A. Tarski, “The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics”, in M. Lynch (ed.), *the Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, Mass.: MIT Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 342.

is white.”<sup>358</sup> Every correspondence in the form T, for Tarski, may be considered a partial definition of truth. Further, the general definition has to be a logical conjunction of all these partial definitions. This means that truth must also be formally correct. According to Badiou’s theory of truth, this material correspondence is also necessary, but this correspondence cannot be known exactly. In other words, there must be an event and its statement, which is a declaration of this event. However, this relation is not clear at the beginning. For, an event is only a sudden appearance or it appears only to disappear, it is undecidable. Thus, the statement concerning this opaque appearing is also undecidable. Because of this undecidability of this statement, there must also be formal justification of a subject in a truth process. As already explained, the subject is only the formalization of a truth process in Badiou’s philosophy. Thus, it may be concluded that there is a similarity between the necessity of formally correctness in Tarski’s theory and the necessary stage of the subjective formalization of a truth process in Badiou’s theory.

To explain what it means to be formally correct, Tarski constructs a liar antinomy. If a liar said concerning a sentence, which he has been stated before, that ‘this sentence is false’, there would appear an absurdity in this new statement. Because of liar’s being a liar, the term of false loses its meaning. Tarski argues that antinomy arises from the structure of language which it occurs. A language contains not only its expression but also the names of these expressions. This structure is the cause of the anomalies, which appear in a language. A language with these predicates, true and false, is called “semantically closed” by Tarski.<sup>359</sup> He rejects using semantically closed language. He introduces two different languages, which can be assumed to resolve the problem of definition of truth. The first language is “object-

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid., p. 356.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., p. 340.

language”. This object-language can be used to talk about. Concerning the second language, Tarski says that it is “the language in which we “talk about” the first language, and in terms of which we wish, in particular, to construct the definition of truth for the first language”.<sup>360</sup> He calls this language “Meta-language”. This Meta-language should include the first one as a part. It must also include a set of general logical terms such as “if, and only if”. More importantly, this Meta-language, according to Tarski, should contain some semantic terms in its definition of truth. In other words, to avoid paradoxes, Tarski introduces his definition of Meta-language. After explaining the Meta-language, Tarski gives an exact definition of truth by using a semantic category of ‘satisfaction’. For him, a sentence is true if it is satisfied by all objects and false if otherwise. ‘Satisfaction’ is a relation between the arbitrary objects and their certain expression by a sentence. The sentence “x is white”, for instance, is satisfied by the object ‘snow’ or ‘flour’. Thus, there must be a correspondence not only between a proposition and the fact, which this sentence refers to. There must also be a correspondence between the object-language in which the object is expressed and the meta-language as its one functional sentence is satisfied by this object.

Similarly, Badiou talks about these paradoxes appearing in a language because of the structure of the language. He aims to overcome this difficulty by using the axiom of separation in Zermelo-Fraenkel system. If some separated elements of a set are expressed by the sentence of an ordinary language, for Badiou, there appears an anomaly. That is, there is an element of a set, which resists to be expressed by the statement of an ordinary language. Thus there must be a new way of expression beyond this ordinary language. In fact, it would be false to say that Badiou also introduces a “meta-language”. Contrary to Tarski, he completely rejects the usefulness of a type of meta-language. For,

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid., p. 342.

a change, which cannot be expressed by an ordinary language, can be expressed only by a new statement, which is foreign for the ordinary language. This new statement has not a certain truth value. There appears a similar point between the category of 'satisfaction' in Tarski's truth theory and Badiou's semantic category of 'fidelity', I think. Similar to the idea of Tarski that an object must be satisfied a functional sentence, Badiou points out that an undecidable statement can achieve a truth value only at the end of the period of fidelity of a subject to this statement. Neither Tarski explains an object how to satisfy a functional sentence of the meta-language, nor does Badiou elucidate the exact meaning of his semantic category of fidelity. I argues that both of categories, 'satisfaction' and 'fidelity', remains unclear.

Additionally, I think that these categories, 'satisfaction' and 'fidelity', are only semantic categories, which cannot be exactly defined without a conventional definition. In short, Badiou rejects defending the correspondence theory because of its requirement that a proposition has the ability to express a fact perfectly. He argues that there is not such an ideal correspondence between the statements of a language and the facts, which these statements refer to. However, he also tries to discover a quasi-correspondence between them only at the end of a truth process. For, an undecidable statement of a disappearing event achieves its value only at the end and only by the continuing fidelity of a subject. In the beginning of this process, a truth as an event, which appears only to disappear, transforms to exist at the end of its truth process. To be faithful of a subject to an undecidable statement, there is not any knowable truth value or objective condition, which can be testified. A subject can decide only axiomatically to be faithful to this undecidable statement. Thus, it can be said that this decision can only be conventional between a groups of humans. This is also the reason why I think that Badiou's theory of truth may only be seen in the tradition of linguistic turn, which is based upon only conventional opinions.

Additionally, Badiou defines ‘object’ as that which is being-there. In other words, an object, for him, is not other than a combination of its atoms. It is not other than what appears in such a combination of atoms in a world. It may be claimed that Badiou’s theory of truth may give only a description of things. He agrees with Wittgenstein in saying that ‘the world is what the case is’. This interpretation seems to me to be fair because the void, which is the very condition for a novelty in a situation, is already in the situation as an unrepresented point. That is to say that it is hidden part of the situation. Any rejection of the void point in a situation, from Badiou’s point of view, would be false description of this situation.

### **5.3. The Refusal of Subject**

I want to discuss firstly whether Badiou can be a decisionist. Badiou is accused of having supported the ‘decisionism’ by Lyotard. What is decisionism? Carl Schmitt is a decisionist. It is also claimed that Georg Lukács is a decisionist, since in his theory decisions precede the facts. The importance and prominence of the decision is showed as the proof for Lukács’s decisionism. He asserts that if one knows the entirety of bourgeois knowledge, he/she can supersede it. That is to claim that after one makes a decision, there appears also a basis for knowing whether this decision is right or wrong. While Lukács explains why the proletariat is the revolutionary power, he says as follows:

Thus the outlines of the situation in which the proletariat, on its own, is called upon to play the leading role become shaper and more concrete. For the *decisive force* in this class struggle, which for Russia points the way to the transition from medieval to modern times, *can only be the proletariat*. The peasants, not only because of their extreme cultural backwardness, but above all because of their objective class position, are only capable of instinctive revolt against their increasingly

intolerable situation. Because of their objective class position they are doomed to remain a politically vacillating stratum – a class whose destiny of the towns, large-scale industry, the state apparatus.<sup>361</sup>

The emphasized point in Lukács's theory is the importance or primacy of the moment of 'decision'. It is claimed that the proletariat is the powerful class because of its ability to decide and its power of transformation of the social structure after this decision. The party is the means for this transformation. Lukács insists that "because it is the party's function to prepare the revolution, it is – simultaneously and equally – both *producer* and *product*, both precondition *and* result of the revolutionary mass movement."<sup>362</sup> Because of his emphasis on this primary character of decision, Lukács is seen as a decisionist. However, Lukács's concept of decision does not have an ontological or logical status in his theory. The proletariat is the revolutionary class not because of its ability to decide but because of its objective class status. Thus, I think that Lukács cannot be seen as a decisionist. If one in his/her theory gives the ontological prominence to the subject's decision, he/she can be seen as a decisionist.

Contrarily, it can be aptly said that Carl Schmitt is a decisionist especially because of his expression that "sovereign is he who decides on the exception".<sup>363</sup> The moment of decision has an ontological prominence in Schmitt's theory. This decision determines whatever occurs in the political or social realm. It suspends the whole regular juridical order. As can be seen these examples of decisionism, the main idea of this thought is that 'decision' precedes the factual becoming. Some ideas in Badiou's theory can be seen as

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<sup>361</sup> G. Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought*, trans. N. Jacobs, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974, p. 22.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>363</sup> C. Schmitt, *Political theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, G. Schwab (ed.), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2006, p.5.

familiar to this kind of thought. This is why Lyotard accuses Badiou of being a decisionist.

This criticism may be true indeed, at least to some extent - even if not in the full sense of the term. It can be said that the event in *Being and Event* is a matter of decision. The act of a subject is to give a name to the event. An event is the first, and then a subject decides on what occurs. Only after this kind of nomination, an event can be an effective occurrence. Otherwise, it is extinguished. Only by the nomination, a truth can appear, or the old structure can be destroyed. The act of decision of a subject precedes the appearing of a truth. This feature can also be seen in Badiou's *Logics of Worlds*. He states that after an event there appears some logical and objective consequences, which are the only ground for a decision. As I at length explained, there appears a change in the logic of situation as a consequence of the effect of an event. In other words, there appear some points on which a subject can decide. However, this decision is not enough to make a truth appear. This subject must also be faithful to the consequences of this decision. The only act of a subject is not to destroy the old structure. Also it must be added that Badiou renounces his old idea that the decision is to name an event. In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou constitutes a new conceptual framework for his triple conceptualization of event-subject-truth. There is a new interpretation concerning what the decision is. From this new point of view as put forward in *Logics of Worlds*, the decision is directly connected to the phenomenological consequences of an event. An event occurs, and then some points appear in a world. Subject is one who decides upon these consequences. Thus, this transformation in his understanding of decision prevents him from subscribing to decisionist theory entirely.

Though Badiou cannot be seen as a decisionist in its full sense, it can be said that he renders subject to a form of decision and fidelity in a truth procedure.

Similar to the concept of sovereign of Schmitt, subject is one who decides on 'the exception'. Schmitt defines the sovereign as one who decides on the state of exception. The term 'exception' is very crucial in Badiou's philosophy. Contrary to the definition of the sovereign of Schmitt, this term is used to determine the topological place of truth in Badiou's philosophy. The principle of his materialist dialectics is expressed as follows: "There are only bodies and languages except that there are truths".<sup>364</sup> It can be said that Badiou's subject is one who decides on this exceptional realm of truths. If there is no subject who declares 'there is an event' or 'there is the exceptional space', then a truth cannot be appear. Though this connection forces us to admit Badiou's decisionism, the necessity of being faithful of this subject to his/her decision saves Badiou again from being a decisionist in the full sense of the term.

Badiou argues that there is not one single politics but many single politics. Every politics is a singularity and does not have any relation to the previous occurrences. Further, its relation to the future is naïve. It has only internality and its own history, which is not a part of continuous history of the world. Thus, it cannot be explained in accordance with the relation to the other occurrences. A politics, for Badiou, must be practiced and thought in relation to itself alone. This non-dialectic and non-historical occurrence and evaluation of politics is the result of his aim to overcome the totalitarian tendency in politics. Badiou tries to surmount the totalizing historical and dialectical explanation of politics, which can be concluded, for him, with the period of 'Thermidorean'.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event 2*, p. 1.

<sup>365</sup> Thermidorean is the name of the period from 1792 to 1794 in France. It is the period in which 'the Revolution is frozen' (This phrase is used by Saint-Just to refer this period). Badiou especially explains what the Thermidorean is in order to provide the ultimate grasping of his view of truth. First of all, Thermidorean is not a failure but termination of a process. If a revolutionary politics is terminated or frozen in a certain place and time, its turning to a Thermidorean is inescapable. The Thermidorean, for Badiou, is the name of subjectivity in the space of termination. It relates the maxim of the revolution with the power of state and the

Badiou argues that every situation, every fabric, every street or every country can be a possible place for a singular politics. Because of that there exists at least one uncounted point in each situation; there also exists the possibility of a political insurrection. Each one of these singular politics is indifferent to the dialectic of objective and subjective, or the dialectic of singularity and universality. In other words, an event, as a political insurrection of the workers in a fabric for instance, does not occur as a consequence of this type of dialectical necessity. It occurs suddenly by a chance. Bruno Bosteels insists on the idea that Badiou's philosophy is grounded upon the dialectics. He indicates the duality between the void and the excess, and that of the belonging and the inclusion as the proof for Badiou's dialectics. Bosteels asserts that a subjective intervention grounded by an objective materiality creates a 'material rupture' in Badiou's philosophy. There is therefore according to Bosteels a dialectical relation between the subjective and objective. Additionally, the very ground of this rupture is internal to the previous situation. Bosteels interprets this internality as the sign of Badiou's dialectics. This internality is similar to that in "each period of history is grounded by or follows from the previous period". Bosteels explains Badiou's dialectic as follows:

Badiou and Lazarus do suggest, however, that the dialectic as heterogeneous articulation can be found mainly in the field of the social sciences, among historians and political scientists. Their diagnosis thus leaves room for another dialectic, one capable of thinking through the material rupture produced by a political intervention, for instance, without having recourse to the form of the party nor to the idealist

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interest. This is one of the results of a particular politics based upon the relation of interest (such as the interest of proletariat) or of giving central importance to the economy. The components of Thermidorean are the "statification, calculable interest and placement whose termination is conditioned by a non-dialectisable truth procedure" (Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 134). Then, the statements of this kind of politics cannot be articulated any more by thought and the politics itself turns to an unintelligible thing. In short, Badiou declares that the period of the Thermidorean is the unthinkable realm of politics.

circulating terms of the time and social movement, the co-presence of which is typically called upon to overcome an underlying heterogeneity of social being and consciousness. In particular, Badiou quotes Lazarus, who allows for a strange margin of uncertainty when evaluating the exact status of the dialectic and negativity in Hegel's very own formulation, carefully separated from the historicist dialectic of social sciences.<sup>366</sup>

This is very questionable point in Badiou's philosophy. I think that Badiou does not cede the historical materialism to the hand of historians and political scientists. Politics, however for him, should not use the method of historical materialism. Badiou sees historians and political scientists as naturalists because of being grounded on the historical materialism. They seek to find a causal explanation of what happens. Bosteels stresses the idea that Badiou wants to cancel out the isomorphism between the nature and history. Badiou replaces the dialectics with the mathematics to avoid the danger of embracing this isomorphism. All that what Badiou's claim is that: there always appears an excess in the relation of the elements and the parts of a situation. That is to claim that the operation of representation exceeds that of belonging. The fundamental feature of this excess is its immeasurability. The role of a subject launches to have a meaning in relation to this immeasurability of this excess. The subject is the only form, which can gauge this excess by his/her decision. The subject signifies a breakdown of the counting operation of a situation. That is to say that the place of the subject is the point in which each ontological counting operation is suspended via the appearance of a rare event.

Politics should proceed, Badiou maintains, without "reference to the economy, the state, alienation, etc."<sup>367</sup> Badiou renounces to use these concepts. The

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<sup>366</sup> B. Bosteels, "On the Subject of the Dialectic", in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 155.

<sup>367</sup> A. Badiou, *La Distance Politique*, 1 December 1991, cited in P. Hallward, *Badiou: a Subject to Truth*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2003, pp. 224-225.

essence of an emancipatory politics is not defined in terms of the alienation and the overcoming of this alienation. For, these terms can pertain to only a pre-unity of the structure itself. Badiou stresses the idea that there is no prior unity in being. A unity can appear only in a situation by means of the counting operation of this situation. The same operation is also the very cause for the existence of an uncounted element there. Badiou argues that any idea of process, causality or determination must be abandoned from the realm of political theory. An event, for Badiou, cannot be explained by using these terms. There is an effect but there is no knowable cause of this effect in Badiou's philosophy.

Jason Barker, in his introduction to Badiou's *Metapolitics*, criticizes Badiou's political understanding. If politics is seen as a transformative procedure, Barker argues, it should include an earlier knowledge concerning the existing relation of production in the state of capitalism. Badiou, for Barker, ignores this relation. Badiou states in his *Ethics* that the knowledge of capitalism and its economic conditions in no way enable to bring forth an event. This knowledge cannot comprehend a political truth procedure. This is why, for Barker, "Badiou is arguably endorsing a reductive theory of individualism".<sup>368</sup> Badiou's subtractive political theory sees the potential subject of a politics as an abstract subject or as a non-conditioned subject. Further, it aims at approving the politics without any emphasis of the relation of interest in the social world or in a situation. Barker aptly argues that the unbinding of humanity from its interest render the political subject not a collective being of Badiou's politics but an abstract individual. Barker adds that Badiou does not truly evaluate the real political change. Badiou admits using the method of abstraction in his philosophy. He states this as follows:

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<sup>368</sup> Barker, Introduction to A. Badiou's *Metapolitics*, p. xxi.

Having said that, the aspect of such changes that matters to the philosopher is the aspect that involves construction of a truth. Why? Because this construction remains unthinkable if we limit ourselves to the logic of the interests of the human animal, which means: to the logic of the (very many) worlds inhabited by this crafty, cruel and obstinate animal. All I am doing here, in fact, is corroborating some very old speculative statements. Plato: philosophy is an awaking, ordinary life is nothing but a dream. Aristotle: we must live as immortals, Hegel: the absolute works through us. Nietzsche: we must free the overman within man.<sup>369</sup>

I agree with Barker on the point he makes. Further, in my view what Badiou's subject in his theory of truth signifies consists of only an abstraction from its concrete situations. Badiou's politics becomes that which is a kind of abstraction from the material condition. The collective subject of a singular politics renders only a formal part of a truth process in his understanding of politics. Further, the subject is only a form of declaration of a truth. Before the constitutional process of a truth, the subject is nothing or only a possibility. It is rendered not a constitutive element of this revolutionary process but a result of this process.

The finite subject, in Badiou's philosophy, cannot be truly connected with the infinity of truth. The subject appears in a concrete situation the knowledge of which cannot be achievable for him/her. There must be a mystic event in order to move this subject in a different direction against the previous laws or knowledge of this situation. However, how is a subject to move in this way by the result of an event is not clear. Simon O'Sullivan explains this non-connected relation as follows:

It is not entirely clear how ... the bar has been negotiated. In fact, the bar seems an inevitable element of Badiou's system, which captures the

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<sup>369</sup> Badiou, "Afterward: Some Replies to a Demanding Friend", p. 237.

subject in the temporal predicament that might name here, post Kant, as ‘modernity’.

...Put simply, Badiou, in the formulation of his thesis on the subject, remains tied to a Lacanian schema. His inconsistent multiplicity or ‘generic set’ moves the subject, and indeed produces the latter (via an event) is nonetheless barred from that very subject. It is the real, inaccessible by the definition from within a situation (the symbolic), but exerting a pressure (that is, the appearing/disappearing event) on that situation.<sup>370</sup>

O’Sullivan stresses the idea that there is a bar, which hinders a subject from moving towards the contrary direction of the previous laws of the situation. Badiou does not make clear how subject can overcome this bar.

Badiou’s subject is only a product of a destructive process of a truth similar to the subject in Lacan’s psychoanalysis. Badiou’s subject is not previous to the structure or not the product of the effect of the structure. It is only a result of a destruction of the previous structure by a sudden event. It does not have any part within this destruction. It reflexes on only itself. Or, it creates only itself. Elias José Palti talks about Badiou’s view of subject with an admiration. He sees Badiou as ‘Meta-Pascalian:

In short, the *work* which the idea of *militancy* invokes is not that of creating illusions (models of society and ways of political organization), but that of the subject’s creation of itself as the (illusory) subject of his own illusions (i.e. a *militant*), the militancy of being a militant.

...It [*Being and Event*] begins as an attempt at accounting for political action to end up trapped in the field of its subjective conditions of possibility, which is its true, implicit subject-matter (and also what it cannot thematize). Badiou’s philosophical project may be defined as

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<sup>370</sup> O’Sullivan, “The Strange Temporality of the Subject: Badiou and Deleuze between the finite and Infinite”, p. 165.

meta-Pascalian. It is no longer a bet on the absolute but a bet on the bet itself.<sup>371</sup>

After these two quotations, it can be said that Badiou's finite subject does not have a relation with the absolute. He/she cannot create an infinite truth because of his/her non-relation with this infinite truth, but only himself/herself. Because of this non-relation between the finite part and the infinity of truth, in Badiou's philosophy, politics also becomes that which is without a special subject. There is no subject before an event. The subject becomes a post-evental being in Badiou's thought. Event becomes the first. It is not the subject who has a role in the occurrence of an event. Indeed, there is no justifiable reason for the emergency of an event. Badiou says: "rebellion does not wait for its reason, rebellion is what is always already there, for any possible reason whatever".<sup>372</sup> But it is the event which initiates the becoming into being of subject. Dewsbury sees Badiou's philosophy in the domain of poststructuralist Marxism. He sees Badiou's subject as a useful conceptualization to overcome the crisis of politics. Badiou, for Dewsbury, tries to demonstrate the subject who does not reproduce the existing order. In contrast, his subject is the part of the re-configuration of the old structure in a different and new way only after an evental occurrence and by his/her fidelity to the consequences of this occurrence. Badiou's subject "attends to politics in the mode of production of an event".<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> E.J. Palti, "Poststructuralist Marxism and the "Experience of the Disaster On Alain Badiou's Theory of (Non-)Subject", *The European Legacy*, vol.8, no. 4, 2003, p. 475.

<sup>372</sup> A. Badiou, "An Essential Philosophical Thesis: "It is Right to Rebel against the Reactionaries"", *Project Muse: Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2005, p. 673.

<sup>373</sup> J.D. Dewsbury, "Unthinking Subjects: Alain Badiou and the Event of Thought in Thinking Politics", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 32, no. 4, October, 2007, p. 455.

Badiou reduces politics only to the transformation of the situation into something new. Politics, for him, is the non-dialectical and non-synthetic operation. He stresses “the sequential character and rarity of politics as thought”.<sup>374</sup> An event occurs by chance. This designates the rarity of politics. Politics is only a thought after an event. That is to say that a subject appears to declare ‘there is an event’ after this rare event. This ‘being after’ signifies the sequential character of politics. Additionally, politics, for Badiou, cannot be reduced to the pair of theory and practice. Accordingly, the problem of the subject cannot be explained by the mediation of this type of duality in the realm of politics. Bosteels stresses the idea that Badiou interests in the “dialectical understanding of truth as process over and against the primacy of the act”.<sup>375</sup> Not only the term of theory but also the term of practice, for Badiou, indicates the realm of thought. That is to say that politics as a thought, Badiou thinks, is only the praxis in theory. The role of political subject is only to declare this thought by being faithful to his/her decision on the previously occurred event. Thus, it may not exaggeration to say that a subject is also only a mode of thought in Badiou’s philosophy.

The concept of immortality is another important one by which Badiou mystifies his understanding of the subject. Badiou links between a finite subject and the infinite time or non-historical time by this concept. While he rejects the acknowledgment of any kind of transcendental measure, how is this linkage explained without a transcendental relation? It is not clear how to explain the possible immortality of human without the distinction between mind and body in the subject. MacCannell sees this linkage as a ‘vertical’ rising of the level of being human. He expresses this exactly that “the logical end of Badiou’s vanishing point is the subject’s *point* of entry into a new *level*

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<sup>374</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 46.

<sup>375</sup> Bosteels, “On the Subject of the Dialectic”, p. 157.

(universality) that leaps out of (infinite) time into eternity – what Badiou calls ‘immortality’”.<sup>376</sup> It does indeed not exaggerate to say that there is a hierarchical status attaching to the level of humanity in Badiou’s philosophy. This may be why he does not see ‘equality’ as that which is the principle of social life. The concept of equality is not what is, or what must be, but only that which can be expressed by the axiom of an emancipatory politics. It can be said that it has only an anticipatory character, or an imaginary character. The concept of equality does not have any objective bases in Badiou’s philosophy. In my view, this is the result of his reduction of human capacity to the ability to think. For him, human can only think equally. By completely ignoring the physical organism of human, Badiou also pays no attention to the material living conditions of human. Thus, the subject is subtracted from his/her physical body. This corporeal side of human is ignored in Badiou’s philosophy. Johnston explains this ignorance as follows:

Additionally, given his firm distinction between all-too-human animality on the one hand, and inhuman eventual subjectivity on the other, it doesn’t seem that Badiou consistently describes all “cognitive activities” as immanent to the natural being of humanity. In fact, quite the contrary – the utterly unnatural subject-of-the-event “subtracts” itself from the animality of its human being so as to operate independently of the influences imposed by material nature.<sup>377</sup>

Johnston indeed formulates the idea that Badiou ignores human brain totally. This critic is crucial. However, I think that it may be claimed that Badiou does not ignore the animality of human entirely. Badiou himself rejects having ignored the animal side of human as the follows:

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<sup>376</sup> J.F. MacCannell, “Eternity or Infinity? Badiou’s *Point*”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2009, p. 827.

<sup>377</sup> Johnston, “What Matter(s) in Ontology”, p. 37.

I do think there is a real difference between human and the animal. This doesn't mean that I deny that, for the essential part of human existence is grasped, seized, within animal existence. This is not a value judgement, it just means that, if we're going to speak of truth procedures, we're going to speak of something else. This something else is what constitutes the singularity human, within the animal universe.<sup>378</sup>

I think that there is another more important point which Badiou's theory of truth ignores entirely. The infinity or value of a truth does not come from its relation to or its influence on the conditions of human life. His understanding of truth can be summarized as follows: A truth appears only as a singularization or localization of infinity by the mediation of a subject only after a sudden emergency of an event. In this explanation, the term 'sudden' refers to timelessness or ahistorical character of a truth and the term of 'localization' signifies the emergency of a truth only in and for a singular point. Both of them are the result of Badiou's aim to avoid giving a *total* explanation based upon the understanding of a gigantic truth and history. For him, there is no continuity in time and space. There are only infinite discontinuous points without any historical and spatial linkage between them. MacCannell truly explains this reduction as follows:

Badiou reduces the spatiality of a *site* (that is, where the subjective, transformative *Event* occurs) to just such a singular point, which sums up its value and its permanency. The *site* does not derive its worth from its relation to the actual lives of human beings, then, but from its importance to a topologically conceived 'universal' that transcends all known times and spaces.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Badiou, "Politics and Philosophy: An Interview with Alain Badiou" [with Peter Hallward], p. 128.

<sup>379</sup> MacCannell, "Eternity or Infinity? Badiou's *Point*", p. 828.

Badiou pays no attention to the historical and material conditions of human life. He tries to explain the category of change without any reference to its material and historical conditions. This is, in my view, why his philosophy becomes a kind of idealist one, while his main passion is to conquer all kinds of idealism in philosophy. Badiou shapes only an abstract and topological space and time for the appearing of a truth and its subject. There is no linkage between them and the real conditions of living human.

#### **5.4. The Refusal of Truth**

Badiou avoids looking at what really happens or happened in the real world. All the terms, which Badiou uses to explain the concrete situation, remain only as abstractions. Daniel Bensaïd makes exactly this point when he asks: “is philosophy then a question of listening rather than saying”.<sup>380</sup> If so, is this kind of philosophy similar to the ‘anti-philosophy of postmodernism’, which Badiou wants to reject? This criticism, in my view, is crucial. Badiou states in *Conditions* that both modern and ancient sophist says that there are no truths but only conventions. He supports the philosophers claiming that there are truths against these sophists. However, the aleatory character of the emergency of an event is a challenging point in his philosophy. Truth, nevertheless, does not lose its objectivity by this character. This randomness in fact is proposed to reject the deterministic understanding of change. Truth, for Badiou, is objective, or real, while its appearance is not necessary. Badiou wants to introduce a new kind of objectivity and universality. His thinking expresses the topological space for the appearance of a truth. This space can only be a singular situation. This singularity and unpredictability of an event in the

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<sup>380</sup> D. Bensaïd, “Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event”, in P. Hallward (ed.), *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 96.

beginning is akin to that of poststructuralist and postmodernists. Indeed, Badiou can be seen as a defender of post-Marxism. Bruno Bosteels explains this tendency of Badiou in what follows aptly:

... Badiou ... can be said to participate in a larger trend in post Marxism ... which holds not only that the subject is split but also, and more importantly, that a subject is needed to bring out the constitutive impasse of the structure that would have defined objectivity. [...] A subject is called for to put a measure on the exorbitant power of the structure over itself. The structural fact of the impasse of being is already mediated by subjectivity; without the intervention of a subject faithful to the event, the gap in the structure would not even be visible.<sup>381</sup>

Bosteels emphasizes the idea that not only the relation between the void and the excess is dialectical and but also that this kind of dialectical relation is the very impasse of the structure in Badiou's philosophy. Then the subject is the only one in this structure who can overcome this impasse by the mediation of his/her decision and fidelity. I think however that it is more crucial to investigate the conception of subject in Badiou's philosophy. It may be emphasized the necessity of the pre-existence of a rare event by chance. Only this undecidable emerging of an event, for Badiou, calls someone into being as a subject through his/her fidelity to this experience. Then a subject can appear by means of his/her fidelity to a truth process and its consequences. Another crucial point is that a truth, for Badiou, cannot be wholly said. That is to suggest that there is only an abstract subject and unattainable truth in Badiou's philosophy. Because of its having an unnameable point, I think, truth turns into a mystic thing.

First of all, Badiou subtracts the concept of event or change from all the mediations of dialectic or history. Badiou supports of anti-historicism. He

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<sup>381</sup> Bosteels, "On the Subject of the Dialectic", p. 161.

determined an event as a singular destruction of a sudden novelty. He is accused of supporting an apolitical understanding and a mystic abstraction of change. Bensaïd criticizes him in respect of his apolitical consequence of his philosophy. Bensaïd argues that Badiou separates truth from its historical conditions and by doing this he produces only a pure concept of truth. Bensaïd adds that Badiou, in fact, refuses the real politics by preventing “it from producing lasting effects”.<sup>382</sup> Further, Peter Hallward, by referring to Karl Marx’s eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, says that though Badiou’s philosophy “will have long since ceased merely to describe the world, its promise to change this world will always remain unduly abstract”.<sup>383</sup> This abstraction, for Hallward, is followed from Badiou’s locating the category of ‘event’ not in an empirical situation but in a mystical one.

It may be unfair, if we ignore the understanding of relation or non-relation between knowledge and truth with regard to the production of truth. Badiou champions the idea that the economic or social conditions of the situation can be analyzed only in the realm of knowledge. He, however, separates this analysis from the activity in a truth process. Badiou explains this distinction as follows:

My conviction is that everybody who is engaged in faithfulness in the relation to an event has an understanding of the situation. So it is not a prerequisite to have prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is always necessary to understand the being, the ontological schema of the situation, the mathematical categories and so on, because we have to work for that sort of understanding; terrible work! But from the point of view of singular truth we have an access from the event itself and not from preconditioned knowledge. The truth creates the understanding of the process of truth and the subject *is* this sort of understanding. So, the

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<sup>382</sup> Bensaïd, “Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event”, p. 101.

<sup>383</sup> P. Hallward, *Badiou: a Subject to Truth*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2003, p. 322.

truth needs nothing other than itself. It's very important. The truth is not a question of knowledge; it is the *defection* of knowledge. This is the reason why the people who defend knowledge are against events: the subject which is constituted within a truth, in a way, has no need knowledge. Such a subject *is* a transformation of knowledge, a complete transformation of knowledge.<sup>384</sup>

As may be seen from this passage, the critical evaluation of the social, historical and economic conditions, for Badiou, is not necessary to change radically the situation. Marx sees humanity as a product of the current productive forces and the relation of production. That is to say that humanity is determined by the conditions in which they live. This determination, for Marx, cannot be a composition of what humanity is. It must be added that humanity is also that which is enable to change these conditions.<sup>385</sup> Marx, Engels and Lenin see the concept of revolution as an understandable and reasonable conditional process. Badiou's understanding of politics contains in a deeply unconditional thinking and doing. Barker asserts that:

...Even if one accepts that doing and thinking politics are unconditional, and therefore immune to such understanding, it seems to me that without it the concept of revolution – i.e. that which interrupts the conditions for the reproduction of a mode of production – is unsustainable.

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<sup>384</sup> Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, p. 179.

<sup>385</sup> See: Marx, K. & F. Engels, *The German Ideology*, C. J. Arthur (ed.), Lawrence & Wishart Limited, London, 1996. They exactly say as follows: "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way. ... By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life. ... The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. ... As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production". (p. 42).

Now, of course, Badiou in no ways claims to rely on the Marxist concept of revolution.<sup>386</sup>

Badiou sees politics as a thought or a different kind of intellectual activity. Further he sees philosophy as something, which thinks thought. The militants of politics make clear what happens newly in the situation by their axiomatic statements. A militant produces an axiom concerning this novelty. Accordingly, the main characteristic feature of politics, for Badiou, can be expressed as ‘politics without party’. There is no need of party organization. However, this does not mean that he champions an unorganized political movement. Politics, for Badiou, is “organized through the intellectual discipline of political process”.<sup>387</sup> He constantly gives *L’Organisation Politique* as an example for a true political activity.<sup>388</sup> He is also a member of this intellectual work. In my view, the relation between this intellectual organization and politics’ being a thought is obviously the most critical point in Badiou’s philosophy. Politics and accordingly philosophy have been rendered a kind of reflection of thought about itself.

MacCannell states that the revolution is reduced only to a “simple speech act” in Badiou’s philosophy.<sup>389</sup> Similarly, Madarasz says that “event” in Badiou’s philosophy “disrupts continuous space and prompts new subjective forms. But how? Through speech alone, a performative act of ‘declaring’ an event has taken place”.<sup>390</sup> I agree with them concerning this reduction of change to the

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<sup>386</sup> Barker, Introduction to A. Badiou’s *Metapolitics*, p. xxii.

<sup>387</sup> Badiou, *Metapolitics*, p. 122.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>389</sup> MacCannell, “Eternity or Infinity? Badiou’s *Point*”, p. 832.

<sup>390</sup> Madarasz, “The Regularity of non-Being: Space and Form in Alain Badiou’s System”, p. 798.

act of declaration. Firstly, a new prescription declaring the consequences of a truth procedure appears as a result of a truth procedure. Badiou ignores a relation between the agenda of revolution and the emergence of an event. An event, for him, happens only by chance. Secondly, Badiou also ignores the problem of consciousness of the agents of revolution. He thinks only of the equal ability of thinking as a common feature or genericity of human beings. Thus, a revolution does not have any effect on the consciousness. In fact, Badiou does not see revolution as a result of a kind of awareness of what is going on wrong. This relational comprehension requires a historical one. Badiou states that there is no linear continuousness in time and that there is no history in which all the occurrences can be linked with each other. Each change, for him, occurs only contingently. Finally, Badiou ignores the particular beings. He gives a superiority of universal over particulars. This is also one of the causes of his ignorance the material and historical conditions for a revolution. Because of the fact that Badiou pays no attention to ‘the specific sociality’ of a subject, for instance of the immigrant workers in France, he values them only to the degree of their universality. Their universality, for Badiou, comes from the egalitarian maxim in their axiomatic hypothesis: we have the same rights with other citizen in France.

Badiou sees ‘communism’ as an ideal for politics. This communism is a place in which a state does not have any representational function. In other words, there must not be a state or state power, which necessarily makes a pressure over some of its citizens. However, Badiou cannot explain how to make possible to wither away of all the possible states. If this end is impossible, does this ideal become meaningless? Or, is all the aim of Badiou’s philosophy to show the impossibility of ‘localization’ of ‘communism’? Milbank points out that if event has the priority over the void in Badiou’s philosophy, “representation can be always already overtaken by a substantive

procedure”.<sup>391</sup> He adds that if Badiou gives the priority to the void, he can overcome this obstacle. I think neither the primacy of the event nor that of the void can save Badiou’s theory from the danger of lapsing into the refusing of the possibility of communism. I agree with MacCannell that Badiou’s “promotion of revolution has earned him a measure of popularity”.<sup>392</sup> For, Badiou’s concept of communism is deprived of any content.

It can be said that the actualization of communism is impossible in Badiou’s understanding of philosophy. This impossible here does not signify the real of Badiou. Rather, it indicates that which cannot be actualized in the reality. That is to suggest that it is ontologically impossible. In Badiou’s terminology, communism means the complete abolishment of the state or the operation of inclusion. That is to claim that there is no possibility for the actualization of communism in Badiou’s philosophy. The idea of communism should remain as impossible forever. For, Badiou introduces us with his ontological laws as logical and as that which is stable forever. Badiou does not use his ontological apparatus to explain the existent reality now. He explains the stable being-as-being by means of them. Thus, it can be said that communism appears as an ideal, which means that it cannot be actualized forever. Similar to the idea of communism, truths also is rendered into that which is ontologically an impossible thing. In other words, a truth, I think, becomes to that which is not only actualized yet, but also that which cannot be actualized in any moment of real life. The only possibility in an emancipatory politics is to restrict the power of the state. Badiou argues that the Marxist axiom concerning the abolishment of the state indicates only this restriction of the power of the state.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Milbank, “The Return of Mediation, or the Ambivalence of Alain Badiou”, p. 142.

<sup>392</sup> MacCannell, “Eternity or Infinity? Badiou’s *Point*”, p. 830.

<sup>393</sup> A. Badiou, *Tarihin Uyanışı*, trans. M. Erşen, *Monokl*, İstanbul, 2011, p. 132.

Bensaïd suggests that Badiou presents the infinity only as “an atemporal eternity”.<sup>394</sup> He relates this non-being-temporal of infinite to Badiou’s understanding of materialism as I think right so. It may be said that the only criterion, which Badiou gives for a determination of truthfulness of a statement, is the ‘time’. In other words, all the matter for the problem of truth turns into the problem of who can be faithful for a longer time. A truth procedure, or its subject, must create its own time, which is exactly out-of-time. The matter turns into a type of debate of the creation of its own time in a subjective formalization of a truth. I think that this is a matter of the creation of a mere consensus on the validity of a truth.

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<sup>394</sup> Bensaïd, “Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event”, p. 95.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Alain Badiou is one of the most debated philosophers in the contemporary philosophy. He develops his philosophy against especially three contemporary tendencies in philosophy. He wants to free philosophy from the influences of science, history and religion. In other words, he tries to withdraw philosophy from the efficacy of positivism, historical materialism and teleological speculation. First of all, according to Badiou, if a philosopher takes the positivist approach as basis of his/her philosophy, the theme of finite things may control the style of thinking in his/her philosophy. Secondly, according to Badiou, the viewpoint of historical materialism is one of the most dangerous ways of thinking in politics, since it inevitably leads to totalitarianism. Finally, if speculation has an effective role in thinking, then, philosophy becomes a discourse of elucidating the 'sacralization'. This is why Badiou establishes his theory of truth in opposition to these traditional attitudes. There is, for Badiou, neither scientifically/historically necessary truth nor transcendental truth. Truth can occur according to Badiou always in a concrete situation. There is no one single truth which may include all other truths. Truth, however, is infinite, since it is originated from the genericity or the unpredictable side of a situation and it cannot be defined and known entirely. Philosophy must be concerned, as Badiou suggests, with these truths appearing in a scientific, artistic, amorous and political situation. There is not one single realm of appearance of a truth. Accordingly, philosophy loses its sovereign status since it is not a creator of truths. This means that it cannot produce any truth. It only evaluates its daily truths and the process of their production.

Secondly, Badiou attempts to establish a theoretical basis by means of which all measures are taken against a tendency in politics towards totalitarianism. He elucidates under what conditions a totalitarianism may appear in both theory and praxis. He attempts to develop a radical theory, which may never and in no way provide the ground for totalitarianism. His conclusion is that there is no single history each moment of which is only a particular existence of a single universal being. In other words, there is no whole, which is a relational and conceptual unity of each particular being. Being is not one. On the contrary, there are only multiplicities of multiplicities, Badiou claims. Being is multiple, history is multiple, truth is multiple, and the subject is multiple. It should be remembered that many postmodern thinkers also acknowledge the multiplicity of truth. From their point of view, there are infinitely many truths. Badiou argues that postmodernism is not successful in demonstrating the true nature of the plurality of truth. He accuses the postmodern philosophers of reducing the multiplicity of truth to mere quantitative plurality of conventional opinions. Although I agree with Badiou in this regard, I think, however, that Badiou also reduces truth only to a conventional opinion. This is the main argument I put forward in this thesis. Here, I would like to point out again some very controversial points in Badiou's philosophy, which make us think that in his theory truth renders a relative conventional opinion.

The main thesis Badiou put forward is that being is an inconsistent multiple. Such an inconsistent multiple is subtracted from all the predicates and determinations. This means that being is nothing. This nothingness of the essence of being is the crucial point in Badiou's ontology. In Badiou's ontology, the conception of 'inconsistent multiple' is developed not only as a formulation of being but also as an indication of the source of change in a concrete situation. Change may be dealt with as the transformation of inconsistent multiple to consistent one, which is occasioned by the mediation of the subject at the end of a truth procedure. A truth procedure operates on this

topological space of inconsistent multiple or of the nothingness. I think that Badiou, in this way, gives a mere formal explanation of truth by ignoring the concrete distinction of a situation from another. In fact one can even argue that the plurality of truth in his approach renders a single type of formalization. In the debate, this point that a change is theorized as a mere formal one is mostly not taken into account.

The operation of representation, or inclusion, is seen as one of the two main counting operations in Badiou's ontology. Badiou sees being-qua-being as multiple without any predicates, or as a void, or as an inconsistent multiple. In order to destroy the sovereignty of 'one' in the realm of ontology, he insists on the idea that 'one' is only counting operation. A pure multiple is counted in two different ways: by belonging and by inclusion. If one of them disappears, then his ontology based upon the set theory would lose its all meaning. For, the void is explained by the mediation of the operation of inclusion. The operation of *inclusion* constitutes the state of situation, while the operation of *belonging* constitutes a situation. Thanks to the axiom that the void is the universal subset of every set, the void is explained. The combination of the situation and the state of situation is called 'the structure'. The void is the element of the structure without being included. This void is seen as the very ground for a radical change in Badiou's philosophy. If the state of structure or the operation of inclusion is omitted from Badiou's ontology, the void would turn into a meaningless concept. A radical change renders then an impossible thing, since it loses its all grounds. This is why I argued in this thesis that that Badiou's philosophical theory does not provide any basis for politics aiming at radical change and popular democracy. In other words, because his one-sided and formal explanation originates in the contradictory relation between the void and the state, Badiou's philosophy may provide merely a theoretical basis for politics of little reforms. This is why the abolishment of the state representation in Badiou's philosophical theory is necessary to make an unapparent appear in

the structure. In the political domain, if an emancipatory politics succeeds in abolishing the state power, this act would be a total emancipation for humanity because of the annihilation of any possibility of appearing a void. Namely, there cannot be a radical change based upon the void in a situation because of the non-existence of the state. Badiou's ontological arguments sound stable since they are only the general formalizations. They change neither from a situation to another nor from a certain time to another.

In addition, if we follow Badiou, the infinity of truth comes from its relation with this unknowable, unpredictable and uncountable essence of being. To become one of the appearances of this non-appearance can be a result of a truth procedure, which is also multiple. The subject can appear in such a multiple truth procedure. It is not organic, but only a form of this truth procedure. That is to suggest that it is only subjectivization of a truth procedure by its decision on whether an event happened or not. If there is no mediation of the subject, a truth cannot appear. The mediating act of the subject initiates his/her decision concerning the occurrence of an event and continues with his/her fidelity to the consequences of the event. The more there are truths, the more there are the forms, or the subjects. It must be added that the subject is also a result of the truth process. One appears as a subject only in a truth process by his/her mediating act. As can be seen from what has been said above, Badiou wishes to prevent truth from being completely a subjective process. The objective basis of truth is that there must be an event and its consequences. By means of these assertions, Badiou tries to avoid relativism. He attempts to demonstrate the ontological and formal logical conditions of a truth and the becoming of a subject in an objective manner. Badiou has successfully illustrated that why truth, in spite of its multiplicity, cannot be relative. However, what kind of truth remains at the end of Badiou's philosophy? A truth becomes that what has an unnameable part. This unnameable part is the source of its universality and the obstacle for any effort toward totalitarianism. A truth turns thereby into

a singular infinity. In Badiou's philosophy, it is supposed to be universal. This universality is however not to be taken in the sense of a total or global but in the sense of a local universality. The truth may occur only in a concrete situation and by the mediation of a singular or finite subject. It can only be a truth of a concrete situation. That is to suggest that the truth's universality does not come from its inclusive character of everything, or its power to explain everything. The universality of a truth depends on its unachievable part of its nature. I think that this appears as the conclusion of Badiou's idea that the real is impossible. Even if we admit the idea that Badiou does not lapse into relativism, we cannot avoid admitting that the rest was only 'unachievable truth'. We are then left with the question what this truth is and whether it exists at all. Thus I argue that Badiou's approach to the concept of truth leads to a position that might argue the non-existence of truth as such.

The only material condition of a truth, for Badiou, is its genericity. This means that a truth comes from nothing. It is necessarily partial, that is, it cannot be wholly said. Badiou does not see this nothing as a virtuality or potentiality of a truth. By using the Lacanian terminology, Badiou calls it the 'impossible'. It should be added that this nothing for Badiou is not a transcendental to a situation. An event happens in an evental site. This evental site is the place of a certain element of a set, which is presented but not represented, or it belongs to the situation but it does not included by the state of the situation. That is to say that this nothing signifies the non-experienced plural element yet. Badiou does not equate the structure to the state of situation. Thus, an evental site appears in the structure, although it is not included in the state of situation with regard to Badiou's distinction between the structure and the state of situation. In the bourgeois state, the proletariat is this non-represented element, for instance. For the state continues to operate by ignoring the proletarians. Or, the immigrant workers in France, as an example given by Badiou, are the elements that which are not represented. They are not seen as citizens by the state and

they do have no documents to prove that they live in France. In other words, these elements are not foundational elements of the state in which they live or accommodate. They are separate elements, or they are in ordinary sense nothing for the state. This is why they may be the material conditions of a truth production, which comes from the structure. They (in other words, the material conditions of a truth) are already intrinsic or inherent in the state. Thus in a truth procedure there is nothing can be claimed to be of a transcendental feature. They are in the situation without being noticed. In other words, according to Badiou's philosophizing there is no transcendental point in the situation. Though the foundation of a truth is intrinsic to the situation, it is impossible to gain its knowledge. Badiou explains this impossibility by using the distinction between truth and knowledge.

I think however that there is something that bears the danger of embracing something other than materialism in his philosophy, though Badiou emphasizes the non-existence of transcendental in his theory. Badiou distinguishes knowledge and truth in order to emphasize the newness of a truth. A truth cannot be known at the beginning of a truth process, because it is in a relation to the hidden part of a situation in which this truth begins to appear. This newness is related to the 'impossibility' of this hidden part. Further, because of the impossibility to reach its knowledge, it can inaugurate to show itself in the moment of event only by a sudden chance. The subject cannot have an effect over this beginning point. This suddenness or spontaneity of an evental appearance without a subject indicates the unknowable beginning point in a truth process in Badiou's philosophy. Badiou also distinguishes event from being, or the historical thing from the ontological thing. The chance point in an event signifies a breaking point of it from the ontological realm by rejecting the rules relative to this ontological status. In fact, this ontological status as a connection of the situation and the state of situation, which Badiou calls the structure, designates the status quo of the structure. How is an act of rejecting

possible, if the rules of status quo are not knowable? It can be claimed that Badiou only insists on the idea that this rejection is not a knowing act. But what is it, then, if it is not an act of knowledge? It is a sudden appearance of the hidden part of a situation under the management of the transcendental law of appearing.

It may be claimed that Badiou does not pay much attention to the materiality of and material conditions of human beings in the world. That is to suggest that he cannot truly connect two distinct parts in a truth process in his theory of truth. He firstly distinguishes the finite subject from the infinite truth of which a finite subject is only a part. But as I think, Badiou does not successfully correlate them. In *Logics of Worlds*, though he tries to relate the being finite of the subject to the infinity of truth by means of the term of 'world', as I think, this world also is rendered a mystic term. Also the subject is situated between a trace of an event and a body in *Logics of Worlds*. Both of them are the consequences of an event, and the subject is at a distance from them. The subject is placed between these two terms and he/she does not have any relation with the infinite without being its operator. Because of this non-relation, Badiou seems to be championing a conception of the subject which seems to be rather mystical. Similar to Saint Paul's invitation to the fidelity for the resurrection of the Christ, Badiou calls for the fidelity to the mystified event - not only in *Being and Event* but also *Logics of Worlds*. This is why I argue that the subject is rendered only a mystic formalization.

The distinction between the potential and the actual does not have any place in Badiou's philosophy. Badiou rejects the idea that this distinction can comprehend what the real is and how it changes. There is only actuality. It can be said that, for Badiou, there is an antagonism, but this antagonism is only between the impossible and the actual. The impossible does not refer to something that which may be 'actualized' or 'realized' in reality. In fact, the

words 'to actualize' and 'to realize' are meaningless, for Badiou, because there is only actuality and there is no development from the potential to the actual. The impossible refers to the real. This impossible is the basis for every novelty or every change in reality. But it is not a potential being of what is in a position of becoming an actual. It may therefore be questioned whether this emphasis on the actual without the relation to the potential can grasp what is or what takes place in reality. Since Badiou rejects a relational approach, this inevitably leads to a dualist position, which necessarily justifies a crude materialism on the one hand and a crude idealism on the other. That is to say that it is so, since it cannot explain the ideal part in the material, and the material side in the ideal. In fact, it may not be wrong to say that Badiou pays no attention to the ideal in its relation to materiality of the world. As a consequence of his formalization in his theory, each concept occurs as not more than an idea. Mathematics appears only as an idea, politics as an idea, praxis as an idea, and finally the life as an idea. Therefore, I think, it is not wrong to claim that Badiou is a crude idealist thinker though he believes that he is a materialist.

Badiou insists on the idea that every truth procedure is random. It is aleatory, since a subject forces a situation to admit the existence of a new thing by some random choices. There is no cause that which has an influence on the choice of a subject. This choice is not a result of such an influent causality. There is no causal relationship which forces a subject to make a decision. In addition, an event is not a cumulative consequence of the previous occurrences. Badiou, by his category of randomness, tries to overcome the problem of deterministic relation of continuity between the occurrences. Badiou states that there is no continuity between the points or the occurrences in a world. More explicitly, there is a discontinuity there. An event occurs suddenly without any certain causation. The decision of a subject concerning the statement, which appears after an event, is seen as a rare or unconditional decision in Badiou's philosophy. There can be a subject, which decides positively regarding this

statement. Also another subject can reject justifying the truth of this statement. For Badiou argues the undecidability of this event. That is to say that it is fair to claim that the truth of the statement is relative, and it can attain a different truth value with the eyes of different subjective formalization. Similar to the category of decision, that of fidelity does not have an objective validation. Who is the faithful subject? To this question can only be replied with a conventional decision, which is given by a group of humans. Someone might say that this man is faithful, while another might say not this, but that man is faithful to a certain truth. Further, the act, which can be seen as a proof for fidelity of a subject, can be different for distinct individuals. I think that Badiou presumes a previous conventional consensus concerning these criteria in his philosophy. Accordingly, as Badiou seems to accept this, such a conventional consensus leads to a position that may rightly be called a relativist one.

Additionally, I think that Badiou reduces social change to a mere logical change in the transcendental of a world or to a mere linguistic change. For, an event appears only in the form of an axiomatic statement, which interrupts the continuity of the previous statements of the sovereign language. Because of the axiomatic character of this new statement, in fact, there are no objective criteria to decide about its truth value. Badiou axiomatically decides by himself about some new political statements such as that concerning the immigrants in France. Someone can claim that Badiou's position on immigrants is wrong and he/she may insist that the immigrants must live in their own countries. If we rely on Badiou's philosophical theory we would not be given some criteria by which we may decide which of these statements is true or not true. The matter is who is more faithful to his/her decision and its consequences. If someone can be more faithful, there appears an increasing possibility to transform of his/her radical statement to a generally admitted one. I would like to claim therefore that Badiou seems to suppose a debate between the opinions, which are not based on some certain (objectively valid) knowledge but only on some

unjustified believes. There are no criteria for gauging the truth value of these opinions in question.

In Badiou's philosophy, this matter appears more clearly in his conception of subject of the political truths. There appears a subject in a political truth procedure. However, there is no cause for being a subject without being uncounted by the state of situation. I think that this is only an abstraction of politics and thus that of a political subject from the concrete situation. Similar to the idea that there is no real politics in Badiou's philosophy, there is not a real subject too. Badiou reduces subject only to a mere formal concept.

I think that this mere abstract individual is the result of Badiou's aim to free politics from the sovereignty of science. This aim concludes an abstract and individualistic theory of subject in spite of his emphasis on the collective 'we-subject'. There are not any conditional points that render some individuals to the collective subject. Badiou willingly or unwillingly refuses the importance of the analysis of the material conditions, which can be cause for the appearing of a subject. In fact, his main stress on this issue is that a scientific analysis cannot give an explanation for the process of becoming a subject. This stress, I think, includes some true thought in it. I also think that such an analysis of the material conditions of a living individuals cannot give an exact knowledge concerning the process of a becoming a political subject. However, its ignorance can lead to a mere formal theory of subject. This may lead in consequence to a rejection of the reality as such. The very basis of this rejection is originated from the definition of the real in Badiou's philosophy. The real, for Badiou, is the impossible. This definition is also given in the form of an abstraction. Only in order to emphasize the non-causal relation of the material conditions and the becoming of a subject, Badiou renounces the reality itself. Due to this renunciation, Badiou's 'we subject' turns to be a linguistic community, which declares only the same axiomatic statement. 'We subject' is

only one who repeats the validity of the declaration of an event by its fidelity to it. It is only a declaring form of a truth. This critique does not mean to say that politics should be directly under the control of science for us. However, politics must benefit from the scientific thought. I think that though humans may change their material conditions permanently, they remain nonetheless a production of their material conditions under which they work and live. One may think of these conditions as under permanent manipulation as may be claimed to be made by many different instruments such as the advertisement in the hands of sovereign power. Their thoughts can be directed, or manipulated by using many tools. However, this manipulated side of human does not show the whole of their capacity. That is to say that human are not only that what is influenced by their material conditions but they are also the creators of their conditions. Badiou's reduction of subject to a linguistic fidelity takes into account the subject merely as a creator of a truth.

Badiou's view of subject does not capture even this one sided-subject. I think that Badiou's linguistic subject is not creator but only a created one. What does this mean? There is no role of a subject in the process of becoming of an event. Subject appears after an event by declaring that there is an event. Badiou ignores that the subject is the creator of the events, e.g. the militants in the Paris Commune. Who are the people there? Or, is there a distinction between the immigrants in France who declares 'we are here', and any other group of people who say 'we are here' too? Which one of them is the real subject? I think that Badiou's theory of subject is hardly able to reply to this kind of skeptic questions.

According to Badiou's theorizing, a sudden occurrence of an event by chance is the creator of subject. This occurrence of an event can only be a result of an appearing anomaly in the structure. That is to say that the structure counts its element in two ways: belonging and inclusion. There necessarily appears an

uncounted element by the counting operation of inclusion. Then there appears an abnormal set in a situation the elements of which are not counted. This constitutes the evental place for Badiou. Though event is not an ontological term in Badiou's philosophy, this evental place is the very ground where an event is to occur. An event spontaneously occurs by a chance. This ground, I think, does not involve any subjective side in it. Also, the inaugurating point of a political truth occurs without a subject. This means that a subject cannot be a creator of this event. Contrarily, the subject can only be a created thing as a result of this spontaneous event. If an event occurs as a result of only an uncounted element of the structure, it can be said that event is only a natural result of the counting operation of the structure. An event also follows from the nature of the structure without necessitated. Accordingly, the subject is only the result of this evental occurrence, since it is only a declaration of 'there is an event'. Thus it can be said that the subject is also created as a result of an appearing anomaly in the structure. Badiou's subject has no creative function at all. Badiou's subject is only a finite form of the invention of the topological place of truth.

Badiou dismisses the category of 'event' from the ontological discourse. In other words, ontology, he argues, is not concerned with the 'event'. In *Being and Event*, Badiou makes a distinction between history and nature. An event does not appear in the situation of nature. The place of its occurrence is 'the evental site', which belongs to the realm of history in accordance with Badiou's distinction. There is no relation between history and nature. It can be said that the place of being is nature, while the place of event is history. As a consequence of this distinction and non-relational being of history and nature, there is also no relation between being and acting. Hallward points out that "the result is a notably abstract conception of acting".<sup>395</sup> I agree with his claim

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<sup>395</sup>Hallward, "Introduction: Consequences of Abstraction", p. 12.

about the abstractness of Badiou's concept of action. Badiou was aware of the difficulty of the non-relation between being and appearance. He tries to overcome this difficulty in his *Logics of Worlds*. He makes a distinction between the ontological realm and the phenomenological realm by his concept of object. As already mentioned, object is that which interconnect 'being' and 'appearance' with each other. After an evental occurrence by a chance, there appear some points as consequences of this event. That is to suggest that an event creates a trace in a phenomenal world. Badiou tries to concretize his abstract understanding of action as thought. The subject's decision is on these phenomenological appearances of the points. However, these points are also designated by the phrase 'either, or'. These appearances, which the subject decides upon, also turn into a mere declaration of an idea. Thus, I argue that Badiou fails to concretize the abstract action of the subject.

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## APPENDIX A. CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

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### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Philosophy	2005
BS	Hacettepe U. Philosophy	2001
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Year	Place	Enrollment
1997- Present	Ministry of Finance	Officer

### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

### HOBBIES

Movies and Literature

## APPENDIX B. TURKISH SUMMARY

Alain Badiou çağdaş felsefenin en tartışmalı filozoflarından biridir. Bir ‘çokluk’ filozofudur. Yirminci yüzyılı on dokuzuncu yüzyıl filozoflarınca ileri sürülen fikirlerin gerçekleştirildiği yüzyıl olarak görür. Badiou durumu şu şekilde formüle eder: On dokuzuncu yüzyıl filozofları insanlığın toptan bir kurtuluşunun teorik temellerini atmışlar ve yirminci yüzyıl aktivistleri de bunu pratiğe geçirmişlerdir. Badiou ve aslında genel olarak çağdaş felsefecilerin birçoğu bu pratik esnasında bahsi geçen fikirlerdeki bazı eksikliklerin ortaya çıktığı ve dönüp bunların giderilmesi gerektiği dürtüsüyle hareket eder. İnsanlığın topyekûn kurtuluşunu ileri süren teorilerin totaliter rejimlere dönüştüğünü tespit ederek, çağdaş felsefenin en temel sorunlarından birinin bu dönüşümün teorik nedenlerinin tespit ederek ortadan kaldırılması olduğunu ileri sürerler. Bu motivasyon ile Badiou’nun temel hedefi tespit edilen sorunun temel nedeni olarak gördüğü nedensellik ve ilişkisel bütünsellik kavramlarına karşı olumsuzluk ve yerellik kavramlarını savunmaktır. Bu yönüyle postmodern akımın içinde görülebilir. Ancak kendisinin iddiası böyle bir belirlemenin yanlış olduğu yönündedir.

Tezimde temel olarak göstermeyi amaçladığım şey Badiou’nun hakikat teorisinin eleştirel bir incelemesini yapmaktır. Badiou kendi dışındaki Negri ya da Žižek gibi çokluk filozoflarının çokluğun doğasını tam olarak açıklayamadıkları gerekçesiyle eleştirir. Genel olarak postmodern akım içinde çokluğun yalnızca niceliksel bir çokluğa ve daha da önemlisi dilsel bir uzlaşımına indirgendiğini ileri sürer. Tam da bu türden bir indirgeme nedeniyle hakikatin nesnel bir temelden yoksun bırakıldığını ve görecelilik problemiyle karşı karşıya kaldığını iddia eder. Kendisi ise ‘türeyimsellik’ kavramı ile bu sorunun ortadan kalkacağını düşünür. Badiou ya göre hakikat iki nedenden ötürü sonsuzdur. İlk hakikat türeyimseldir, yani her bir somut durumda

yapısal ve ontolojik olarak beliren ‘sıra dışı’ çokluktan kaynaklanır. Başka bir deyişle hakikat karar verilemez ve tahmin edilemez olmak anlamında türeyimsel bir karaktere sahiptir. İkinci olarak da adlandırılmaz bir yanı vardır. Ortaya çıkma sürecinin sonunda dahi tam olarak dile gelmez. Bir hakikati adlandırmaya yönelik her edim bir kötülüğün ortaya çıkmasına neden olur. Totaliter devlet ise bu kötülüklerden biridir. Bu iki nedenden ötürü somut bir durumda beliren tekil bir hakikat aynı zamanda sonsuzluk niteliğine de sahiptir. Böylelikle, sonsuz kavramı Badiou’nun felsefesinde öncesiz ve sonrasız olma ya da bütünü kapsama anlamlarının dışına çıkmış ve bambaşka bir anlam kazanmıştır. Badiou hakikati yapısal bir negatif öğeye yani boşluk ya da sıra dışı öğeye dayandırarak ona nesnel bir zemin kazandırdığını yani zaman ya da kişiye göreceli olma probleminden kurtardığını ileri sürer. Ben ise tezimde bu iddianın aksine Badiou’nun hakikati uzlaşımaya dayalı bir düşünceye indirgediğini ve böylece dilsel bir edime indirgediğini ileri sürdüm. Ayrıca hakikatin, Badiou felsefesinde, adlandırılmaz olması nedeniyle asla erişilemez bir öteye sürüklenerek mistik bir hakikate dönüştüğünü ve hatta bunun tıpkı sofistlerde oldu gibi hakikatin reddi anlamına geldiğini ileri sürdüm.

Platon Badiou’nun en önemli referanslarından biridir. ‘Bir’ ya da ‘çokluk’ meselesi ya da hakikatin neliği sorunu gibi birçok sorunun Platonculuk ile çözüleceğini iddia eder. Badiou’nun Platon’u öne çıkarmasının en önemli nedeni Platon’un felsefeyi kendi içinde kapalı ve hakikat üreten bir sistem olmaktan ziyade, başka alanlarla diyalog içinde olan bir düşünce sistematığı olarak göstermesidir. Ayrıca Platon’u felsefenin diyalog içinde olduğu bu alanlarda ortaya çıkan hakikatlerin ne olduğunu tespit eden bir filozof olarak görmesidir. Bununla ilişkili olarak Badiou felsefeyi hakikat üreten bir sistem olarak görmez. Hakikat başka birçok alanda ortaya çıkan bir kategoridir ve felsefe ancak gününün hakikatleriyle ilgilenir. Bu alanlar sonsuzdur ancak Badiou dört tanesini tespit etmekte yetinir: aşk, sanat, bilim ve politika.

Badiou felsefeyi bilim, tarih ve dinin etkilerinden kurtarmayı amaçlar. Başka bir ifade ile pozitivizm, tarihsel materyalizm ve erekçi spekülasyonun felsefe üzerindeki etkilerini yok etmeyi amaçlar. İlkın, Badiou açısından şayet bir filozof pozitivizmi felsefesine temel olarak almaya kalkarsa, sonlu şeyler onun düşünce sistematiğine egemen olur. Ve bu tavır felsefenin sonsuz olanın neliğini görme önünde bir engel olarak belirir. İkinci olarak, tarihsel materyalizmin bakış açısı politikada en tehlikeli olanlardan biridir, çünkü totalitarizme neden olabilir. Son olarak, şayet spekülasyon felsefede etkin bir rol üstlenirse, felsefe kutsallığı meşrulaştırma alanına dönüşebilir. Bu nedenlerle Badiou hakikat teorisini bu geleneksel tavırlara karşı konumlandırma çabasındadır. Badiou'ya göre ne bilimsel ya da tarihsel olarak zorunlu ne de aşkın bir hakikatten bahsedebiliriz. Hakikat her zaman somut bir durumda açığa çıkar ve somut bir duruma aittir. Diğer bütün küçük hakikatleri kapsayacak büyük, evrensel ya da mutlak bir hakikat yoktur. Buna rağmen hakikat sonsuzdur.

Badiou ayrıca politikada totalitarizme neden olan eğilime karşı teorik bir temel inşa etme amacındadır. Asla ve hiçbir şekilde totalitarizme olanak vermeyecek radikal bir teori geliştirmeyi hedefler. Ulaştığı sonuç şudur: her bir tikel momenti kendi içinde kapsayan tümel bir varlık ve bu varlığın yürüdüğü bir tarih söz konusu değildir. Başka bir ifadeyle, her bir tikel görüngünün ilişkisel ve kavramsal birliği olan bir bütün yoktur. Bir yoktur. Yalnızca çoklukların çokluğu vardır. Varlık çokluktur. Hakikat çokluktur. Özne çokluktur.

Badiou'ya göre bir hakikatin ortaya çıktığı dört alan vardır: politika, aşk, sanat ve bilim. Felsefe bu alanlardan biri değildir. Hatta bu alanlar felsefenin yegâne koşullarıdır. Felsefe hakikat üretmez. Onun görevi bir hakikat sürecinde ne olduğunu açığa çıkarmaktır. Felsefe kendi zamanının hakikatleriyle ilgilenmelidir. Çağdaş hakikatler için onları anlaşılabilir kılacak kavramsal bir şema oluşturmalıdır. Ayrıca felsefe koşullarına da belirli bir mesafede

kalmalıdır. Yani felsefenin Heidegger'in felsefesindeki gibi şiire, postmodernizmin genel eğiliminde görülebileceği gibi aşka ya da pozitivismdeki gibi bilime indirgenmesi felsefe için en tehlikeli durumlardan biridir. Badiou bunları felsefe olarak değil, 'felsefesi' olarak adlandırır.

Althusser'in tarihsel materyalizm eleştirisi ve öznenin yapısal bir biçimleniş ya da ideolojik olduğu savı Badiou'nun etkilendiği noktalardandır. Althusser'in yapısalcılığı ile Sartre'ın varoluşçu özne vurgusunu kaynaştırmak ister. Özne hakikat sürecinde önemli bir yere sahip yapısal bir biçimselliğe dönüşür.

İlk olarak 'varlık'ın Badiou için ne anlama geldiğine bakılması yerinde olacaktır. Ona göre varlığı bir 'birlik' olarak ya da 'bütünlük' olarak görmek felsefe için en hatalı noktalardan biridir. Ontoloji alanındaki çıkmaz varlığı bir olarak görürken, var olanların çokluk formunda olduğunun ileri sürülmesidir. Tam da bu noktada Badiou varlığın bir formunda olmasının bir çelişki olacağını ileri sürer. Ona göre 'varlık' çokluk formundadır. Başka bir ifadeyle hiçliktir. Bu hiçliğin anlamı, ona göre, belirsizlik anlamı taşır. Ancak bu belirsizlik bire değil çokluk formunda bir şeye aittir.

Varlık alanında ne özdeşlik ne de farklılık söz konusudur. Her ikisi de ancak görüngü alanında söz konusudur. Bunun nedeni saf varlığın herhangi bir nitelikten yoksun oluşudur. Başka bir ifadeyle, varlık niteliksiz olması anlamında tutarsız çokluktur. Badiou varlık araştırması olarak tanımlanabilecek olan ontolojinin tam anlamıyla matematiğe özdeş olduğunu ileri sürer. Ontoloji matematiktir, der. Aslında bu Badiou'nun aksiyomatik bir biçimde verdiği bir karardır. Bu kararına iki neden ileri sürer. Birincisi, varlığın çokluk formundaki yapısını açıklayabilecek yegâne düşünsel metodolojinin matematiğe ait olmasıdır. İkincisi ise, matematiğin de aksiyomlar aracılığıyla iş görme durumudur.

Öncelikle Cantor'un sonsuz kavramı ve Cohen'in türeyimsel küme tanımı Badiou'nun matematikle kurduğu önemli dirsek temaslarından. Cantor Russell paradoksuna kendi sonsuz kavramıyla yanıt bulduğunu ileri sürer. Şöyle ki: Kendinin üyesi olmayan kümelerin kümesini düşünelim. Böyle bir kümenin kendisi şayet kendine üye değilse tam da bu nedenle bu kümeye ait olmalıdır. Ancak şayet üye kabul edilirse de üye olması için taşıdığı niteliği yitirmiş olduğundan bu kümenin bir üyesi olmamalıdır. Bu nokta bahsi geçen paradoksun ortaya çıktığı noktadır. Cantor bu paradoksu kendi sonsuzluk tanımıyla aşmaya çalışır: Ona göre şayet bir çokluk çelişkiye düşmeden bir birlik olarak kavranamıyorsa bu çokluk sonsuz bir çokluktur. Aslında bunun anlamı bir olarak sayılmaya ya da nitelikleri tam olarak belirlenebilir olmaya direnen bir çokluk olmasıdır. Cantor bunun bir Tanrı olacağı görüşündedir. Badiou ise tam olarak belirlenmeye direnen olması ya da adlandırılmayan olması bakımından sonsuz kavramını Cantor'un bu sonsuz kavramıyla ilişkilendirerek açıklar.

İkinci olarak bakılması gereken ise Cohen'in türeyimsel küme tanımıdır. Cohen Gödel'in yapısı bilinebilir olan küme tanımına karşı bu tanımı geliştirir. Gödel böylesi bir kümenin belirli bir tasvir ve ad sahip dolayısıyla tüm üyelerinin tüm nitelikleri bilinebilir olan bir küme olduğunu ileri sürer. Cohen ise bu bilinebilir kümenin karşısına nitelikleri tam olarak tespit edilemez olması anlamında türeyimsel kümeyi koyar. Badiou ise tutarsız çoklukların türeyimsel çokluk, tutarlı çoklukların ise Gödel'in kümesine benzer olduğunu söyler.

Badiou için, çokluk niteliği taşıyan varlığı anlama olanağı verebilecek tek disiplin matematik, özel olarak ise küme teorisidir. Badiou için, 'bir' ancak bir sayma işlemi olarak anlamlıdır. Bu sayma işlemi ile tutarsız bir çokluk tutarlı bir çokluğa dönüşür. Badiou açısından bu sayma edimini yapan bir öznenin olmadığı belirtilmesi gerekir. Bu sayma işlemi varlık açısından olagelen bir

işlemdir. Küme teorisine dayanarak açıkladığı bu sayma işlemi iki türdür: Üye olma ve kapsanma. İlk olarak bir çokluk başka bir çokluğa ait olabilir ya da başka bir çokluğun üyesi olabilir ki bu onun tutarlı bir çokluk olarak belirmesini sağlayan bir sayma işlemidir. İkinci olarak ise bir çokluk başka bir çokluk tarafından kapsanabilir. İlki bir temsil mekanizması oluştururken ikici sayma işlemi bir yeniden temsil mekanizması kurar. Daha önce belirttiğimiz gibi tutarsız bir çokluk olan saf varlık olarak varlık iki farklı işlem tarafından sayılabilir: üye olma ya da kapsanma. Bu iki işlemten herhangi biri ortadan kaybolursa Badiou'nun küme teorisine dayanan ontolojik açıklamaları da anlamını yitirecektir. Üyelik ilişkisi 'durum' olarak adlandırılan mekânı oluştururken kapsanma ilişkisi 'durumun hali' denilen şeyi kurar. Badiou 'boş küme her kümenin evrensel alt kümesidir' aksiyomu sayesinde boşluğu açıklar. Her iki sayım işleminin kurduğu mekanizmaya ise 'yapı' adını verir. Boşluk kapsanmamasına rağmen yapının elemanı olan şeydir.

Badiou bu yapı içinde beliren çoklukları ise şu şekilde sınıflandırır: normal, tekil ve fazlalık. Normal çokluk hem duruma üye olan hem de durumun hali tarafından kapsanan çokluğa işaret eder. Tekil çokluk ise duruma aittir ancak durumun hali tarafından kapsanmaz. Fazlalık ise kapsanan ancak üyelik ilişkisinin dışında olan çokluktur. Badiou'nun kendi örneklemesiyle: Marksist teoriye göre kapitalist toplum düzeninde burjuva sınıfı normal terim, proletarya tekil terim ve kapitalist devletin kendisi fazlalıktır. Ancak kendisi Marksist teorinin genel kabulünün aksine burjuva sınıfı ve proletarya arasında görmek yerine, kapsanmayan eleman olan proletarya ve kapitalist devlet yani yapının fazlalığı arasında görür.

Bu sınıflandırmadan da görüleceği gibi, yapı içinde Badiou'nun 'boşluk' ve 'fazlalık' olarak nitelediği iki nokta ortaya çıkar ki tüm değişimin dinamiği bu ikisi arasındaki karşıtlık içermeyen diyalektik ilişkidir. Bununla birlikte Badiou radikal değişimi yapıda açığa çıkan boşluğun bir bilinene dönüşmesi,

kapsanmayan eleman olmaktan çıkıp kapsanma ilişkisine girmesi olarak görür. Bu aynı zamanda boşluğun ortadan kalkması demektir ki, aslında ontoloji yasalarının ortadan kalkmasına işaret eder. Ontolojinin yasaları olarak görebileceğimiz sayma işlemleri ise zamansal ya da mekânsal olarak değişken değil mantıksal belirlemeler olduğundan hiçbir şekilde tam anlamıyla ortadan kalkmaz. Yani radikal bir değişim sonucu boşluğun belirgin ya da tutarlı bir çokluğa dönüşmesinin ardından yeni bir boşluk üreten mekanizma işlemeye devam edecektir. Tüm bunlar, bana göre, Badiou felsefesinde büyük radikal bir değişimin imkânsız olduğunun bir göstergesidir.

Olay Badiou için varlık-olarak-varlık değildir ve ontoloji yani matematik tarafından açıklanamaz. Başka bir ifade ile olay aslında ontoloji dışı olandır. En önemli eleştirilerden birisi varlık ve olay gibi iki terimi birbirinden bu denli keskin ayırdıktan sonra aralarında yeniden bir ilişki kuramamış olmasıdır. Benzer bir durum sonlu özne ve sonsuz hakikat arasındaki ilişkinin açıklanamaz kalmasında yeniden belirir. Bu iki eleştiri Badiou açısından da dikkate değer bulunmuş ve son eseri *Dünyaların Mantığı*'nda (*Logics of Worlds*) en çok bu 'ilişki' sorununu çözmeye çaba harcamıştır.

Badiou *Varlık ve Olay*'daki (*Being and Event*) durum teriminin yerine *Dünyaların Mantığı*'nda dünya terimini kullanmaya başlar. Bu dünya yine çokluk formundadır. Yani bir dünya yoktur. Dünyalar vardır. Her bir dünya bir görüngü alanıdır. Burada vurgulanması gereken şey Badiou'nun zamanı felsefesinin dışına atıp mekân üzerinden varlık, olay, hakikat ve görüngü gibi kavramları tanımlamaya çalışmasıdır. Zaman kavramı bir ardışıklık ya da ilişkisellik bildirdiğinden o olmadan sonsuzun nasıl açıklanabileceğini göstermeye çalışır. Bir dünya mantıksal bir düzen ya da yapıya sahiptir. Bir dünyadaki görüngülerin bu mantıksal düzeni Badiou tarafında 'aşkınsal' olarak adlandırılır. Her dünyanın kendine özgü bir aşkınsalı vardır ve bu aşkınsal da kendi içinde bir çokluktur. Aslında Badiou açısından çok olmak 'biricik'

olamamak ya da tam olarak belirlenememek anlamına gelir. Badiou özdeşlik ya da farkın varlık düzeyinde değil görüngü düzeyinde ortaya çıktığını ve aşkınsalın belirli bir dünyadaki özdeşlik ya da farklılık derecelerinin göstergesi olduğunu söyler. Böylesi bir aşkınsal ait olduğu dünyaya aşkın dışsal bir şey olmaktan ziyade ona içkin bir şeydir.

Bir nesne bir aşkınsal düzeneğinde ya da göstergede bir özdeşlik ya da farklılık derecesinde gösterilebiliyorsa ya da belirlenebiliyorsa bu aşkınsalın ait olduğu dünyada bir görüngü olarak belirir. Kant'ın öznesinin aksine, Badiou'nun felsefesinde nesnenin ortaya çıkış sürecinde öznenin bir rolü yoktur. Ayrıca iki görüngü arasındaki tek ilişki ancak aşkınsal ölçüm aracı aracılığıyla kurulabilir bir ilişkidir. Bir görüngünün aşkınsaldaki ölçüm derecesi ancak bir başka görüngünün derecesi ile karşılaştırılabilir niteliktedir. Aslında Badiou varlık ve görüngüyü birbiriyle ilişkilendirme amacındadır. İlk elden diyebiliriz ki, Badiou için varlık alanındaki tutarsız çokluk belirli bir dünyanın aşkınsalında yani mantıksal göstergesinde bir değere sahip olmakla bu dünyada bir nesne ya da tutarlı bir çokluğa dönüşür.

Badiou kendi metodunu 'nesnel fenomenoloji' olarak adlandırır. Fenomenolojisinin amacı hakikatlerin nesnelliğini beden, nesne, özne ve nokta benzeri kategoriler aracılığıyla korumaktır. Beden, tikel bir dünyada sonsuz bir hakikatin açığa çıkarılmasını anlaşılır kılan şeydir. Öznenin ortaya çıkmasına zemin sağlar. Nesne, görüngüde bir olarak sayılandır. Yani ontolojik ve mantıksal alanları birbirine bağlayan şeydir. Ancak bir olay, böylesi bir bağı koparabilir ya da nesnenin ait olduğu dünyanın aşkınsalı tarafından belirli bir şekilde konumlanmasını ya da yerleşmesini değiştirebilir. Çünkü olay yerleşme yasasını değiştirir. Başka bir deyişle, olay dünyanın aşkınsal sabitleme yasasını değiştirerek, dünyanın mantığını değiştirir. Badiou bu değişimi kendi 'nokta' kategorisiyle açıklamaya çalışır. Ona göre her nesne kendi içinde aşkınsal tarafından sabitlenemeyen aykırı bir parçaya sahiptir. Bu

nesnenin var-olmayan ögesidir. Nokta kategorisi Badiou'nun teorisinde bu anlamda bir fonksiyon olarak belirmeye başlar. Biraz önce bahsi geçen var-olmayan öge hakkında verilen karar aşamasında iş görür. Bu var-olmayan ögenin var olup olmadığına dair kararın mantıksal zemini. Yani nokta öznenin kendi kurulumunun zemini olan karar mekanizmasının üzerinde iş gördüğü mantıksal ya da topolojik mekândır.

Olayın meydana geldiği yer Badiou için 'olaysal bölge' olarak adlandırılır. Bu bölge bahsi geçen var-olmayan ögenin kapsandığı ya da daha önce açıklandığı gibi bir çokluğun kurucu üyelerinin değil ayrık ögelerinin bulunduğu mekândır. Bu var-olmayan öge bazen tüm yapıya zarar vermeksizin yapıya kısmi zararlar verir. Bu zararın bazı sonuçları belirir. Bu sonuçlara Badiou 'iz' adını verir. Bu iz şayet yapıda radikal bir değişime neden olacak etkiye sahipse, beden bireyin 'özneleşmesine' zemin olarak beliriverir. Çünkü karar verilemez bir noktaya sahiptir. Bu noktanın birbirinden ayırt edilemez iki bileşeni vardır: evet ve hayır. Aslında denilebilir ki bir nokta var-olmayan bir ögenin karar verilemezliğinin sonsuzluğunu 'iki'ye indirger. Bu iki 'ya / ya da' ifadesiyle dile getirilebilir. Bir birey ancak işte böyle bir iki ya da nokta üzerinde karar verme edimiyle bir özneye dönüşebilir. Badiou *Dünyaların Mantığı*'nda önceki bütün kitaplarından farklı olarak üç tür öznenen bahseder. İlki hakikatin hakiki öznel formu olan sadık öznedir. Hem olaya hem de olayın sonuçlarına sadık kalmasıyla gerçek anlamıyla sonsuz bir hakikatin sonlu öznesi durumuna gelir.

İlk büyük kitabı olan *Özne Teorisi*'nde (*Theory of Subject*) tek bir hakikat alanından bahseder: politika. Dolayısıyla tek bir özne vardır: politik bir hakikat sürecinin sadık öznesi. Daha sonra *Varlık ve Olay*'da dört hakikat usulünden ve bu usullerin tek bir biçime sahip sadık öznesinden bahseder. Son büyük kitabı *Dünyaların Mantığı*'nda ise üç öznellik tipinden bahseder: sadık özne, tepkisel özne ve belirsiz özne. Sadık özne hem olaya hem de olayın sonuçlarına sadakat gösteren öznellik formudur. Tepkisel özne ise olayın kendini reddederken

olayın sonuçlarına olaydan bağımsız bir biçimde sadakat gösterir. Bu özne hakikati tam olarak olumsuzlamaz. Ancak olayı reddettiğinden hakikati tam anlamıyla kavramış değildir. Son özne formu ise olayın ve etkilerinin kurduğu ‘şimdi’yi tam anlamıyla değildir. Kararı fetişisttir. Badiou buna Hitler’in Alman ırkını fetişleştirmesini örnek olarak verir.

Badiou belirli bir yapıda meydana gelen radikal bir değişimin determinist bir değişim anlayışıyla açıklanamayacağını ileri sürer. Ona göre olay radikal değişimi şansa bağlı olarak başlatır. Bir olayın ortaya çıkmasını sağlayan şey şans ya da talihtir. Ancak şansa dayalı meydana gelen bir olay bir yeniliğin yaratıcı usulünün başlamasına neden olabilir. Bu şans meselesi Lucretius’un materyalizmindeki atomların ‘sapma’ meselesine benzer. Her ikisi de nedenselliğe yer bırakmaz. Bu yaratıcı edimin nesnelliği onun zorunluluğuna değil ontolojik temeline, yani ölçülemez boşluğa dayanır. Badiou’nun ontolojisine göre ise her durumda hiç değilse bir karar verilemez ya da ölçülemez bir boşluk mevcuttur. Bir birey ancak bu karar verilemez olan hakkında karar vererek, onu adlandırarak ve bu sürece sadık kalarak bir hakikatin öznesi olabilir. Badiou bu yapısal olarak her durumda mevcut olan ‘boş nokta’nın kendi teorisini görecelilik problemine düşmekten kurtardığını düşünür.

Badiou her bir dünyada bir bilgi ansiklopedisi olduğunu ve bunun her bir kişi için ulaşılabilir bir bilgi olduğunu ileri sürer. Denilebilir ki, bir dünyanın yapısı, sahip olduğu nesnelere ve bu nesnelere arasındaki ilişkilerin bilgisinin tümüne birden o dünyanın bilgi ansiklopedisi adını verir. Bu ansiklopedi nesnel bir yöntemle dünyanın yapısının bilgisini ortaya koyabilmelidir. Ancak bu bilgi deposuna erişim değişebilir. Aynı zamanda her durumun bir bilgi ansiklopedisinin olması gerekir ancak bu ansiklopedi bu durumun değişmeyen ve mutlak doğasını göstermez. Bu bilgi meselesi hakikat meselesinin tamamen dışındadır. Zaten Badiou hakikatin yeri olarak tamda bu bilme ediminin iş

göremeyeceği ya da sınıflandıramayacağı yer olan 'boşluk'u işaret eder. Bilgi ve hakikat arasındaki bu ayrım aslında Badiou'dan önce Lacan tarafından yapılmıştır. Lacan'ın bu ayrımı ve 'gerçek' kavramı Badiou'yu etkileyen iki noktadır. Gerçek tıpkı Lacan gibi Badiou için de 'imkânsız'a işaret eder. Ayrıca Lacan bilinçdışının topolojik alanını göstermeyi amaçlar. Badiou ise bilinç ve bilinçdışı meselesini bir yana bırakır ve Lacan'dan farklı olarak hakikatin topolojik alanını göstermeyi amaç edinir.

Bilgi ansiklopedisini kuran bilinebilir yapının dışında, bazı dünyalar karar verilemez noktalara sahiptir. Bu türden dünyalara 'gerilmiş' dünya olarak adlandırırken, böylesi herhangi bir noktaya sahip olmayan dünyayı 'kuvvetsiz' dünya olarak adlandırır. Noktalar olayın meydana gelmesi için beliren topolojik alanlardır. Topoloji bilinmeyen ya da hesaplanamayan alanları rakamlar aracılığıyla değil de harfler ya da yeni simgeler aracılığıyla hesaplamayı amaçlayan modern bir matematik dalıdır. Birden sonsuza doğru giden sıralı sayı sisteminin yerine hiçten sonsuza giden yeni bir açıklama önerir. Topolojik olarak dile getirirsek bir yoktur, yalnızca sıfırdan sonsuza giden bir sıçrama mümkündür. Ya da birbirinden farklı iki çemberin birbiriyle özdeşliği ancak topoloji aracılığıyla gösterilebilir. Lacan bilinçdışının ne anlama geldiğini onun topolojik mekânını tespit etmek suretiyle göstermeyi hedeflerken, Badiou bilinçdışı meselesinden uzaklaşır. O hakikatin topolojik alanını tam da bahsi geçen noktalar üzerinden tespit eder. Noktalar bilgi düzeninde aşırı olan ve karar verilemez olan alanı gösterir.

Badiou'ya göre bir özne karar verilemez bir nokta hakkında verdiği karar ile yapıyı değişime uğratmaya başlar. Onun kararının sonucu olarak dünyada bir iz meydana gelir. Aslında bu iz bir önerme formundadır. Ancak bu bir bireyin özneye dönüşmesi için yeterli değildir. Özneleşme bireyin kararının ardından yine bu karara sadakati gerektirir. Badiou 'sadakati' *Varlık ve Olay*'da Bergsoncu anlamda bir süre yaratımı olarak görür. Bir hakikatin ortaya çıkış

sürecinde zamanın işin içine girdiği tek yer burasıdır. Kaldı ki bu yalnızca her bir hakikat sürecinin kendine has süresidir. Daha sonra *Dünyaların Mantığı*'nda bir şimdiki zamandan bahseder. Şimdiki zamanı ise bir olayın tüm sonuçlarının toplamı olarak tanımlar. İşte bir hakikatin öznesi tam da bu türden bir şimdiki zaman içinde ise sadık özne olarak görülür. Bu anlamda şimdiki zaman geçmiş ile gelecek arasında bir zaman değildir. Bu Badiou tarafından şöyle açıklanır: şayet geçmişte meydana gelmiş bir olayın etkisi ya da sonuçları bugün için hala etkin durumda ise şimdiki zaman sınırları içinde demektir. Öznenin sadakatini gerektirir. Ancak öznenin bu edimiyle, tikel bir durumda sonlu bir öznellik formu dolayısıyla, sonsuz bir hakikat açığa çıkar. Bu hakikat dünyanın bilgi deposunda bir değişime neden olur. Ve ilgili dünyanın yapısında bir değişim meydana gelir. İşte burası bir öznenin doğru yaşamının alanıdır.

Badiou'ya göre yaşamak bir hakikat ya da bir idea ile yaşamaktır. Burası Badiou'nun Platon'un idea kavramını sahneye çıkardığı yerdir. Badiou'nun hakikatleri Platon'un idealarına benzer. Badiou Platon için ideanın 'düşünce'nin kendisi değil 'düşünülebilir olan' şey olduğunun altını çizer. Bu vurgu ile kendisi için hakikatin soyut bir kendinde düşünce olmadığını göstermeyi amaçlar. Ayrıca 'karar' ya da 'tercih' düşünce düzeneğinde tıpkı Platon'un doğru düşünme meselesindeki benzer bir yere sahiptir. Ancak Badiou edime, daha doğrusu konuşma pratiğine vurgu yapar. Badiou'nun öznesi böylece bilinç meselesine yabancı bir özneye dönüşür. Ayrıca empirik ve aşkınsal ikilem tartışmasından da uzak durur. Her çeşit tarihsel koşuldaki bağımsız bir özneye dönüşür. Ne öznenin ne de hakikatin tarihsel koşulu yoktur. Her ikisinin de ekonomik, toplumsal ya da dilsel olmayan koşulları vardır. İki olay ya da hakikat usulü arasında dahi nedensel bir ilişki yoktur. Bir olay kendinden önceki bir olay ile açıklanamaz. Önceki bir olayın sonuçlarının toplamı sonraki bir olayın nedeni olarak görülemez. Daha önce de belirttiğimiz gibi bir olay ancak şansa dayalı olarak belirir.

Bu genel açıklamaların ardından eleştirilerimizi sıralamaya başlayabiliriz diye düşünüyorum. İlk, Badiou açısından hakikatin sonsuzluğu varlığın bilinemeyen, tahmin edilemeyen ve sayılamayan özülle ilişkisinde açıklanabilir. Görüngü olmayanın bir görüngüye dönüşmesi bir çokluk olan hakikat usulünün sonucu olabilir. Özne de ancak böyle bir hakikat usulünün içinde beliren biçimdir. Organik bir mekanizma değildir. Özne yalnızca bir hakikat usulünün biçimi ya da formudur. Başka bir ifadeyle özne bir olayın olup olmadığına dair verdiği karar ile bir hakikat usulünün öznelleşme biçimidir. Eğer bir öznenin dolayımı yoksa hakikat ortaya çıkamaz. Öznenin dolayım edimi olay hakkındaki karar ile başlar ve olayın sonuçlarına sadakat ile devam eder. Ne kadar çok hakikat varsa, o kadar çok biçim ya da özne vardır. Yani özne ancak bir hakikat sürecinin sonucu ortaya çıkabilir. Yalnızca bunu belirtmek eksik olacaktır. Çünkü aynı zamanda bir hakikat süreci de öznenin biçimlendirmesi olmaksızın açığa çıkamaz. Bu ilişki ile Badiou'nun amaçladığı şey hakikatin beliriş sürecini tamamıyla öznel ya da tamamıyla yapısal bir süreç olmaktan çıkarmaktır. Hakikatin özneliği inkâr etmeyen nesnel temellerini ise bir olayın meydana gelmesi ve bu olayın değişik sonuçlarının ortaya çıkması olarak tespit eder. Badiou bu nesnel ya da belirli bir öznenin bağımsız (olayın şansa dayalı olması nedeniyle) ön gereklilikler aracılığıyla görecelilik meselesinden kaçınmaya çalışır. Bir hakikatin ve bir öznenin belirişinin ontolojik ve mantıksal koşullarını nesnel bir biçimde açıklamayı amaçlar. Herhangi bir tarihselliğe ya da özneye bağımlı olmaması anlamında hakikati görelilikten kurtarmış gibi görünüyor. Ancak bu noktada Badiou'ya şu soruyu soruyorum: Geriye ne türden bir hakikat kalmıştır?

Badiou'nun hakikat teorisinde hakikat adlandırılmayan bir parçaya sahip olan bir şeye dönüşür. Bu adlandırılmayan onun evrenselliğinin kaynağıdır ve totalitarizmin en önemli engeli olarak ileri sürülür. Hakikat ancak bu

adlandırılmayan parça aracılığıyla çokluk formunda, tekil ve aynı zamanda sonsuz bir hakikat olarak belirir. Evrensel olduğu ileri sürülür. Ancak bu evrensellik bütünsel olma anlamında değildir, yerel bir evrenselliştir. Hakikat ancak somut bir durumda sonlu bir öznenin (mesela sanat alanında sonlu bir birey olan Sophokles kendi sonlu eserinde sonsuz bir hakikat ile bugün de geçerliliğini koruyan trajedi türünün somut bir örneğini verir) dolayısıyla açığa çıkar. Yani hakikatin evrenselliği onun her şeyi kapsayıcı niteliğinden ya da her şeyi açıklama gücünden kaynaklanmaz. Bir hakikatin evrenselliği doğasındaki erişilemez parçaya dayanır. Bana göre bu Badiou'nun 'gerçek imkânsızdır' fikrinin bir sonucudur. Badiou'nun görecelilik problemine düşmediğini kabul etsek bile, geriye kalan hakikatin ulaşılamaz bir şeye dönüştüğünü görmezden gelemeyiz. Bunun ardından ise şu soruyla baş başa kalırız: Badiou için hakikat nedir ve Badiou hakikatin varlığını kabul eder mi? Benim bu soruya cevabım Badiou felsefesinde hakikatin reddedildiği yönünde olacaktır.

Badiou için bir hakikatin maddi koşulu onun türeyimselliğidir. Bu hakikatin hiçlikten geldiğini söylemek demektir. Bir hakikat ancak kısmen dile getirilebilir ancak bütünüyle dile gelmesi imkânsızdır. Aynı zamanda Badiou için kaynak olarak görünen bu 'hiçlik' bir edilginlik ifade etmez, imkânsız olarak adlandırılır. Ancak eklenmelidir ki bu hiçlik bir duruma aşkın bir hiçlik değildir. Zaten bir olay olaysal bölgede meydana gelir. Olaysal bölge bir duruma üye olan ancak durumun halince kapsanmayan ögenin mekânıdır. Yani bu hiçlik henüz deneyimlenmemiş çokluğa yani tekil ögeye işaret eder. Aslında Badiou durumun halini yapıya özdeş olarak görmez. Olaysal bölge, durumun halince kapsanmamasına rağmen, durum ve durumun halinin bir birleşimi olan yapı içinde açığa çıkar. Mesela burjuva devlette proletarya temsil edilmeyen ögedir. Çünkü devlet proleterleri görmezden gelerek işlemeye devam eder. Fransa'daki göçmen işçiler Fransa devleti ile kurduğu ilişkide kapsanmayan ya da temsil edilmeyen ögedir. Yaşadıkları ya da ikamet ettikleri devletin kurucu

ögesi değillerdir. Devlet mekanizması içinde hiçbir etkiye sahip olmayan ayrıksı öge konumundadır. Tam da bu nedenle Fransa devletinde ortaya çıkabilecek bir hakikatin maddi koşulunu oluştururlar. Aslında görülebileceği gibi bu koşul yapının kendisine içkindir. Dolayısıyla bir hakikat usulü için aşkınsal bir ögenin temel oluşturduğundan bahsetmek Badiou'nun felsefesi açısından imkânsızdır. Badiou bunu bilgi ve hakikat arasında yaptığı ayrımaya dayanarak açıklar.

Ancak tam da bu noktada Badiou'nun felsefesinin materyalizmden başka bir noktaya sürüklenme tehlikesi belirir. Badiou hakikatin yeniliğine vurgu yapmak amacıyla bilgi ve hakikat arasında ayrım yapar. Ona göre bir hakikat ortaya çıkış sürecinin başında bilinemez. Çünkü hakikat belirmeye başladığı durumun gizli parçasıyla yani anormal ya da tekil ögesiyle ya da boşluk noktası ile ilişki içindedir. Ayrıca bir hakikatin bilgisine ulaşmanın imkânsızlığı nedeniyle, hakikat ancak şansa dayalı bir olay anında kendini göstermeye başlayabilir. Öznenin bu başlangıç noktası üzerinde hiçbir etkisi yoktur. Olayın öznenin etkisi olmaksızın ansızın belirişi bir hakikat sürecinin bilinmeyen başlangıç noktasını gösterir. Ayrıca Badiou olayı varlıktan ayırarak, tarihsel olanı ontolojik olandan ayırır. Bir olaydaki değişim noktası ontolojik duruma görelî kuralların reddedilerek kopuş ve yıkım sürecinin başlamasına işaret eder. Aslında durum ve durumun halinin birleşimi olan yapı ontolojik bir konumda yapının statükosuna işaret eder. Şayet statükonun bilgisi bilinebilir değilse, bu reddetme edimi nasıl mümkün olabilir? Badiou için bu reddetme ediminin bir bilgi meselesi olmadığı ileri sürülebilir. Fakat bilgi meselesi değil ise nedir? Yalnızca bir durumun gizli parçasının, ait olduğu dünyanın aşkınsalının etkinliğiyle, aniden bir görüngü konumuna dönüşmesi ve yeniden gözden kaybolmasıdır. Bu ise olumsal ve aniden oluverişi nedeniyle bilgiye konu değildir.

Badiou'nun insanın bu dünyadaki maddi yaşam koşullarını değerlendirme dışı bıraktığı iddia edilebilir. Bu onun hakikat teorisi içinde özne ve hakikat gibi birbirinden ayrı iki figürü doğru bir biçimde birbirine bağlayamadığı anlamına gelir. Önce sonlu özneyi yalnızca biçimsel bir parçası olduğu sonsuz hakikatten ayırır. Ancak bana göre daha sonra bunları başarılı bir biçimde yeniden ilişkilendiremez. *Dünyaların Mantığı* adlı kitabında bu ilişkiyi 'dünya' kategorisiyle kurmaya çalışsa da bu kelime gizemli ya da mistik bir terime dönüşür. Ayrıca özne bir olayın meydana geldiği dünyada bıraktığı iz ve beden arasında konumlandırılır. Aslında her ikisi de olayın sonucudur ve özne bunlarla belirli bir mesafededir. Bunların arasında konumlandırılır ve sonsuz olan ile onun biçimselliği olmanın dışında bir ilişkiye sahip değildir. Bu ilişkisizlik nedeniyle Badiou daha çok mistik olan bir özne kavramını destekler gibi görünüyor. Tıpkı Saint Paul'un İsa'nın yeniden doğuşuna karşı gösterilmesini beklediği bir sadakat çağrısına benzer bir biçimde, Badiou da mistikleştirilmiş olaya yöneltilmiş bir sadakate çağrı yapar. Tam da bu nedenle Badiou'nun özneyi mistik bir biçimlendirmeye dönüştürdüğünü iddia ediyorum.

Badiou aynı zamanda etkin ve edilgin arasındaki ayrımı reddeder. Bu ayrımın gerçeği ve değişimi kavramaya yardımcı olamayacağını ileri sürer. Ona göre yalnızca etkinlik vardır. Badiou için bir karşıtlık vardır ancak bu karşıtlık etkin ve edilgin arasında değil, etkin ve imkânsız olan arasındadır. Bu imkânsız gerçeklikteki gerçekleştirilebilecek olan şeye gönderme yapmaz. Etkin hale gelme ya da gerçekleşme terimleri Badiou açısından anlamsızdır. Çünkü yalnızca etkinlik vardır ve edilgin olma durumundan etkin olma durumuna doğru bir geçiş söz konusu değildir. İmkânsız her değişimin temelidir. Fakat bu terim etkin hale gelen bir edilginliğe gönderme yapmaz. Bu nedenle etkin olma hali üzerindeki bu vurgunun gerçeklikte olup bitenin kavranması konusundaki yeterliliği sorgulanmalıdır.

Badiou bütünsel ilişkisellik yaklaşımını reddettiği için etkin – edilgin ayrımını reddedişi iki şeye neden olabilir: ya kaba materyalizm ya da kaba idealizm. Çünkü kaçınılmaz olarak maddi şey içindeki maddi olmayan yanı ya da maddi olmayan içindeki maddi yanı görmezden gelecektir. Aslında Badiou'nun dünyanın maddi yanı ile ilişki içinde olan maddi olmayan, düşünsel yanı görmezden geldiğini ileri sürmek yanlış olacaktır. Hakikat teorisindeki biçimselleştirmenin bir sonucu olarak, her kavram maddi olanla ilişkisiz düşünsel bir şeye dönüşür. Matematik, politika, praksis ve son olarak da yaşamın kendisi yalnızca bir fikre, yani düşünsel bir şeye dönüşür. Bu nedenle bence Badiou, kendi düşüncesinin aksine, bir materyalist değil kaba bir idealist olmaya daha yakın gibi görünüyor.

Badiou her hakikat usulünün tesadüfi olduğu konusunda ısrar eder. Ayrıca özne tesadüfi tercihlerle durumun halini (politika alanında örnek vermek gerekirse egemen konumda olan herhangi bir mekanizmayı mesela devleti) içinde beliren yeni bir şeyin varlığını kabul etmeye zorlar. Öznenin bu tercihini etkileyecek herhangi bir neden ya da nedensellik yoktur. Ayrıca bir olay önceki meydana gelişlerin birikmiş bir sonucu olarak görülemez. Badiou olan şeyler arasındaki determinist süreklilik problemini aşmaya çalışır. Süreklilik yerine süreksizlik bir durumda yeni şeyin ortaya çıkmasını sağlayan şeydir. Bir olay birdenbire şans eseri ortaya çıkar. Olay sonrası açığa çıkan önerme hakkındaki öznenin kararı tesadüfi ya da koşulsuz karardır. Ancak bu önerme hakkında olumlu karar veren öznenin dışında başka türlü düşünen bireyler de olabilir. Çünkü Badiou olayın karar verilemezliği konusunda ısrarlıdır. Bir olay ortaya çıkar çıkmaz gözden yitmesi nedeniyle karar verilemezdir. Çünkü artık gözden yittiğinden ortaya serdiği önermenin belirli bir doğruluk değeri taşıması imkânsızdır. Bu nedenle, bana göre, olay sonrası açığa çıkan önermenin doğruluk değerinin görelî olduğunu ileri sürmek hiç de yanlış olmayacaktır. Bu önerme farklı öznellik formlarının gözünde farklı doğruluk değerine sahip olabilirler ve bunlar birbiriyle nesnel anlamda karşılaştırılabilir değildir. Karar

kategorisi gibi sadakat kategorisi de bu nedenle nesnel bir geçerliliğe sahip değildir. Sadık özne kimdir? Bence olay sonrası önermenin belirsiz olan doğruluk değeri belirli bir grup insanın uzlaşımına bağlıdır. Bazıları bu bireyin sadık olduğunu ileri sürerken bir diğeri bu bireyin değil diğeri sadık olduğunu ileri sürebilir. Dahası, bir öznenin sadakatının göstergesi olarak görülen edim farklı bireyler için farklı olabilir. Badiou'nun sadakatın ne olduğuna dair öne sürdüğü kıstaslar da başka bir uzlaşım karar örneğidir. Bence bu nedenle Badiou'nun hakikat teorisi görecelilik probleminden kurtulamaz.

Badiou görecelilik probleminden kurtulmak için hakikati gizemli bir kavrama dönüştürür. Önce Freud ve onun ardından Lacan psikanaliz alanında pozitivist özne ve hakikat açıklamalarına bir tepki olarak öznenin kuruluşu ve ediminin rasyonel olmayan yönlerini araştırır. Badiou aynı kaygı ile teorisini oluşturmasına karşın rasyonel olmayan neden vurgusuna katılmaz. Dahası, bir hakikat sürecinin bilinmeyen ya da belirsiz yanını içinde meydana geldiği dünyanın mantıksal ya da anlaşılabilir yanıyla ilişkilendirir. Bu noktada Badiou'nun iki seçeneği vardır. Birincisi, şayet bir dünyanın mantıksal altyapısını ya da kuruluşunu kabul ederse, Badiou'nun felsefesi bir idealizm savunusuna dönüşür. Bu vesileyle bu dünyanın ötesinde ideal bir kontrol mekanizmasının varlığını kabul etmiş olur. İkinci olarak, dünyanın mantıksal yapısını reddederse, hakikatin tüm bileşenlerinin olumsal bir şeye dönüşmesi nedeniyle göreceliliği kabul etmek zorunda kalır. Aslında olumsallık düşüncesine dayanan bir teorisinin doğrudan göreceliliğe düştüğünü söylemek doğru olmaz. Fakat Badiou bir hakikatin ortaya çıkışını öznenin olumsal bir kararına ya da sadakatine bağlar. Karar ve sadakat kavramları ise tamamen semantik kavramlardır, ne oldukları ancak dilsel bir uzlaşım ile gösterilebilir. Böylesi bir hakikat teorisinin görecelilik problemiyle baş edebileceğini ileri sürmek safdillik olacaktır.

Ayrıca, bence Badiou toplumsal değişimi bir dünyanın aşkınsalındaki mantıksal bir değişime ya da yalnızca dilsel bir değişime indirger. Çünkü olay, egemen dilin önceki önermelerinin tutarlı sürekliliğini kesen bir aksiyomatik önerme formunda ortaya çıkar. Aksiyomatik niteliği nedeniyle yeni önermenin doğruluk değeri hakkında karar vermeyi sağlayacak nesnel ölçütler yoktur. Mesela Badiou Fransa’da yaşayan mültecilerin Fransa vatandaşı sayılması gerektiğini savunurken bir başkası pekâlâ ısrarla kendi vatanlarına dönmeleri gerektiğini iddia edebilir. Ve bu iddiasına sadık kalmaya ısrarla devam edebilir. Mesele kimin kendi kararına ve bu kararın sonuçlarına daha uzun süre sadakatle bağlı kalacağı meselesine dönüşür. Her kim sadakatinde daha ısrarcı olursa onun radikal önermesi genel kabul görmüş bir önermeye dönüşebilir. Bu nedenle Badiou kendileri nesnel olarak temellendirilemez fikirler arasında meydana gelen bir çatışma alanını varsaymış gibi görünüyor. Bahsi geçen fikirlerin doğruluk değerini ölmek için ise herhangi bir ölçüt veremiyor. Tek ölçüt soyut bir kavrama dönüştürülmüş olan öznenin kendinde hiçbir belirli değer taşımayan kararı ve kendi süresini yaratan sadakatidir. Bana göre, bu ölçütler tekil bir hakikate Badiou’nun iddia ettiğinin aksine sonsuz olma niteliği kazandıracak ve göreliliğini engelleyecek nesnel bir zemin veremeyecektir.

## APPENDIX C. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

### YAZARIN

Soyadı : YENİSOY ŞAHİN  
Adı : Eylem  
Bölümü : Felsefe

**TEZİN ADI** :A CRITICAL READING OF ALAIN BADIOU:  
RELATIVISM IN BADIOU'S THEORY OF TRUTH

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**