

## CONDITIONAL NOTES ON A NEW *REPUBLIC*

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**ABSTRACT:** We attempt to discern what Badiou's philosophical system provides for thinking of education in a form which separates it from its contemporary representation in the state. These notes oppose to this state form Badiou's declaration that 'the only education is an education by truths'. We pursue this in three sections. First, we will address the significance and function of the term 'conditions'. Secondly we will address Badiou's essay 'Art and Philosophy' from *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, the only essay in fact where Badiou addresses education in a specific manner and in which Badiou discusses the link between art and philosophy in terms of the 'pedagogical theme': A theme, he says, that has been brought to collapse. Thirdly we will attempt to discern what might make up what Badiou refers to as the 'fourth modality' of the link between philosophy and its conditions through a somewhat speculative discussion of the dual 'militant' praxis known in Badiou's work as 'subtraction' and 'forcing'.

**KEYWORDS:** Badiou; Philosophy; Education; Conditions: Forcing; Subject; State

'Could anything show a more shameful lack of [education] than to have so little justice in oneself that one must get it from others, who thus become masters and judges over us?'<sup>1</sup>

'The sole remit for thought is to the school of decision.'<sup>2</sup>

'...whence arises the obstacle to every valid account of the effects of education, since what brought about the results cannot be admitted to in discussing the intention.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. F.M. Cornford, London, Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 95, 405a. Or, in Desmond Lee's translation, 'It is the sign of a bad education if one seeks justice at the hands of others', London, Penguin Books, 1974, p. 168. See also *Apology*, 24b-27b esp. in Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. & intro. Hugh Tredennick, London, Penguin, 1954, pp. 56-59.

2. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham, London, Continuum, 2006, p. 149 (henceforth BE).

3. Jacques Lacan, 'Kant with Sade', in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink with Heloise Fink and Russell Grigg, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, pp. 665/787. First published in English in *October*, trans. James B. Swenson Jr., vol. 51, 1989, pp. 55-75.

Alain Badiou says that what he admires most about Pascal is his effort to ‘invent the modern forms of an ancient conviction, rather than follow the way of the world’ (BE 222).<sup>4</sup> That education *is* good is an ancient conviction. That the good it is needs to be given ‘modern form’, which is to say, something other than a state form is the underlying wager of this paper. We take our direction from Badiou’s axiomatic and singular declaration that ‘the only education is an education *by truths*’.<sup>5</sup> Truths make ‘holes in knowledge’—that encyclopaedia of the state. This encyclopaedia provides the predicative order of judgements such that a multiple ‘finds itself belonging to a set of multiples, that is, to a part’ (BE 328). In other words, to paraphrase from Lacan it is the state which ‘know[s] what you will do’.<sup>6</sup> For Badiou, a truth, constituted as a generic procedure and subject to its event, necessarily entails a type of indifferent and ‘logical revolt’ against the *state* of the situation. Badiou’s claim in regard to an ‘education by truths’ suggests therefore something like an operation of immanent rivalry, ‘within justice’, to an education by the state.<sup>7</sup> Of course, today, at the level of the (state) system, the knotting of the state and education is tighter than ever. This knot binds a complex historicity of ideology, economy, desire and demand. This historicity is itself well worth tracing in light of Badiou’s ‘ethic of truths’ insofar as the state today incorporates and reconfigures many of the radical, emancipatory and authentic demands associated with education since the French Revolution. However, we will not be investigating the particulars of this situation here. Rather, we will attempt to discern what Badiou’s system provides for thinking of education in a form which separates the ancient conviction as to its virtue from its contemporary representation in the state. These notes will, nevertheless, set Badiou’s ‘education by truths’ against the education of the state in the hope of discerning the possibilities for a ‘modern form that does not follow the way of the world’.

We will work through three linked variations on the pedagogical theme. First we will address the significance and function of the term ‘conditions’. Secondly we will address Badiou’s essay ‘Art and Philosophy’ from *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, the only essay in fact where Badiou addresses education in a specific manner,<sup>8</sup> and in which Badiou discusses

4. It is obvious that this says as much about Badiou as Pascal.

5. Alain Badiou, ‘Art and Philosophy’, in *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. Alberto Toscano, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2005, p.13 (henceforth HI).

6. And, ‘to know what your partner will do is not proof of love’. Jacques Lacan. *Seminar XX: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972-1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink New York, W.W. Norton, 1999, p.146, (p.133 in the French). If the state does not love, how then does it educate? One should recall that in articulating the argument that ‘deductive fidelity’ is the ‘equivocal *paradigm* of all fidelity’, Badiou claims that one such example of this is the ‘proofs of love’. See BE, p. 254.

7. Alain Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Politics’, in *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens, London, Continuum Press, 2003, pp. 69-78. Also translated under the same name by Thelma Sowley, *Radical Philosophy* 96, July/August 1999, p. 30 and as ‘Truths and Justice’, in *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker, London, Verso, 2006, pp. 96-106 (henceforth M).

8. In the collection *Conditions*, Badiou does devote a short article to the question ‘*Qu’est-ce qu’une institution philosophique?*’ See *Conditions*, Paris, Seuil, 1992, pp. 83-90. See translation this issue. He discusses it in passing in an interview with Bruno Bosteels published in Gabriel Riera (ed.), *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and its Conditions*, New York, Suny, 2005. And there are vague references in *Logiques des mondes*, Paris, Seuil, 2006, i.e. see the

the link between art and philosophy in terms of the ‘pedagogical theme’: A theme, he says, that has been brought to collapse. Thirdly we will attempt to discern what might make up what Badiou refers to as the ‘fourth modality’ of the link between philosophy and its conditions through a somewhat speculative discussion of the dual ‘militant’ praxis known in Badiou’s work as ‘subtraction’ and ‘forcing’.

### AXIOMATIC CONDITIONS

One of the more well known features of Badiou’s philosophical system is that philosophy does not produce truths itself but ‘has begun’ as a discourse under ‘conditions’.<sup>9</sup> The four conditions are Badiou says, ‘uniform... recognisable from afar, whose relation to thought is relatively invariant. The name of this invariance is clear: it is the name truth’.<sup>10</sup> It is through a tripartite relation with the ‘wholly empty’ yet invariant category of truth that these four truth—or generic—procedures condition philosophy. Philosophy as such, will come to be as the thinking of their compossibility through the categories of being, event and subject. Although this certainly causes some debate we are not concerned in this paper with why he opts for these four procedures alone.<sup>11</sup> Our concern ultimately is only for the ‘modality’ of the relation this term implies between the four procedures, truth and philosophy. This is because Badiou institutes the notion of the configuration of the four conditions—as a *set* of generic procedures—precisely as the condition of the freedom of philosophy.<sup>12</sup> And so the form of the modality of the link, what he names in *Handbook of Inaesthetics* as the ‘pedagogical form’, as that which, suitably reconfigured, prevents philosophy’s suture to, and saturation by, one of these procedures, and yet maintains each as a condition, must be a pedagogy of freedom in some sense.

From the ontology of love to the partitioning proofs of Ramsey cardinals, Mao’s expression ‘one divides into two’ has an axiomatic status in Badiou’s work. Metapolitically speaking, an axiom is that which is thrown up within the antagonism and contingency of a situational sequence. It is that immanent principle which a collective act not so much marches behind as pushes forward—*liberté, égalité, fraternité*—as itself.<sup>13</sup> But, as

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table on p. 87.

9. Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Norman Madarasz, New York, Suny Press, 1999, p.33. Hereafter, MP.

10. Badiou, MP, p. 33.

11. For arguments concerning this issue see Slavoj Žižek. *The Ticklish Subject: the absent centre of political ontology*, U.K, Verso, 2000, esp. Ch 3, ‘The politics of truth, or, Alain Badiou as a reader of St Paul’, pp.127-170. Here, Žižek argues for religion as a condition. As does Simon Critchley in ‘Demanding Approval: On the ethics of Alain Badiou’, *Radical Philosophy* 100, March/April 2000, pp.16-27. Ray Brassier argues Capital itself might ‘think’ and therefore qualify as a condition in, ‘Nihil Unbound: Remarks on the Subtractive Ontology and Thinking Capitalism’, in *Think Again* ed. Peter Hallward London, Continuum, 2004, pp. 50-58. Justin Clemens sees in the ‘letter’ a ‘condition of conditions’ in ‘Letters as the Condition of Conditions for Alain Badiou’, *Communication & Cognition*, Vol. 36, Nr. 1-2, 2003, pp.73-102.

12. Badiou, MP, p. 35.

13. On what has become of these today under conditions of a contemporary Thermidor see, Alain Badiou,

Badiou argues, this equality (the political form of justice) is not objective or part of the putative ends of a state program, but subjective; an expression *in actu* of the equal capacity for thought. He says, it is ‘not what we want or plan but what we declare under fire of the event, here and now as what is and not what should be.’<sup>14</sup> An axiom functions as a declaration in language of the immanent singularity of what *happens* in a situation. It authorizes an operational decision drawn from its conditioning event, which it is the labour of thought to render consistent. Oliver Feltham, deploying the term Badiou himself ‘steals’ from Deleuze, names this operation the ‘disjunctive synthesis’ saying the ‘synthesis’ is what ‘allows such an interruption to endure.’<sup>15</sup> This division, at any stage, is not in the form of a subjective, objective split. It is instead a wholly operative, subjective and situational division, ‘singular and immanent’, and as such, this is what authorizes Badiou’s deployment of Deleuze’s terminology.<sup>16</sup> However, we must insist here that this borrowing of a name is not the same as borrowing that which it names. Although it marks for both a conceptual form for thinking the (non)relation between being and thought, for Badiou it is through the event as (rare) irruption or, surrection, and not as ‘univocal issue’ that this ‘relation’ is form[ed]: events mark ‘absolute beginnings’... ‘and singularities of thought incomparable in their constitutive gestures’; whereas for Deleuze, according to Badiou at least, this ‘non-relation is still thought in relation to the One, which founds it by radically separating the terms involved.’<sup>17</sup> For Badiou ‘disjunctive synthesis’ entails a non-conceptual, operational deployment and as such a procedure of inseparation as enduring fidelity to this immanent division.

This does not mean that philosophy (nor the philosopher) provides resolution or totalization of this division, between the event *and* its consequences, *in the concept* or anywhere else for that matter. Philosophy draws the consequences of this constitutive division in thought, faithfully maintaining the real of the disjunction within the resultant synthesis or consistency, demanded by the subjective creation of the concept—or, the thinking of its thought. This fidelity to Mao’s axiom has consequences all the way through Badiou’s work.<sup>18</sup> Philosophy itself, on his terms, is the consequence or rather, the consequences drawn, of the decisive splitting of philosophy and ontology. The latter declared by Badiou to *be* mathematics. And mathematics provides the model of an

*Le Siècle*, Paris, Seuil, 2005, pp. 145-6. See also, Badiou, ‘What is a Thermidorean’, in *M*, pp. 124-140.

14. Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Politics’, p. 72.

15. Oliver Feltham, ‘And Being and Event and...: Philosophy and its Nominations’, *Polygraph*, no. 17, 2005, p. 37.

16. Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 79.

17. Badiou, *Deleuze*, pp. 90-91 and p. 22 respectively.

18. It is worth noting that in his essay on justice and politics Badiou cites Mao’s dictum from the sixteen point decision: ‘Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement, let them determine by themselves the distinction between what is just and what is not.’ ‘Philosophy and Politics’, p. 29. (*Radical Philosophy* version for this translation). See for the full text Mao Tse-Tung, ‘The sixteen point decision’, Point 4. Appendix to Jean Daubier, *History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, trans. Richard Sever, New York, Vintage Books, 1974, p. 300.

‘infinite thought’ or, a thought capable of thinking infinities.<sup>19</sup>

When Badiou claims that philosophy is subject to conditions we are to hear this term functioning in two ways: It is the generic name for the four procedures as procedures, that is, ‘conditions’ is the nominal form given to mark these procedures in their ‘compossible’ singularity. At the same time these autonomously operating procedures ‘condition’—as in form or shape—that which is or will be the discourse of philosophy. They are the disciplinary operations by which these four procedures act upon the discourse that will be philosophy. And it is thus only within this constituted discourse that the ‘truths’ produced by the four conditions are one-ified or become compossible, or can be thought together: the ontological disjunction ‘synthesized’ through the thinking of their truths in a retroactive syntax which affirms the ‘being *there*’ (or *there are*) of truths. In this sense the conditions prescribe, and absolutely so, the possibilities of a philosophy’s form.<sup>20</sup>

In this way the ‘wholly empty’ category of Truth acquires the tools necessary for it to become operational. Both ‘condition’ and ‘condition.s’, as two instances of the singular (non)relation between a procedure and the philosophy it convokes, name, but again in two ways, this split between the finite *conditions*, the works of the procedures, and the infinite *condition*, the (immanent) idea, or the thought of these works that philosophy comes to think *together*.<sup>21</sup> Philosophy is what will have been conditioned by its conditions. Badiou renders the structure of this effect, which is evidently pedagogical—though not as we might ordinarily understand it—as ‘what a thought declares to be a thought, on condition of which it thinks that which is a thought.’<sup>22</sup>

The singular importance for philosophy of these conditions—the work of the procedures—is that in their various operations they are capable of creating a sequence (of works), a consistent multiple, subject to an event (of its situation), such that it will be possible to say, something new, some truth, has come to be. It is important to remember however, that that which Badiou calls a truth is not incarnate, substantial or adequate by correspondence. In the final section we will elaborate on this further but it is important in light of what a condition is for Badiou to remark that in relation to these ‘truths’ philosophy proceeds ‘in its history’ under these conditions, as the ‘desubstantialization of Truth, which is also the self-liberation of its act.’<sup>23</sup> Thus it is incorrect to say, for ex-

19. Bruno Besana argues that it is in regard to ‘a model’ that Badiou’s thought of the being *and the event* can be most strictly demarcated from Deleuze’s thought of being *as an event*. The argument involves ‘two readings of Plato’ and is beyond this essay. See Bruno Besana, ‘One or Several Events? The Knot Between Event and Subject in the Work of Alain Badiou and Gilles Deleuze’, trans. Justin Clemens, in *Polygraph*, no. 17, pp.245-266. See also Ray Brassier, ‘Badiou’s Materialist Epistemology of Mathematics’, *Angelaki*, vol. 10, no. 2, August, 2005.

20. On the importance of this point see Justin Clemens, ‘Had We But Worlds Enough, and Time, this Absolute, Philosopher...’ in this issue.

21. Alain Badiou, ‘Definition of Philosophy’, in MP, p. 141.

22. Alain Badiou, ‘The Political as a Procedure of Truth’, trans. Barbara P. Faulks, *lacanian ink* 19, Fall 2001, p.81 and in M, as ‘Politics as a Truth Procedure’, pp. 141-152.

23. Badiou, ‘Définition de la philosophie’ in *Conditions*, p.82. I cite the original because I have modified the English translation from ‘Definition of Philosophy’, p.144.

ample, a revolution *is* True or a poem *is* an event or to conflate the two. These may mark or inscribe a finite point in a process of truth but the process itself can never be totalized. A process does not belong to being as being but is precisely a subtraction from being that forces the logic of its appearing. Its trajectory cannot be circumscribed by any predicative or finite expression because it is founded in the void, and as such is without representation and therefore without knowledge in the state. If this trajectory could be discerned or, in other words, predicated by a curricular process, it would merely belong to the existing regime of knowledge. Its process would belong to the order of what was readily verifiable.

Thus these four procedures, art, mathematics, politics and love, are conditions for philosophy precisely because of their ‘extraordinary’ ability to formalize by the processes unique to their functioning the ‘truth(s)’ of the situation in which they operate; truths that are singular to their field, irreducible to any other and immanent to the situation in which these procedures appear. That is, the truths produced are singular to the work and thought of the procedure itself. There is no external surveillance in this regard and at the same time, nor does any single procedure organize the whole of truth within itself. No procedure can say that it alone constitutes all that Truth is on pain of ‘disaster’.<sup>24</sup> Thus, these procedures provide the ‘conditions’ for philosophy by their singular and immanent production of truths. In the dictionary definition wholly appropriate here, these conditions are ‘an indispensable requirement’. At the same time, in the modality of their operation, these procedures are a qualification, a limit and a restriction. They are a discipline. Here, ‘condition’ takes on its more directly pedagogical sense of forming, shaping (*éduquer*), even prescribing. What they prescribe is precisely the form and shape of the trajectory of the enquiries made in the production of the generic, and by which the thought produced within this procedure is seized under the name of philosophy. We can get a sense of how this works if we think of it in the manner in which a coach is said to ‘condition’ an athlete. In effect without the condition-*ing* the ‘athlete’ would not, as the athletic subject, ‘have begun’.

It is worth looking at an example here of how a condition ‘works’. To do this I will move quickly across Badiou’s description of the importance of the mathematical conditioning of philosophy initiated by the Platonic decision to enquire into the consequences of the ‘mathematical rupture’. As one move in what amounts to a series of moves against the Heideggerian influence on contemporary thought, Badiou claims that philosophy begins with Plato. This beginning is due to the Platonic attention to mathematics as a form of thought which, as atemporal and ideal constitutes a break with doxa.<sup>25</sup> This break is both once and for all, in the sense that mathematics *is* a break with doxa, and discontinuous in the sense that it will continue to be that thought which will have to

24. Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An essay on the understanding of evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, London, Verso, 2000, p. 71.

25. Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Mathematics’, in *Theoretical Writings*, ed. and trans. Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano, London, Continuum Books, 2004, p. 24.

break with doxa again and again.<sup>26</sup> Certainly, time and again in Plato's work Socrates establishes as his starting point that there in fact is such a break with doxa. That is, that doxa, established circulating knowledge, already includes within its delimitations of knowledge a site 'at the edge of the void' which it represents as nothing. For Plato/Socrates it is this nothing, this knowledge of *nothing* which can be thought under the condition of mathematics. Such a thought will be a break with knowledge. As such, void to knowledge, it founds a thought whose intelligibility owes nothing to the regime of already existing knowledge. This intelligibility exists as that which will have been established. Effectively, it is established that mathematics is a form of thought, one that thinks that which is intelligible against the perceptually immediate.<sup>27</sup> This break, with what is for Badiou effectively opinion—mathematically speaking there are no opinions—demands a further break or intervention. This is because this first break is obscure insofar as its consequences for thought are concerned. What does it mean that mathematics proceeds as it does? In one sense this is perfectly amenable to doxa, knowledge or the state, insofar as mathematics proceeds to follow a trajectory whose discoveries remain within mathematics. Such discoveries remain, so Badiou says, 'obscure and forced' in the sense that mathematics is not free to break with opinion, or not, but working from hypothesis and making use of 'axioms it cannot legitimate' it is thus forced 'under constraint of its own deductive chains [...] themselves dependent upon a fixed point', axiomatically or prescriptively stipulated, to rupture with opinion. Thus it is this dual constraint of being forced and obscure that at once makes mathematics an essential thought due to its singular ability to affect the entirely necessary break with opinion, to instate discontinuity into thought, *and* makes necessary a second break. And this precisely because the significance of this break must itself be thought. What consequences does the existence of a form of thought which breaks with doxa, with the knowledge that repeats as the way of knowing, that establishes discontinuity within thought, have for the freedom of thought? Philosophy must begin here. It is the discourse of the second break. As such the dialectic (in Plato) is the procedure by which this deductively present discontinuity is placed within thought. Its obscurity is (or must be) rendered consistent outside itself. But this is not to be understood in the form of a subsumption; rather, in Badiou's words 'mathematics amounts to an in between (*metaxu*) of thinking as such: that it intimates a gap which lies even beyond the break with opinion'.<sup>28</sup> What Badiou is moving toward here is the claim that mathematics is ontology. What he wants to establish and precisely what links the notion of conditions and the notion of the 'pedagogical theme' is that mathematics is that which presents nothing. This nothing is the gap between knowledge as opinion or doxa and being. Being, being precisely what knowledge, in its sophistic state sense, claims to be knowledge of. What Badiou insists on and what he finds so essential in the thought of Plato for example, is that Plato himself, in a sense forced by his

26. Badiou, 'Philosophy and Mathematics', p. 29.

27. Badiou, 'Platonism and Mathematical Ontology', *Theoretical Writings*, p. 50. Whether mathematics 'thinks' is a thorny issue (for some) still.

28. Badiou, 'Philosophy and Mathematics', p. 31.

fidelity to mathematics, elaborates a discourse named philosophy which ‘establishe[s] the illumination of the continuous at the moment of discontinuity’. And he does so precisely at that point where mathematics has to offer only its ‘blind, stubborn inability to propose anything other than the intelligible and the break.’<sup>29</sup> Philosophy as a particular conditioned operation comes to elaborate within a space of freedom this truth which is the demonstrated break with opinion. Philosophy thinks the consequences of a thought that is other than opinion (or in Badiou’s terms, knowledge) on condition of the conditioned break with that knowledge. We have no room here to do so but as is well known each of Badiou’s four conditions can be similarly explicated as to their particular and irreducible role in conditioning philosophy; which is to say, of establishing the effect of an encounter as a transformation.

So ‘condition’, or to condition, one could almost say belongs to the register of the *future anterior* in that to argue that the conditions as we have described them also condition philosophy is, in a way, to subject philosophy to an exam as to its performance regarding what it does with these truths produced by the four procedures.<sup>30</sup> This might suggest, to take up the terminology of a thesis developed by Bruno Bosteels, that we are dealing with a dialectical materialism, of a sort (perhaps, indeed, a ‘materialist dialectic), in which neither the finite (subject) nor the infinite (of the procedure it supports) provide the substance of which the other is ‘merely’ the idea.<sup>31</sup> Such a suggestion, on the one hand, would then invert what Badiou calls the didactic schema, whereby it is philosophy that authorizes the truths of art and, on the other, it would authorize a step beyond what he calls the romantic schema whereby philosophy drags along in the wake of art (or logic) as a fawning servant come journalist in thrall to art’s immanent ability to reveal absolute truth.<sup>32</sup> We now turn to the artistic condition.

## ART, PHILOSOPHY AND THE PEDAGOGICAL THEME

For Badiou ultimately, it is under the condition that *there are truths* that philosophy functions (HI 15). The pedagogical theme he suggests is that which enables the encounter between these truths that are produced within the process of these conditions, and the thought which thinks them. It is in the essay ‘Art and Philosophy’ that Badiou makes several explicit claims regarding education. As stated above, to my knowledge, this is the

29. Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Mathematics’, p. 32.

30. Badiou, ‘A Philosophical Task: To Be Contemporaries of Pessoa’, in HI, p. 37.

31. Bruno Bosteels, ‘Alain Badiou’s Theory of the Subject: The Recommencement of Dialectical Materialism’, Part 1. *Pli* 12, 2001, pp.200-229 and Part 2, *Pli* 13, 2002, pp.173-208.

32. Badiou, HI, p.5. In regard to mathematics Badiou names the three schemata which organize the link between philosophy and mathematics, the *ontological*, the *epistemological*, and the *critical*. There is some scope for mapping the first three schemata from the realm of art and philosophy onto the latter from mathematics and philosophy but such an attempt must proceed with caution. And in any case Romanticism is for Badiou the central concern, as for him it is our subjection to Romanticism post-Hegel that constitutes the ‘time of our time’. See, ‘Philosophy and Mathematics: Infinity and the end of Romanticism’, *Theoretical Writings*, p.22.



only text in which Badiou addresses education qua education. Indeed the term is (symptomatically?) absent from his work. So for anyone looking for some sort of master methodology or hoping to draw some instances from these claims that might be adapted to the contemporary scene of a state education, the following will (hopefully) be singularly unhelpful. What the several claims in this essay signify is an inherent pedagogical operation, operating within Badiou's project for philosophy which teaches the immanent power of what is (and is) not, as against the ruthless repetition of what must be. Such is the project of all philosophy, Badiou contends, which is nothing less than discerning 'the possible modalities of a single statement: "The Same is at once thinking and being"'.<sup>33</sup> Obviously the interconnection between pedagogy and philosophy is embedded in the tradition of the discipline itself. However, in the same way that Badiou determines one aspect of the relation between art and philosophy to have been characterized, the relation between education and the state has itself been one determined by a form of philo-sophistical surveillance. Despite the plaintive cries lamenting the state's attack on the academy, the university persists in being that institution which sets and determines the standard and form of the curriculum for the final years of high-school, as for itself.<sup>34</sup> It also, at the behest of and as an immanent function of the state, persists in being that nexus of knowledge and training which reigns down upon both the secondary and the primary schools, upon itself, and upon the social realm in general its methods, its economic, social, cultural and psychological insights (such as they are) and its graduates. All this and so much more, operate as the education system. And today of course, as Althusser and Lenin before him (and many others in various less radical ways) have pointed out, this is inextricably linked to the capitalist form of the state.<sup>35</sup> Concerned as we are

33. Badiou, *Deleuze*, p.79. The statement is of course from Parmenides. See translator's note (p.137; note 1) for an explanation of this translation.

34. Consider that the highest degree available in any discipline is still called Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). It is thus that we here conflate the university, as an institution of the state and philosophy as the (master) discourse of this institution. Apologies to Lacan(ians) and, of course, to Plato(nists).

35. 'The revolution that the bourgeois class has brought into the conception of law, and hence into the function of the state, consists especially in the will to conform (hence ethnicity of the law and of the state). The previous ruling classes were essentially conservative in the sense that they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own, i.e. to enlarge their class sphere 'technically' and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed state. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. The entire function of the state has been transformed: the state has become an "educator"'. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, New York, International Publishers, 1971, p. 260. One should note here that in the U.K. (as elsewhere) prior to the installation of the state-school many worker groups maintained a distance from this 'good' on offer by the state. Prophetically, or rather because they were very well aware of their relation to the state, they were concerned that it was merely a vehicle for further co-optation. Of course it is neither *wholly* one nor the other. Precisely this is Badiou's reason for a move away from a traditional dialectics. This because it is in the sphere of representation that the void is seen to be included in the situation. This void, what immanently escapes significant representation, is the foundation for the new. One must be careful here though to not slip into liberalism which happily grants that in and through 'education for all' in its state sense, new relations emerge in the social. Liberalism forecloses the void precisely under operations of

with an education which serves as a modality of a procedure of truth, a modality subject to the encounter of being and thought, then we are engaged with Badiou in thinking the thought *that is*, against such surveillance, and is ‘nothing other than the desire to finish with the exorbitant excess of the state.’<sup>36</sup>

In the essay ‘Art and Philosophy’ which serves to introduce a ‘series of variations’ on the theme *Inaesthetics*,<sup>37</sup> Badiou distinguishes three primary schemata which he maintains have governed the thinking of the modality of the link between art and philosophy. He links these schemata to what he calls the three ‘massive tendencies of thought’ in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century these tendencies have become saturated by particular schemata which are in themselves ‘out of time’ due to the fact that they themselves are not the product of these 20<sup>th</sup> century tendencies. As such, in regard to the ‘thinking of art’ Marxism (dialectical materialism) is didactic, hermeneutics (after Heidegger) is romantic, and psychoanalysis (in relation to Art, vis-a-vis Aristotle) is classical (HI 5). Each ‘massive tendency of thought’ is thus saturated by being deployed in the form of a particular schema that either utilized or identified with them.<sup>38</sup> Badiou contends that the thinking of the relation between art and philosophy has thus become saturated by the predominance of one of these three tendencies or, by a ‘*simultaneously conservative and eclectic*’ combination thereof (HI 5 emphasis added).<sup>39</sup> Badiou argues that these tendencies saturated by their schemata are thus incapable of offering anything new in regards to thinking (the thinking of) art.

Along with the production of a disentanglement between art and philosophy, something he restates in different ways in regard to philosophy and all its ‘conditions’<sup>40</sup>, this saturation has also produced ‘the pure and simple collapse of what had circulated between them; the pedagogical theme’ (HI 7). The difficulty assumed in this essay, ‘Art and Philosophy’—as in many others—is to account for the dis-relation that this link (a link he determines to ‘re-found’),<sup>41</sup> signifies ‘between’ two entirely distinct, yet intimately

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reform. Reform or reaction, if you like, is a veil of the void. It incorporates any and all interruptions within itself as its virtue. In liberalism the individual under education may change his place in the social relation; the social relations themselves are maintained by just this move. See Mao Tse-Tung, *Combat Liberalism*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1954.

36. Badiou, BE, p. 282. See also Peter Hallward, ‘Generic Sovereignty’, *Angelaki*, Vol 3, 1998, p.92.

37. Which he describes thus; ‘By inaesthetics I understand a relation of philosophy to art that, maintaining that art is itself a producer of truths, makes no claim to turn art into an object for philosophy. Against aesthetic speculation, inaesthetics describes the strictly intraphilosophical effects produced by the independent existence of some works of art’. Badiou, HI

38. See, on these 20<sup>th</sup> Century tendencies, or ‘passion(s) for the real’, Badiou’s *Le Siècle*.

39. ‘Though it is considered to be the century [20<sup>th</sup>] of endings, breaks and catastrophes, when it comes to the link that concerns us here, I see it instead as a century that was simultaneously conservative and eclectic’, HI, p. 5.

40. See for example Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Mathematics: Infinity and the End of Romanticism’, in *Theoretical Writings*, esp. pp. 21-22.

41. See Badiou, HI, where this link has ‘collapsed’ and must therefore also be re-founded in the fourth modality; also, (cf) MP, where this re-founding is more accurately a return [of philosophy] {to} itself. See, ‘The Return of Philosophy to *Itself*’, pp. 113-138.

(non)related operations of thought. In other words, what is the method, in reality the non-method produced within the singular, situational praxis of these four ‘conditions’?<sup>42</sup> Badiou proposes a ‘new schema, a fourth modality of [this] link’, thus proposing a formal trajectory, between art and philosophy (HI 8). And one which at the same time ‘subverts’ the sophistic ‘subterfuge’ that an artistic apprenticeship is the way to an education (HI 1).

While it is not the place of this essay to provide a critique of the veracity of Badiou’s diagnoses of those ‘schemata’ and their attendant saturation of the ‘massive tendencies’ (schemata, by the way, that can definitely be found to be operating ‘conservatively and eclectically’ (HI 5)<sup>43</sup> within the theory, policy and practice of the contemporary education system), nevertheless it is necessary to follow closely the trajectory of Badiou’s diagnoses because it is against the ‘saturation’ of these schemata that he introduces his (un-explicated) and quite extraordinary notion that ‘the only education is an education by truths’ (HI 14). What we will do is explore the ‘pedagogy of conditions’ in Badiou’s essay in order to understand how that which Badiou proposes as a ‘fourth modality’ of the pedagogical link between art and philosophy (HI 11), or of the re-entanglement of mathematics and philosophy,<sup>44</sup> or the subjective role of justice that philosophy will come to seize from politics<sup>45</sup> or the exact condition of the ‘immanent two’ that constitutes philosophy as a thought of love,<sup>46</sup> might offer a return of the pedagogical theme to itself, as an instance of overcoming its ‘collapse’ (HI 7).

42. It is interesting on this point to compare with Badiou what Jacques Rancière describes as the ‘non-method’ of intellectual emancipation ‘stumbled’ upon by Joseph Jacotot, whereby one may ‘teach what one doesn’t know’. This method, as with Badiou, begins with an axiomatic statement. Rancière declares an ‘equality of intelligence’. Thus: ‘Let’s affirm then that universal teaching *will not take*, it will not be established in society. But *it will not perish* because it is the natural method of the human mind, that of all people who look for their path themselves. What the disciples can do is to announce to all individuals, to all mothers and fathers, the way to teach what one doesn’t know on the principle of the equality of intelligence’. See Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross, Stanford University Press 1991, p.105. cf. Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Politics’, p.71. ‘What does equality mean? Equality means that the political actor is represented under the sole sign of his specifically human capacity...[t]his specifically human capacity is precisely thought, and thought is nothing other than that by which the path of a truth seizes and traverses the human animal’.

43. This at once ‘conservative and eclectic’ tendency is ruthlessly at work in the theoretico-policy work of the contemporary state system—at least here in Australia and especially noticeable within the ‘New Basics’ regime of Education QLD. It is also very to the fore in educational theory. This summary paragraph is all too exemplary: ‘Each child, as a unique human being, can be enlarged and enlivened in the inclusive, enactive environment of the transactional curriculum. In such classrooms the lived experience of students and teacher co-exist, learning and knowledge co-emerge, the multiplicity of curricula converge, nature and nurture co-originate as product and process; and, the cognitive and non-cognitive learning of each as Other are brought forth through pedagogical love into a new world of knowledge, acceptance and understanding. Truly, in such classroom settings... “the light gets in”, and heart in becomes heart of teaching’. Blaine E. Hatt, (Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education) ‘Heart In is Heart Of Teaching’, in (funnily enough) *Eclectica*, December, 2000, <http://www.eclectica.ca/issues/2002/4/hatt.asp>

44. Badiou, ‘Mathematics and Philosophy’, p. 37.

45. Badiou, ‘Philosophy and Politics’, p. 71.

46. Alain Badiou, ‘The Scene of the Two’, trans. Barbara P. Fulks, *Lacanian Ink*, no. 21, 2003, p. 55.

Against the thesis that art is the being-there of truth, Badiou contends that the didactic schema treats art as mimesis. This, Badiou insists, accounts for art's singularity as a process (HI 9). Art functions as the charm of a truth. Its power, derived from its immediacy, consists in charming us away from the necessary 'dialectical labour' of reasoned argument that leads to principle (HI 2). Art is imitation, in regard to a certain effect of a truth extrinsic to art as a process. Art is true only insofar as it is a verifiable re-presentation of the Truth. This capitalized, substantialized Truth properly belongs to the regime of philosophy or at least to its police function. And as such truth is not a procedure immanent to art. In this sense there is no art other than what philosophy authorizes. As Badiou puts it, '[t]his position upholds a didactics of the senses whose aim cannot be abandoned to immanence. The norm of art must be education; the norm of education is philosophy' (HI 3). Here philosophy operates much as master to a pupil, verifying the truth of a work or, it's the same thing, its *good*, by the effect it has in its display (HI 3). In this schema, philosophy 'graduates' a work as art, subject to it effectively achieving a response in the spectator (the marker?) that the master, in accordance with the master's knowledge of the Truth, can verify as correct. The process of the work itself achieves only, and at best, the status of (the act of) re-presentation. Didacticism as a pedagogy places all power in the hands of the master and the master's knowledge. As Badiou argues in discussing the power of Brecht's didactic art, 'the philosopher is in charge of the latent supposition of a dialectical truth' (HI 6). It becomes essentially a question of sovereignty; a sovereignty retained by knowledge as truth over the mimesis achieved by mere practice; or, in another register; the intellectual over the manual. As we see in *The Republic* (at the point where it over-reaches itself—perhaps—in its desire to have done with 'sophistry') a strict protocol of surveillance is maintained between these two forms. An alienation is activated as all that proceeds in the city as the work of the day to day is only a semblance (or a semblance of a semblance) of the state. The truth of the state remains extrinsic to the functioning state. The 'obvious' gap opened by the 'protocol' of surveillance between the quotidian, working city-state and the sovereign truth of the state affirms the didactic demand of the 'extrinsic objectivity of the true' (HI 6).

Romanticism, essentially in total opposition to the educative surveillance of this schema, understands truth to be that of which art alone is capable. In Badiou's words regarding this schema, 'Philosophy might very well be the withdrawn and impenetrable Father—art is the suffering Son who saves and redeems' (HI 6) The relation between art and truth here is indeed one of immanence. The romantic schema proposes an education by its complex of pure subjective example. It is an example of a practice which in itself is one of truth absolutely, because it 'teaches of the power of infinity held within the tormented cohesion of a form' (HI 9). Thus, only what the artist unveils of the infinite through the finitude of the work is True. Philosophy (as hermeneutics) bears this as the fundamental ground of its relation to art. Badiou says, 'it is *the same truth that circulates between them*' (emphasis in original). The philosopher thinker is held in thrall to the artist poet for it is the poet alone who 'preserve[s], not Being itself ...but the *question* of Being' (MP 50). Pedagogically speaking, romanticism, under this analysis, has something in

common with pastoralism as its concerns are with the shepherding of that authenticity which (it supposes) inhabits the individual qua subject and which through the process invoked as its process alone, this Truth of the individual (literally, *of the individual*) might come to be revealed as the very speaking of Being. In this way the thinker (or teacher) is merely the reversal of the artist/poet/(true) subject, as they both approach the same truth. The truth reveals itself as Janus-like. Janus as shepherd of salvation from, *pace* Heidegger, the ‘annihilation that Being, in the terminal technical figure of its destiny, has as its being to *will*’ and pastorally, from the evil wrought by a certain ignorance (of God and all his shadows)<sup>47</sup> and towards a ‘resacralisation...’ (MP 52). Contrary to Mao’s dictum the two is here revealed as an effect of the one which is not at all a mere obverse of ‘one divides into two.’<sup>48</sup> It is at this point that romanticism, despite itself, might be implicated in terms of the state. Ideologically—and therefore educationally—speaking, to locate the very agency that provides the ballast of the subject within each individual uniquely, serves at the same time to structure the alienation of one subject from another as an inherent law of Being, or nature. Thus the extrinsic, self-authorized truth of the state as the site of freedom is exhibited precisely through the authentic expression of alienation as effect. That is, the expression of this romantic alienation as the mark of the truth of being is not at all, at least under contemporary democratic state ideology, that of a radical separation but is precisely the kind of subjectivity authorized by that very state and (re)produced in its institutions.<sup>49</sup>

The third schema, classicism, removes the question of truth from art altogether. Badiou proposes that Aristotle employed this schema to defuse, albeit in an unsatisfactory manner, the quarrel between art and philosophy, As Badiou puts it, fusing Lacan and

47. See, Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and the State,’ In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, New York, Monthly Review Press, 200, where he says education as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus is ‘as natural indispensable-useful and even beneficial to our contemporaries as the church was... for our ancestors a few centuries ago,’ p.106.

48. Alain Badiou, ‘One Divides into Two,’ trans. Alberto Toscano <http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/firmfi.htm>. In this essay, discussing revolutionary China in the 1960’s, Badiou articulates the conflict of these two positions. The latter is considered leftist because its partisans hold that, from the perspective of the revolution, there is no view of the one as synthesis in sight. So it is a maxim of division and struggle, of, if you like, continuing to draw the consequences of a central antagonism. The former, in this essay ‘two fuses into one’ is considered rightist, reactionary, a plea for a return to the ‘old one under cover of syntheses’. It is a conflict that occurs in a different form, to give it a nominal mark, between Lenin and Kautsky. In both cases the reactionary form is the mark of a retreat, a throwing up of one’s hands, a declaring of ‘only a God can save us now’. This essay is translated from *Le Siècle*, Ch 6.

49. Badiou, BE, pp.164-5. First published in English as ‘Hegel,’ trans. Marcus Coelen & Sam Gillespie *Umbr(a)*, no. 1, 1996, p. 30. Badiou defines ‘bad infinity’ as the ‘repetition of the alternative between one and another under the law of “ought to be”’. See also Alain Badiou, ‘A speculative disquisition,’ in *Meta-politics*, p.78. First published in English as ‘Highly Speculative Reasoning on the Concept of Democracy,’ trans. Jorge Jauregui in *lacanian ink*, No. 16, 2001, at [www.lacan.com](http://www.lacan.com) p.1. ‘Actually the word “democracy” is inferred from what I term “authoritarian opinion.” It is somehow prohibited not to be a democrat. Accordingly, it furthers that the human kind longs for democracy, and all subjectivity suspected of not being democratic is deemed pathological. We suggest that with certain grammatical changes in place the term ‘education’ can take the place of ‘democracy’ in these sentences and be understood in much the same way.

Aristotle, the classical schema ‘*dehystericalizes art*’ (HI 6). It declares art innocent of either hysterically submitting its always already there-ness to the master’s surveillance or of incarnating, in the simultaneity of the declaration and its act, the Truth—self-identity as profound alienation. Instead under Aristotle’s classical prescription, which a certain ‘applied *psychoanalysis*’ (HI 7) carries into the contemporary situation, art is subordinated not to knowledge, but to its performance of an ethical function of therapy. It provides a space of ‘catharsis’ whereby art is that which ‘makes it so that the object of desire which is beyond symbolisation, can subtractively emerge at the very peak of an act of symbolisation’ (HI 7). It provokes an affirmative, captivating and ultimately therapeutic effectiveness upon the passions. This effect is rendered upon the passions through a process of ‘liking’, or *verisimilitude*, in which the work of art within the regime of semblance provides that likeness which ‘calls to mind’ *what is true* and arranges an identification which is always ex-centred and yet at the same time does not command the determination of the work itself (HI 4). Or, in more psychoanalytic language, according to Badiou it ‘links up to a transference because it exhibits, in a singular and contorted configuration, the blockage of the symbolic by the Real, the extimacy of the *objet petit a* (the cause of desire) to the Other (the treasure of the symbolic)’ (HI 7). The passions are relieved, desire is pacified, merely having ‘imagined’ this ex-centred truth (or, *objet petit a*) through the work of art.<sup>50</sup> Such a work, of itself, does not aim at this Truth but renders its likeness

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50. It is interesting to note here what Lacan himself said about desire in the context of state educators. In Seminar VII he says that desire—that desire one should never give up on—has been ‘domesticated by educators’ and ‘the academies’, he says, ‘betray it’. If we recall Badiou’s claim that ‘a thought is nothing other than the desire to have done with the exorbitant excesses of the state’, we come across a suggestive link between thought and desire. Further, Lacan says, and Alain Badiou takes this up, ‘what I call “giving ground relative to one’s desire” is always accompanied in the destiny of the subject by some betrayal’. Lacan goes on to say that either the subject betrays himself in some way or that someone with whom he is involved betrays that to which they were jointly committed and this commitment is to some good. This betrayal sends the subject back to the service of goods but he is forever out of joint there. So my contention is overall that education functions today as a betrayal. What does it betray? It betrays the good. That it betrays some good rather than any individual in particular is both what allows this process of betrayal to be ‘tolerated’ as Lacan says, (and one should hear this word especially in its contemporary context) and also illustrates the essential disinterest of the state in individuals as such. This good, as Lacan sees it, is that which ‘serves to pay the price for access to desire’ and desire is, he says, a ‘desire for both what we are and what we are not’. Betrayal thereby is an act, rather a process that forecloses the possibility which inheres in the desire for the ‘what we are not’. Surely that desire or rather that we are desiring, is precisely that aspect of being which sustains that side of the subjective disjunction that we, at any given time are not, that which in fact we ‘will have been’. This desire then is like a wager on the future, or on the very being of an encounter; a future other than that which it has always already been. State education works its magic on the ‘what we always already are’ —the animal with interests inscribed in the signifying chain, interests expressed materially by our activities within the service of goods. How does a state education function in this way? Precisely because it prescribes, through its errant power to deploy its knowledge, ‘what we will do’ and what we *will do* subject to its demand is enter some-how, some-way—with a school certificate or with a PhD—into the service of goods. And the more we enter into it as Lacan says, the more it demands. Thus what this demand must prevent is ‘...the least surge of desire’. See Jacques Lacan, *Seminar VII The Ethics of Psychoanalyses*, Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.), trans. Dennis Porter, London, W.W. Norton, 1997, pp. 311-325. One should also juxtapose here Marx’s analysis of the July days in his 18<sup>th</sup> *Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where he says something remarkably

‘constrain[able] within the imaginary’, an effect recognizable by the ‘catharsis’ achieved by the spectator. ‘Art’, as Badiou says in relation to the classical schema, ‘captures desire and shapes [*éduque*] its transference by proposing a semblance of its object’ (HI 5). Such a state of affairs signals for Badiou, for whom truth and thought are intimately identified, that art, innocent of truth is therefore not a form of thought. It is, he says, little more than a ‘public service’ (HI 5). Under the rule of patronage in the absolutist state so under the rule of ‘arts councils’ then in contemporary capitalist bureaucracy (or democracy), the therapy or, ethical catharsis that art will render must first be approved before any funding is forthcoming. To Badiou, the state, in relation to the thinking of art, is ‘essentially’ classical (HI 5).<sup>51</sup>

As I have suggested an effect issues in the contemporary state of these three schema under the saturation of these tendencies.<sup>52</sup> So, to reiterate and reduce: The didactic schema operates a pedagogy of surveillance, the romantic, a pedagogy of authentic identity as alienation, and the classical, a pedagogy of public service or state ethics. Thus, we can say, subtracting from Badiou’s otherwise occupied assessment, that surveillance, identity, and ethics make up, the pedagogical forms inherent to the ‘saturated’ 20th century. According to Badiou, what these schemata have in common is the negative fact that all three propose a modality of this relation that we ‘must rid ourselves of’ (HI 7). For Badiou, this commonality is constituted by the fact that none of these schemata operate a pedagogical form that is both singular and immanent. It is because of this that they have offered nothing new. Concerned as we are with this link, with the ‘pedagogical theme’, we must insist on two points: One, that effectively the reduction of these three schema through their negative commonality allows us to claim that what has effected this collapse as its own, is a ‘state’ pedagogy. Second, that in regard to this state pedagogy it becomes possible to say that this collapse is a functional collapse.<sup>53</sup> The pedagogical theme under the saturation of the state schema functions as a collapse that at the same time maintains an impasse. The operational function here is nothing other than the perpetuation of the state or, the knowledge of the state—which in Badiou’s words is the ‘profit of statification, calculable interest and placement’.<sup>54</sup> And the impasse,

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similar in form regarding the betrayal of the proletariat by the bourgeois-democratic party.

51. ‘[E]xcept for the socialist states which were “rather didactic”’, HI, p.5

52. I have shown elsewhere how actual policy prescription from the state in regard to the everyday functioning of education can be seen to operate under the injunction of similar schemata; whereby it operates a series of surveillance, alienation and an ethics thoroughly conducive to the perpetuation of the state form. All of these are shown to be ‘without truth’ in Badiou’s sense. See my ‘The Pedagogical Theme: Alain Badiou and an Eventless Education’, *anti-THESIS*, vol 16, 2006, pp. 129-147.

53. It is instructive to compare this tripartite schema with Badiou’s own in ‘What is a Thermidorean’, where he analyses that which is constitutive of a sequence of Thermidor. Such a sequence is objective in its conception of the country, conservative in its conception of law and obsessed with security. Thus a triple alliance -objectivism, status quo and security. Under Thermidor—and Badiou is certainly explicit that Thermidor is now—a disarticulation is active. What it does is render a political sequence ‘unintelligible’. It produces the unthinkable. This is what we claim a ‘state’ education involves. See, Badiou, M, p. 129.

54. Badiou, M, p. 136. For example, a pervasive slogan of education in Australia—one that enlists a wide and stupefying consensus—is that it functions to make one ‘job-ready’ or employ-able. One should above

as the effect of this operation, functions to preclude a subject from effecting the extent of its enquiries which is to say, ‘a truth from coming to be’.

Under the condition of singularity (irreducible taking place of truth) and immanence (whereby the condition is ‘rigorously co-extensive with the truth that it generates’), the ‘pedagogical theme’ is granted a specific task within the infinite procedure of a truth. It must be that which ‘arrange[s] the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them’ (HI 9).<sup>55</sup> Lest the philosophical act—the thoughtful composition of these disparate truths—be ‘nothing but an academic quibble’, there must ‘be truths’. ‘[To] make truths manifest... [is] to distinguish truths from opinion’. To decide therefore that there is ‘something besides opinion’ or, as Badiou ‘provocatively’ puts it, ‘something besides our “democracies”’ (HI 15). On Badiou’s terms, education is that which makes the necessary arrangements for the manifestation of truths which are not opinions and which signify therefore the possibility for some other, new (political etc.) configuration. In fact using Badiou’s analysis it is not going to far to claim that as our democracies are manifestations of the organized rule of opinion then the state system of education for which our democracies are responsible is without truth, without thought, and thus cannot operate other than as either ‘oppressive or perverted’ or indeed as both (HI 9).<sup>56</sup>

What is significant concerning an education which arranges the forms of knowledge in a way that can make truths appear therein is that this education can have no predication *in* those forms of knowledge. The process *is* immanent to the situation and it does proceed to work through the knowledge of the situation but that knowledge qua knowledge of the state (encyclopaedia) can have no determinative role over what is in essence a process of *fidelity to what happens* and not to *what is*. And this, as we know, because knowledge is a result; and as such, it never *encounters* anything. Knowledge is not that which is subject to the encounter but such an encounter is the very presupposition whose conditions of possibility it works to foreclose (BE 395).<sup>57</sup> This is why education, in Badiou’s sense, is a (permanent?) revolutionary process, an auto (but not individu-

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all *know* or rather, *be*, what the bosses want. Thus the good of education equates nicely with the ‘profit’ of these three. Badiou conceptualizes this nicely: ‘Today, it seems that ‘modernisation’, as our masters like to call it, amounts to being a good little dad, a good little mum, a good little son, to becoming an efficient employee, enriching oneself as much as possible, and playing at the responsible citizen. This is the new motto: ‘Money, Family, Elections.’ See Badiou, *Le Siècle*, p. 100. Many thanks to Alberto Toscano for the use of his forthcoming translation. I cite the page number of the French edition.

55. Badiou borrows this from Lacan who is nothing less for Badiou than ‘the educator for every philosophy to come’. See, Badiou, ‘Truth: Forcing and the Unnamable’, in *Theoretical Writings*, p. 119.

56. What is perverted, we could say, is fidelity, what is oppressed is the (possibility of a) subject. Althusser’s contention in regard to state education being the leading ISA in our epoch should be recalled here.

57. cf. Rancière. *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, pp. 6-7. Rancière says this; ‘before being the act of a pedagogue explication is the myth of pedagogy, the parable of a world divided into knowing minds and ignorant ones, ripe minds and immature ones, the capable and the incapable, the intelligent and the stupid’. Jacotot calls the method of the master ‘enforced stultification’. The trick of the pedagogue in this sense is two. On the one hand the pedagogue decrees when learning is to begin; on the other he presents all that is to be learned as veiled and the pedagogue of course is the only one who can lift this veil.



alistic) education whose only predicate is the axiomatic form. An axiom being, as we have said, the immanently produced principle of the event; the formalizing, within a linguistic address capable of transmission, of that which has effectively disappeared. As such the subject, this finite support of the truth of this address, is in fact he/she/we/it which educates and is educated in the faithful process of this arrangement. Subject then to the inherent declaration of the political event, the equal capacity of all for thought, the arrangements carried out by this subject of the forms of knowledge—or the enquiry of enquiries within the situation—will constitute a ‘generically educative set’, as each enquiry whose trajectory is regulated by chance, whose ethic amounts to the courage to continue, reveals elements of the initial set that confirm the justice (i.e. belonging) of the eventual declaration. The generic is not an act of representation but a regathering of presented terms—singularities—subject to their belonging (BE 396). And belonging is a relation whose intercourse with inclusion, or representation by the state, is not mutually reciprocal. The latter, being what the state in its excess must assume. Given then, that the pedagogical theme is effectively ‘caught’ in the non-space between what presents of truth subject to an event, and the state of that situation which is the procedure of annulment of the extensive consequences of these truths, this theme then must perform something of a dual operation of subtraction and forcing which in turn is the very constitution of itself. As such it becomes legitimate to say that education amounts to nothing more and nothing less than *establishing the effect of an encounter as a transformation*. And this is said of course under illegitimate conditions.<sup>58</sup>

#### SPECULATIVE REMARKS ON THE COMPLEX PROCEDURE: SUBTRACTION AND FORCING

‘Transformation’, in the work of Badiou, ‘goes under the name of ‘generic truth procedure’.<sup>59</sup> As we know, the generic truth procedures or, the conditions in relation to philosophy, produce these truths in the singular labour they perform. To put it bluntly they render an existence; an existence precisely, ‘wrested from all founded inclusion’, from that is, the knowledge that represents it as nothing. And ‘nothing’, as Badiou claims, ‘can be granted existence... without undergoing the trial of its subtraction’.<sup>60</sup> To put it somewhat schematically the pedagogical theme in this process articulates the affirma-

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58. In passing, this authorizes us to turn the Socratic problem of the teaching of virtue (and despite the vicissitudes of ‘interpretation’ in regard to this term and the utilitarian disavowals, this *is* the ongoing question of education especially at a time when the state represents virtue) from a question into an axiom. Rather than consider virtue from the *perspective* of knowledge and then consider the mode of its transmission as such, we can instead now begin with the declaration ‘virtue teaches’. Here we have the form of a truth whose veracity is wholly suspended in the procedure it authorizes. From this point the deductive process of subjecting this declaration to the real of the situation defines ‘an education’. As Lacan put it, ‘to be on the side of virtue is not to change under an effect of law’. ‘Kant with Sade’, *Écrits*.

59. Oliver Feltham, ‘And Being and Event and...: Philosophy and its Nominations’, in *Polygraph*, no. 17, p. 27.

60. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 103.

tive core of a taking away. The state form of education so long concerned with that which supports its addition—what the Brazilian Educator Paulo Friere once described not inappropriately, as a ‘*banking* education’—functions in thrall to a logic of quantitative repetition. As we have mentioned, it cannot conceive of itself as split or divided in any affirmative way and so its adding is always that which serves to repeat what it is under the law, as Badiou says, of ‘what must be’. Thus to proffer truth as revolt against the state it is logically necessary to locate that which is negated by the state. And further in order to avoid transcendence or the appeal to any form of theology it is doubly necessary to affirm that ‘void-site’, affirmed through a process of ‘taking away’, as wholly within the situation ordered by the state. One, in fact, divides into two. Eschewing the explicative equations, we know, via the axioms of foundation and separation that any situation represented as a one is at some point constituted by a division, a point where the consistency, or the well ordered-ness, or constructability of the set or situation cannot hold. It is from this point that subtraction proceeds to render an existence, which is nothing more than the operations necessary to make being appear.

Subtraction essentially names four operations which Badiou says are irreducible to one another. They are: the undecidable, which philosophically is linked to the event; the indiscernible, linked to the subject; the generic to truth; and the unnameable to an ethics of truths.<sup>61</sup> Essentially, subtraction works by ‘voiding’ all predication. As an operation of thought it asserts the primacy of being over language. However, Badiou cautions, it is not a process of extraction, of ‘drawing out of’ but it is one which ‘draws under’.<sup>62</sup> For Badiou, there is no position from which to operate upon a situation other than from within that very situation. As is the case in all Badiou’s analyses however, there can be no clearing of the ground *before* something takes place.<sup>63</sup> So this removal of predication is a part of the very process initiated by the act of irruption or surrection within the situation. What marks the difference between an event as an interruption within the situation and say a strike for wages and conditions, is precisely that in the latter the state is immediately able to include such an interruption within its order of operations. It may instigate negotiations, declaim the strikers in the press or send in its police but in any case such a strike ‘fits’ within the logic and knowledge of the state.<sup>64</sup> The logic of subtraction pertains to the event in an intrinsic form. The event so to speak undoes or will have undone, through its sheer novelty, the order of this knowledge

61. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 111. The latter term has disappeared in recent times. We will maintain it here as it nevertheless has an ethical truth to it which continues in Badiou’s work under new names, perhaps.

62. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 111.

63. ‘Destruction was my Beatrice’, Badiou says, quoting Mallarmé, comparing his *Théorie du sujet* to *L’être et l’événement. Le Siècle*, p. 85.

64. Indeed most strikes today seem to a priori fit themselves to the demands of the state. At a recent teachers’ ‘rally’ in Melbourne the police were accorded an ovation for their efforts at securing the march. Teachers, after all, are not in any way enemies of the state. Too often they are slavish petitioners desirous only of being well thought of by their master. Like Althusser, I make an exception for the ‘militant’ few. See ‘Ideology and the State’.

of inclusion and thus, subtracting from the state of the situation its formal process of evaluation, it opens a space which marks the immanent separation of the truth of the state from its knowledge.<sup>65</sup>

However, as we know, it is of the very ‘empirical character’ of the event to disappear. And as Badiou says, ‘this is why it will always be necessary to say... the event has taken place.’<sup>66</sup> This statement in effect constitutes a decision for the undecidable. Effectively it is a decision which intervenes in the indices between the event and its naming as an event. The decision decides for the event, itself subject to pure contingency. It is constitutively an act of fidelity which is ontologically prior to any ‘formal announcement’. It is a pure ‘yes’ saying, to use a Nietzschean formula, but within the confines of a wager. The decision says nothing more than that which happened, happened. The decision founds a declaration; to the effect that what has disappeared has being and it is to this declaration that the subject is faithful. The subject, being that which crosses any temporal conditions by declaring a fidelity to a sequence that ‘will have been true’ and at the same time pursues the consequences of this ‘evental occurring’ within the situation as the finite being that it (also) is. The pursuit of the consequences has no predicative order, no established law by which the subject guides itself in its enquiries. As Badiou puts it, such a subject is ‘a hazardous trajectory without a concept’ one who can find no verifiable comfort in the representations of the object of his enquiry or from the principle of objectivity more generally.<sup>67</sup> What then is the logic of this subject’s progress given that it is faced at every turn with the necessity to choose and yet due to its fidelity to a disappearing and devoid of a law of operation, it has no way to distinguish between terms? Given this situation, whatever terms present to the subject for choosing, present as properly indiscernible. We must first backtrack somewhat for it appears we have two subjects; one which decides for the undecidable and one which is ‘co-ordinated by the indiscernible’.<sup>68</sup> We must recall that we are tracking the trajectory of a truth as it makes its way across a situation. We could say the four figures of subtraction mark the stations of its progress. In regard to a temporal schema it is not the case that one station follows the other in a graduated stage of becoming. There is no particular time frame or objective determination which either verifies the time of a truth nor determines the instances of the subject within a chronological form. The schema of the truth procedure is operationally structural and it is true to say that a truth after circuiting the trajectory of the structure under the logic of subtraction, will only be seen or be ‘known’ to have been true once it has effectively returned as the ‘knowledge of the subject’. This subject, Badiou says, in relation to its procedure is ‘ruled in its effects, but entirely aleatory in its trajectory’ (BE 394). Thus to decide for the undecidable is to immediately be situated between the event and the void; two indiscernible terms. And in terms of Badiou’s

65. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 111.

66. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 111.

67. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 111, also BE, p. 394.

68. Badiou, ‘On Subtraction’, p. 113.

schema, this place is ‘at the edge of the void’.<sup>69</sup> The subject then is structurally situated between—or is founded as the split of—the disappearance which it has decided for and the void, or nothing, from which the order of its trajectory must be drawn. It is not that the subject so situated has to choose between nothing and nothing. Rather, it is that the subject faithful to this constitution as the fragment of a disappearance and the order of the void proceeds to make enquires from the perspective of a truth that *will have been ‘true’* and not from that of the knowledge of the state. Thus, as the logic of truth is such that it addresses itself to all indifferent to differences—circumcized or uncircumcized, Greek or Jew—the subject proceeds as that which does the work of indiscernibility, effectively subtracting the mark of difference.<sup>70</sup> The subject proceeds with what Badiou calls confidence, a ‘knowing belief’ (BE 397). Belief being, Badiou says, the ‘what is to come under the *name* of truth’ (BE 397), such that, pedagogically speaking, the knowledge the subject has recourse to, is essentially this confidence. This confidence equates with the belief that what is discernible is subject to an order of thought whose trajectory, is indiscernible. The subject has confidence that the truth to come will have been true for the very situation within which the subject proceeds to conduct its enquiries (BE 397). Such confidence, we can say, owes its modal power to that procedure Badiou names ‘forcing’; ‘*a fundamental law of the subject*’ (BE 401).

The complex ontological exposition of ‘forcing’ (the term taken from Paul Cohen) is beyond the scope of this essay. Instead, in order to situate the subject as that which performs this act and as that which constitutes itself in this act, we will sketch its topology in a speculative interlacing of Badiou’s concept with the notion of the pedagogical theme. Let’s preface what we are here faced with: an understanding or rather a declaiming of education as contingent, risky, without predicate, opposed to knowledge, subject to fidelity, to courage, to a certain ruthlessness in regard to continuing. Education in essence is founded on the chance encounter between a site and its inconsistency, that sets forth subtractively to maintain this irruptive demand from pure multiplicity by a forcing of its truth through the terms already known to the situation. With such effect that a transformation literally *takes place*. To go to school, sit up straight, attend, repeat with a certain facility and graduate well behaved, which includes of course suitable acts of rebellion, certainly appears the simpler form.

To educate is certainly to transform. To have been educated is no doubt to have been transformed. Thus education amounts to either ‘being’ or, ‘to have been’ transformed. The questions, of course, are: by what, from what, to what? Is it by the state whose goal is perpetuation and whose method thereby is predicated on meiosisitic repetition or, in Althusser’s more ‘structural’ terms reproduction (of the relations of production)? Or is it by truths and thus to be transformed without predicate, educated without

69. We could posit that it is precisely at this point that mathematical inscription and poetic inscription ‘meet’. See, Alain Badiou, ‘Lacan and the pre-Socratics’, in *Lacan: The Silent Partners* Slavoj Žižek (ed.), London, Verso, 2006, p. 11.

70. Alain Badiou, *St Paul: The foundation of universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2003, p. 26.

curriculum, subject to the ‘what will have been’ by grace of the event? A procedure which is at once immanent and thus without surveillance and singular in that it universally presents singularities without representation (BE 401). But what is this thing that is being or has been transformed? Certainly contemporary democratic educational logic, as we have seen above, performs a process of subjectivisation whose goal is the creation of a certain individual(s) fit for the state. This state mode of transformation apprehends the collective as a generically amorphous mass, both empty of what it is that makes them fit for the state and possessed of nothing but this. This mass is then that which, via the processes of the state, will be operated on in such a way that it will render to the state individuals capable of performing pursuant to the norms, laws and procedures of the state. The subjectivizing process of the state as transformation from equality of ignorance to equitable redistribution as heterogenous entities conforming to its ‘count’ renders a representation of ideologically self-identifying individuals. It achieves a sort of one to one correspondence in which each, libidinally invested in the other, considers an ‘objective’ interest to be theirs in common.<sup>71</sup> That is, the state guarantees the suitably educated subject access to his/her interests. As suitably educated, the interests of this subject will correspond, more or less, to the interest of the state.<sup>72</sup> And of course in its excess the state terrifies this subject through its retaining the imminent threat of withdrawal. Its excessive count *for* one, that operation by which a state is the state of the situation, collecting one-multiples into one-parts constitutively threatens un-representation. Its subjects are thus those whose very representation as ‘a’ subject is subject to their desire for representation. Such a desire is the very constitution of their subjectivity. Such is why theories of recognition are so attractive in social theory today. And such is why notions like adaptability, flexibility and ‘availability for learning across the life-span’ proves so intensive in educational discourse. These are of course pure subordinate responses to the state as excess provided by the state itself for the subject: A balm for permanently open sores and they remind us of nothing less—and this is entirely appropriate in this context—of Lacan’s description, ‘from a philosophical perspective’, of the truth of human rights

71. In this ‘new and risky future’ the *New Basics* will deliver a student who is ‘flexible’, ‘adaptable’, capable of a form of ‘self-analysis that copes with this flexibility’ and possesses an ‘educability’—for ‘retraining across the life-span through a range of media’. The student will be capable of ‘designing him/herself a ‘social future’, be proficient in the ‘care and maintenance of the self’ and practice an ‘active citizenship’—*within* our ‘democracy’. It should come as no surprise that the theoretical parameters of the three year longitudinal research of which the ‘New Basics’ is both a result and an experiment were coordinated by a constructivist and reconceptualist paradigm. See, *New Basics Research Paper*, No. 2, ‘Synthesis and Research’, p.6 <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/> and *New Basics Technical Paper*, pp. 85-6 Lacan’s remark in relation to Sade’s treatise on the education of young girls should be recalled here: ‘The victim is bored to death by the preaching and the teacher is full of himself’, Lacan, ‘Kant with Sade’, *Ecrits*, p. 664/787.

72. A subject capable of making their way within a ‘globalized information environment’ Such a subject [will help] ‘...gain access to the benefits (sic) of the knowledge economy of the future...’[a]nd ‘will improve our [QLD’s] economic performance’. Non-performance’ of this ‘role’, this document says, has ‘dire consequences for the individual’. See, Education QLD 2010, ‘New Basics Research Program’, 2003, pp. 3-10. Available through <http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/>. The use of the term ‘role’ is somewhat fascinating, but we leave it to ‘sit’ here.

as ‘the freedom to desire in vain’.<sup>73</sup> Opposed to this is the subjectivizing process of the generic truth procedure whose initiation in the event as disruption of the state—of precisely its excess—convokes a collective as *subject* (in the case of a political situation). Its address, so to speak, is carried by the practice of its thought; by that of which ‘we are equally capable’. For Badiou, no subject at all precedes this subject. Subject to the axiomatic declaration of an equal capacity for thought any one (multiple) might be/could be/can be transformed from public alienation into the collective subject alienated *from* the public. This is a subject at once *of* and *to* truth. Of this we can say that a subject is that which at each stage ‘will have been educated’. So there are two readings of what it is to be transformed. On the one hand, the ‘thing’ is transformed into an individual issuing as and within the states permanent reordering of its parts. Representation here makes void the possibility of ‘generic extension’. That is to say, the site of the generic is represented as nothing. And on the other, from the egalitarian multiple is subtracted, subject to the disappearance that is the empirical mark of an event, the generic set whose trajectory as infinite collection proceeds by subtracting itself at every step from the logic of the situation in which it labours.

What then makes this anything but some form of anarchic wandering? What makes this education by truths distinct from no education at all or mere reaction? The state is after all (and this is a symptom we must be very attentive to, I suggest, such is the basis for this exploration) determinedly focussed on an ‘education for all’. Publicly, this is seen as its chief credit or virtue (just think of the dialectic of election time rhetoric and publicity where education is demanded by the state and equally by its petitioners) and again we must be attentive to this as a symptom. What serves to differentiate here are two things: One, as we have seen, is the event itself. It establishes the possibility for the new in being. A subject is convoked who, under the discipline of a fidelity to that which is disappeared, itself becomes a rising of that which was not. Secondly, in regard to the subject we must ask the question, what does this subject hold to? The subject is that which is caught in a procedure between what has gone and what is to come. We know that truths interrupt knowledge, that they are in fact an a-voidance of (the determinants of) knowledge and so on. But what of the subject split by the ‘two’? How can it avoid knowledge? The question in relation to forcing is two-fold. On the one hand there is some knowledge, while on the other, by fidelity, this subject is faithful to that knowledge which is sustained in its veracity *as knowledge* by the future anterior and as such, it is knowledge that is itself the *effect* of a ‘rearrangement’. It is in this space that education by truths is enacted. Between the event and its forcing, or rather, *as its forcing*, a subject is educated. To quote Badiou:

What one must be able to require of oneself, at the right time, is rather that capacity for adventure to which ontology testifies, in the heart of its transparent rationality, by its recourse to the procedure of the absurd; a detour in which the extension of their solidity may be restituted to the equivalences: ‘He shatters his own happiness, his excess of happiness, and to the Element which magnified it, he

73. Lacan, ‘Kant with Sade’, *Ecrits*, p. 661, 783.

rends, but purer, what he possessed (BE 254).

Badiou's claim that 'the only education is an education by truths' demands in fact that this equation result. Thus we can say that, as the finite carrier of an infinite procedure, a truth, it is only a subject who is *educated*.

It has been argued elsewhere that forcing constitutes the real praxis of the subject and I can only concur with this.<sup>74</sup> By extension, I am suggesting that it is entirely within a praxis of this type that an education takes place, whereas in the state situation 'nothing takes place but the place' which is to say the 'positive' production of *impassé*. So rather than force a subject to be educated, in this idea, forcing, as that complex of the subject, is what educates. As part of the complex of forcing we can say that it is by non-knowledge that the subject proceeds. As we have seen, the subject follows no curriculum, no pre-established method in its enquiries. That it makes enquiries at all is, as Badiou says, subject to chance: On the one hand, the chance of an event occurring and, on the other, the decision for its occurring qua event. But with no 'method', how does the subject proceed?

For any 'obscure occurrence' to be an event it must produce its name in the subject. The name given by the subject, as an act of its very subjectivity, under condition of the event, belongs in the first instance to the subject-language. It is the singleton of the occurrence in Badiou's terms. This name is the minimal condition of the subject qua enquiries, or for us, of the subject qua education. How then to 'remake' the name, a name already included by state knowledge, into a name belonging to the occurrence? That is, how does the name make evental that which is 'obscure'? In this first instance the subject supports the transitory status of the name which is at once attached to an obscurity and an encyclopaedia. In a sense this is a first instance of 'tearing holes in knowledge'. The name is subtracted from the encyclopaedia of the state for which language is the 'medium of commensurability between itself and the situation it represents' (BE 288). The void, by which the name as supernumery is founded as exposed, is mobilized in the subjective procedure of forcing. Precisely through this immanent gap—between the presentation of inconsistency marked by the event and its consistent presentation marked by the (void) name of this event—a truth procedure authorizes itself. Forcing hereby names the procedure of tearing the name from encyclopaedic inclusion and remaking it as belonging to the event.<sup>75</sup> Similarly to the dual nominalism of 'condition', 'forcing' also names the arduous process of this becoming-true, of which fidelity is the ethic of a militant operation and subtraction the mode of deployment. By its series of

74. Oliver Feltham, *As Fire Burns: Of Ontology, Praxis, and Functional Work*, unpublished PhD diss., Deakin University, 2000.

75. Thus, Badiou calls the statement of the subject-language in regard to names 'bricolés'. See Alain Badiou, *L'être et l'événement*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1988, p. 441. Barker translates this as 'makeshift' (p. 107), and Feltham as 'cobbled-together', BE, p. 403. The point is that this name is brought about by a forced relation between the language of the situation and the subject-language. The latter itself is a part of the former but is co-coordinated by a different 'logic'. See, Jason Barker, *Alain Badiou: A Critical Introduction*, London, Pluto Press, 2002.

enquiries the subject establishes, in the first instance, the connection or non-connection of this name to the multiples of that situation through which it works (BE 330). This is the procedure which establishes (or does not) the grounds for the universality inherent to the disappeared event by organizing via connections the ‘belonging to’ the ‘generic set’. Thus these enquiries follow a militant trajectory of connection—multiples subtracted from the laws of presentation—and a subsequent decided deployment rather than a ‘scholarly’ process which by (institutional) instinct and not by thought, seeks to mediate and not commit.<sup>76</sup> Structurally speaking, we could say that the scholar marks the ‘place of announcement’.

‘Education for all’, that common refrain of the representative state, thus takes on a very different and critically particular meaning in this process than that which is meant by this state. To put it schematically, we might say that the latter is concerned with what to do with its subject within the confines of a state, and the former with the extension ‘for all’ of that which a subject is capable.<sup>77</sup> At every step, forcing articulates the crucial aspect of this minimal difference by its imposition of its positive connections. The name of the event thus holds as that single term by which the infinite of the truth of the event may become veridical over and above its declaration.<sup>78</sup> But as was mentioned above, this is not, as some have intimated, simply the coming of a truth back to knowledge. Or rather; it is and it is not.<sup>79</sup> The whole point of Badiou’s enterprise is of course that the situation as it is is transformed in truth. Thus the statement ‘for every situation there is a truth’ is, as we can see, the complex of a disjunction and its synthesis or, the ‘junction

76. Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 126.

77. In relation to Badiou’s newer work in which the faithful subject opens a space within which the ‘reactive subject’ and the ‘obscure subject’ can also come to exist, we can argue that what education today educates for is a ‘reactive subject’. This is a subject who is constituted by an education which tells that an event is unnecessary, that attempts at establishing ‘justice’ are not worth it, that truths are relative (or belong to ‘fact’ alone), and that opinion and consensus decide the political and so on. What is of interest is that the ‘obscure subject’ and the ‘reactive subject’ seem to have an investment in each other.

78. One should recall here Badiou’s text on Nietzsche where he singles out Nietzsche’s conflation of the declaration and the event as the form of an archi-politics. See, ‘Who is Nietzsche?’ *Pli: Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, no. 11: Nietzsche: Revenge and Praise, 2001.

79. In relation to what we are calling the pedagogical theme—that truths mobilize a desire for the end of the state—what we mark here is that Socrates’ crime is all that it is made out to be. Socrates does not bring knowledge but rather he submits all to the singular procedure of subtracting truth from knowledge. Plato describes this in the *Sophist* as that of ‘follow[ing] our statements step by step and, in criticizing the assertion that a different thing is the same or the same thing is different in a certain sense, to take account of the precise sense and the precise respect in which they are said to be one or the other’. Having hereby affirmed the procedure affirmed in the Socratic practice he then goes onto impute to the sophist a method ‘like’ but ultimately unlike, due to its proximity to the sensual and the immediate. He says, ‘merely to show that in some unspecified way the same is different or the different is the same, the great small, the like unlike, and to take pleasure in perpetually parading such contradictions in argument—that is not genuine criticism, but may be recognized as the callow offspring of a too recent contact with reality’. Plato, ‘Sophist’, in *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist*, trans. F. M. Cornford, Mineola, Dover Publications, 2003, 259b-d, pp. 297-8. See also Plato, ‘Parmenides’, in *Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides’ Way of Truth and Plato’s Parmenides*, trans. F.M. Cornford, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939, p. 113.



of a disjunction' (BE 239). This is because this statement contains two temporal schemas. First, the schema marked by the claim 'for any situation there *will be* a truth' and by the statement, 'for any situation there will *have been* a truth' and thus the knowledge that 'returns' is precisely not the knowledge that was. And further this knowledge does not by necessity merely reprise the structural form of the previous knowledge for that situation. As Andrew Gibson has made a point of, what are forced are generic extensions to the situation and not the constructions of 'new' situations entirely.<sup>80</sup> As Cohen showed ontologically and Badiou here translates philosophically in relation to being and truth, a generic set is situated precisely in the space 'normally' occupied by the state. And this space is the immeasurable excess of inclusion over belonging: An excess for which, in Badiou's metaontology, the event provides the first measure.<sup>81</sup> The price for the avoidance of transcendence, as for holding fast to the axiom 'the one is not', is that of extension. Extension, however, is in no way reform. The latter, as we know, is almost constitutive of the contemporary state. It exists only to reform and this reform is of course in order to better capture whatever threatens to escape. And nowhere it seems as much as in education (and this is consensual) is this type of reform regarded as imperative.<sup>82</sup> Extension of course is the extension by eventual rupture of that which was represented as nothing—precisely the 'truth of the situation'. Somewhat paradoxically but logically, representation exposes the unique singularity immanent to the situation it represents—that of the void, the very possibility of extension, of same/other. The subject is again this figure of, or rather *in*, extension. To put it somewhat enigmatically we can say that extension is what 'sames in truth' what was 'other in knowledge'. Thus the modality of extension is forcing and thus the subjective trajectory is that which is forced on two sides. The two relate to Cohen in particular. On the one hand the subject comes to be under the axiom of choice. It decides itself into being as it decides for the undecidable; that an obscure occurrence is an event subtracted from all knowledge; or as Badiou puts it, '*knowledge knows nothing of this*' (BE 332, Badiou's italics). On the other 'side' the subject is forced by that which continues. It continues faithful to the undecidability which it has decided for.<sup>83</sup> It has decided that there will have been a something (rather than nothing) to decide for. Structured in this way it can hold fast to the name

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80. Andrew Gibson, 'Repetition and Event: Badiou and Beckett', *Communication and Cognition*, vol 37, no. 3-4, 2004, p. 271.

81. Hallward, *Badiou*, p. 131.

82. Again this should be read as symptomatic and not as evidence of the state's good intent. It has two forms. On the one hand the state must of course organize the worker/consumer in such a way as to be readily available in the right way for subjection to the dominant relations of production. But it must also do this under the ideological cloak that it thereby reflects the 'non-ideological authentic longing'—to quote from Žižek—of the population for precisely what is perceived of education, as being that which is more than just such a 'job readiness'. The idea that education is not just utilitarian training is that idea, prevalent in the community at large, which enables the capture of all under the education system. A system dear to the state for reasons already outlined.

83. Cohen, of course, proved the independence of CH from the axioms of set theory. CH is thus 'undecidable'.

subtracted from (thus independent of) the state encyclopaedia but *known* to the subject by its *belonging* to the ‘makeshift’ subject language.<sup>84</sup> The real force of the subject then is precisely the maintenance of this ‘complex of forcing’.

The subject, as we have seen, has nothing, purely nothing, as its curricular instruction; no method, no syllabus, no state. The trajectory of the educated subject is a-voidance, of the state and of knowledge. It is separated from the state by its non-knowledge and from the truth that will have been by an ‘infinite series of aleatory encounters’ (BE 399). What it has is pure structure or rather pure axioms of operation by which it regards every step of its enquiries. Such is why fidelity for Badiou is drawn from mathematical procedures of deduction and not from its theological variant.<sup>85</sup> And we propose that this fidelity, under the complex of forcing, extends into the situation itself. Should such a truth procedure be ‘forced’ into the situation, should a truth come to be that which it was, fidelity to that fidelity which extended and sustained the procedure does not end. Should there be an end, then decidedly we have had reform but not revolution, not transformation.<sup>86</sup> Even though Badiou reminds us that knowledge in its constructivist orientation with its ‘moderated rule, its policed immanence to situation and its transmissibility’ is unavoidable, he at the same time reminds us that this is the ‘ordinary regime of the relation to being under circumstances in which it is not time for a new temporal foundation, and in which the diagonals of fidelity have somewhat deteriorated for lack of complete belief in the event they prophesise’. Then again, Badiou claims that even for those ‘who wander on the borders of eventual sites staking their lives’ on events, ‘it is, after all, appropriate to be knowledgeable’ (BE 294). But even as it is in the process of enquiries that a faithful subject approximates a procedure of knowledge, such enquiries are nevertheless first and foremost a matter of a militant fidelity. Such a fidelity demands that the void constitutive of every situation not be foreclosed or veiled or counted as no-thing but be rigorously marked as such: Which is to say that this, at a certain point, necessary coincidence with knowledge must not itself be coincident with a taming by the state (BE 294). Only in this way is ‘justice done’ and subjects appear in their belonging as constituted by this very fidelity to their belonging, and not as the mere consequence of an ‘inclusive education’.<sup>87</sup> That is to say that ontology, which presents beings in the

84. To the state what the ‘subject knows’ is precisely nothing at all. In Platonic terms the subject is that which can claim only that it ‘knows nothing’. This claim ‘places the void’ within the situation. Non-knowledge as void of knowledge is that name of the void which is the very mark of *their* knowledge. The subject sets their enquiries by this mark in order not to fall back into the knowing comforts of the state—such as they are.

85. A variant still very prominent in the methods of the state through the pastoral-welfare complex it runs as an ideological ‘soul supplement’ to the material ‘syllabus of the market’.

86. Ultimately this is why Badiou talks of exhaustion not ends. A procedure can become exhausted, subjects may be lacking, but the truth for which a subject is a subject has not, by this, come to an end. And nor are we finished with truths.

87. As is well known, ‘inclusion’ is the concept of the age. It and ‘recognition’ form the crux of a weak leftism—taken up by the ‘democracies’ as their rhetoric of choice—which still sees a state education, a state program, as the way to (social) justice. Or, to use the timid and defeated contemporary form, ‘equality of opportunity’.

singularity of belonging, links with truth as that which is true for all or not at all and with justice which is the philosophical name for equality whose very being is the presentation of a ‘communism of singularities’. Ultimately the invariance that pertains to education, to the name education in the generic phrase ‘education for all’, is that which today must be forcefully subtracted from the state; which is to say the one multiple that it is must be found to be ‘indiscernible and unclassifiable for the encyclopaedia’ of the state (BE 333). Plato’s *Republic* was one attempt at this, being as it was an ideal non-state articulated on the basis of a certain event within the state (of the situation).<sup>88</sup> As Badiou has said, we need a ‘new Republic’ for it is quite obvious that today the educated-subject—a being struck by the desire to think the truth that it also is, and thereby produce a generic present—is precisely that which cannot be tolerated. As Badiou says, such a subject, linked as it is to the infinity of a truth and its generic indiscernibility, is ‘without qualification’ (BE 408) and fundamentally irreducible to ‘the pedagogy of the world as it goes.’<sup>89</sup>

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88. Like Plato, what we object to is the claim that this state education *is* an education. For if the only education is an education by truths then this cannot be an education at all unless the state can in some way be equated with truth. This is precisely what Plato seeks to found, this knot of truth and the state in his ‘thought institution’ named the *Republic*. This designation of the *Republic* as ‘not a state’ goes against the very language Plato uses to describe his republic but, so I would argue, not against his thought. That Plato deemed it necessary to invent an entirely new form by which to support this truth in its transmission is what legitimates this notion that the *Republic* is not the repetition of ‘the state’. And neither is it an ideal state; it is rather the *idea of a non-state*: precisely a utopia.

89. Alain Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, Paris, Seuil, 1982, p. 318.

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