

Some Reflections on Psychoanalysis, Philosophy and Politics. Exploring the Intellectual Trajectory of Alain Badiou

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ENG Abstract. In the light of some recent criticisms, this text seeks to promote a debate that takes place on two fronts: on the one hand, the logic of the origin of logic and, on the other hand, the relationship between psychoanalysis and Marxism. To this end, some texts published by Alain Badiou towards the end of the 1960s, in which he polemicalizes with Jacques-Alain Miller around the concepts of “suture” and “subject” (Žižek), are recovered in order to situate both the different positions and the coherent reconsiderations throughout his intellectual trajectory. Indeed, from “The Concept of the Model” to his most recent trilogy (Theory of the Subject, Being and the Event and Logic of Worlds), a perspective is proposed that, far from establishing hierarchies and subordinations, seeks to promote connections based on specificities and differences through that particular path that is philosophy. In this way it is possible to appreciate that, despite his critique of the primacy of the logic of the signifier, the concepts proposed by Jacques Lacan functioned as a notorious source of inspiration for Badiou, especially in relation to the subject of the unconscious.

Keywords. Philosophy; Psychoanalysis; Alain Badiou; Subject Theory; The Self.

ES Algunas Reflexiones Sobre Psicoanálisis, Filosofía y Política. Explorando la Trayectoria Intelectual de Alain Badiou

Resumen. A la luz de algunas críticas recientes, en el marco de este texto se busca impulsar un debate que tiene lugar en dos frentes: por una parte, la lógica del origen de la lógica y, por otra parte, la relación entre psicoanálisis y marxismo. Para ello se recuperan algunos textos publicados por Alain Badiou hacia finales de la década de 1960, en los que polemiza con Jacques-Alain Miller alrededor de los conceptos de “sutura” y “sujeto” (Žižek), para situar tanto las diversas posiciones como las coherentes reconsideraciones a lo largo

de su trayectoria intelectual. En efecto, desde “El concepto de modelo” hasta su más reciente trilogía (Teoría del sujeto, El ser y el acontecimiento y Lógica de los Mundos), se propone una perspectiva que lejos de establecer jerarquías y subordinaciones busca promover conexiones a partir de las especificidades y las diferencias a través de esa vía particular que es la filosofía. De este modo resulta posible apreciar que, pese a su crítica respecto de la primacía de la lógica del significante, los conceptos propuestos por Jacques Lacan funcionaron como una notoria fuente de inspiración para Badiou, especialmente en relación con el sujeto del inconsciente.

Palabras clave: Filosofía; Psicoanálisis; Alain Badiou; Teoría del Sujeto; El Ser.

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Introduction: Badiou’s Three Descartes, or Fidelity beyond Treason

The complex and ever-changing relations between philosophy, science, politics and psychoanalysis, were considered throughout the past century by many authors. Moreover, several strains of thought found their place of inception exactly in this interdisciplinary framework. In the works of Alain Badiou, the correlation of these four domains shows up to be set in a particularly original way, that has become nowadays a paradigm in its own right. This has much to do with three authors that have decisively influenced Badiou’s own thought; that he considered to be his masters (maîtres) and to whom he always stayed faithful – in the peculiar sense of fidelité that Badiou gives to it. Those thinkers are namely: Sartre, Althusser and Lacan. So how has this improbable trio (obviously, amongst many other thinkers), made of Alain Badiou a philosopher that he has become today? Or much better, how Alain Badiou became what he is, in responding to his masters? Let’s have a brief overlook of this multidirectional exchange, with a particular interest in Badiou’s relation to psychoanalysis, and more precisely, to Lacan.

1) Roughly speaking, Badiou has inherited from Sartre the rationalist, Cartesian foundation for his philosophical works – his early taste for truth and freedom. Badiou considered Sartre, as he puts it himself in a short text named Hegel in France, as “Descartes of the cogito” (Badiou 2012, p. 23) of the 20th century. Sartre’s famous formulation: “Consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself.” (Sartre 1966, p. 24) – which simply means that the being for-itself is pure Nothingness, will fundamentally seduce Badiou already in his days of lycée. This encounter with Sartre’s ontology will represent for Badiou a true event – maybe even a paradigmatic case of event that will nourish his later developed concept. In that sense, although he will formally abandon much of what Sartre’s ontology postulates, Badiou’s overall approach to philosophy will preserve a certain fidelity to it, so that his trajectory of thinking “may be perceived as the paradoxical combination

of an energetic fidelity to the Sartrean message and the formal pulling to pieces of the dialectical schema that undergirds this message” (Badiou 2012, p. 29). Thus, for example, he will pick up from Sartre notions like situation or choice/decision, but just to reaffirm them in terms of mathematics and politics respectively. Taking a dive with Sartre into “meaning-giving functions of Nothingness” (Ibid. p. 33), will paradoxically enable Badiou to find his interest – once awoken from the Sartrean slumber – in the very opposite category, as it will become well known, in Being. Counterintuitively, yet still in correlation with what has just been said, even his interest in set theory has something to do with Sartre. As Badiou himself reminds us, the subtitle of the Critique of the dialectical reason is Theory of Practical Ensembles (Sartre 2004), underlining that he always read this book thinking of Cantor, one of mathematical founders of modernity, much unlike Sartre who didn’t care much about mathematics. It is important to know that he also inherited from Sartre an abstract, political and idealist view on Marx – which will remain one aspect of Badiou’s multifocal view on Marx’s philosophy. And this is exactly where another of Badiou’s masters enters in scene.

2) From Althusser, the “Descartes of the machines” as Badiou calls him (Badiou 2012, p. 23), he has inherited a perspective on Marx that differs significantly from Sartre’s one. Or rather, he inherited a stance to which he could respond by proposing his own hypothesis. Namely, according to Badiou, Althusser has developed a positivist stance in respect to Marxism, a stance according to which philosophy is dependent on science, or that, in Marx, dialectical materialism (as philosophy) depends fundamentally on his historical materialism (as science). Althusser writes: “It is by founding the theory of history (historical materialism) that Marx, in one and the same movement, has broken with his earlier ideological philosophical consciousness and founded a new philosophy (dialectical materialism)” (Althusser 1965, p. 25). Badiou will point out that this break corresponds in Althusser to the break between science and ideology, and further, between the materialism

and idealism. It is by remarking that this divide and this difference bare an original impurity, that Badiou will reject dialectical materialism as supreme Theory. This will lead him to respond indirectly to Althusser through his later works (all while staying somehow faithful to his master), claiming that science isn't always a sufficient ground for philosophy, because, as Bruno Bosteels resumes nicely Badiou's thought: "not every scientific break is always registered in philosophy, sometimes its impact goes unnoticed or for a long time is driven underground as in the case of set theory, and, more importantly, the formation of a philosophy is always conditioned not just by scientific discoveries but also by emancipatory politics, by artistic experiments, and by the encounter of a truth in love, as in psychoanalysis" (Bosteels 2001, p. 205) – thus not only by science, but also by art, politics and love, all of which are known as four famous Badiou's truth procedures.

In correlation to what has been exposed until now, we can state now that the first two of Badiou's three 'Descartes', Sartre and Althusser, will provide him with an initial insight in the problem of subjectivity and the idea of subject. Irreconcilable at the first glance, those two perspectives will find a way to coexist in Badiou's philosophy. Sartre's ideal, reflexive subjectivity created ex-nihilo and thrown in the world, that has its projects and is always in a situation, turned always towards the others in its own intentionality, and Althusser's subject which is an effect of the structure, a derivative of ideology, an individual transformed by the process of interpellation into the subject of society, will both remain underlying aspects Badiou's philosophy despite of their contradiction. How come, one could ask? This question will be addressed briefly in the last lines when we will return to Badiou's concept of fidelity, but since the notion of 'subject' is now in question, we shall pass to Badiou's third 'Descartes', namely, Jacques Lacan, because it is in his psychoanalytic ontology of the subject that the contradiction between the two former theories are curiously resolved, not as a synthesis between the two, but rather as a return to the original One that has dialectically split in two parts.

3) To readers who are not very well acquainted with Badiou's work, the centrality of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory to his philosophy might be surprising, because, as Peter Hallward underlines "Badiou has had no particular experience of psychoanalysis as such. He never attended Lacan's famous seminars, and with the partial exception of *Théorie du sujet*, the form of his work bears little resemblance to Lacan's" (Hallward 2003, p. 11). Yet, Badiou himself will state that "A contemporary philosopher, for me, is indeed someone who has the unfaltering courage to work through Lacan's anti-philosophy" (Badiou 2008, p.129). Even more confusing could be the fact that Badiou relates Lacan to none other than Descartes. More precisely, in *Being and Event*, he says that besides the return to Freud, Lacan has performed a simultaneous movement consisting namely in a return to Descartes. So, how could those two apparently incomparable projects be reconciled? Of course, the question of subject arises anew. Towards the end of *Being and Event*, Badiou writes: "One can never insist enough upon the fact that the Lacanian directive of a return to Freud was originally doubled: he says – in an

expression which goes back to 1946 – 'the directive of a return to Descartes would not be superfluous.'" (Badiou 2007b, p. 431). And obviously, this return presupposes a return to cogito. Badiou finds the worth of this Lacanian return to Descartes in the fact that it will decisively stress the spatial determination of the subject: "What renders the cogito irrefutable is the form, that one may give it, in which the 'where' insists: 'Cogito ergo sum' ubi cogito, ibi sum. The point of the subject is that there where it is thought that thinking it must be, it is. The connection between being and place founds the radical existence of enunciation in subject". (Ibid.) The subject is where it thinks¹. Yet, all while adopting Descartes' point of departure, Freud will subvert the Cartesian gesture, 'via dislocation' as Badiou puts it, by refuting the cogito's 'pure coincidence with self, its reflexive transparency'. This is best seen in the Freudian maxim: *Wo Es war, soll Ich warden*. So, no transparency between the Id and the Ego in the first place, no reflexivity either and no initial location of the Ego, but only a primal dislocation of Ego in taking the place of the Id. Nevertheless, Badiou will state that "Lacan signals that he 'does not misrecognize' that the conscious certitude of existence, at the centre of the cogito, is not immanent, but rather transcendent. 'Transcendent' because the subject cannot coincide with the line of identification proposed to it by this certitude. The subject is rather the latter's empty waste." (Badiou 2007b, p. 432). So Badiou sees, with Lacan, the subject as a void, as 'pure void of its substraction'. This, he claims, is the only form of subject that could be sutured 'within the logical, wholly transmissible, form of science', thus saving the truth as the generic hole in knowledge. Badiou will also translate this void in the language of mathematics as an 'empty set' capable of receiving content without being formally transformed (this content could be very well the unconscious, or else for example the proletariat, as we will see later in this text). Therefore, as Lucy Bell writes, "by relocating and rearticulating the void, by reconstructing his models, and by transforming his structures into processes, Badiou's philosophy allows Lacan's psychoanalytic ontology to be remapped as a 'new way in the desert'" (Bell 2011, p. 218-219). Therefore, while Lacan's subject is a passive subject of the unconscious, "subject split by its incorporation into the symbolic order and sustained as a gap in the discourse of that collective Other whose desires structure this unconscious [...]" Badiou's subject, by contrast, is in a certain sense consciousness in its purest forms: decision, action, and fidelity" (Hallward 2003, p. 12).

Thus, in seeing subject a localized void with Lacan, as an empty set that will support the truth, Badiou reconciles Sartre's and Althusser's opposed heritages, and stays faithful to them through the very act of betraying them. And he does exactly the same with Lacan: he betrays him in perfectly faithful way,

¹ We can note, in the light of previous examination on Sartre's influence on Badiou, that the heuristic value for Badiou's ontological (but also political) enterprise of the importance of *place of subject* that he find in Descartes and Lacan, might be traced back also to Sartre's concept of situation, which shows that ontologically the for-itself is always in a factual situation, and politically that our collective situations are often those of oppression of different sorts (Sartre underlines his own, such as racism and colonialism).

by relocating the void from the unconscious to consciousness, thus making it serve the purpose of his own philosophy. But how is this faithful betrayal possible in the first place? Here is how Badiou himself explains this: “The word fidelity has a negative meaning – not to betray. For me, though, fidelity shouldn’t be defined by non-treason, by its negation. To be loyal to an event – fidelity is always fidelity to an original rupture, and not to a dogma, a doctrine or a political line – is to invent or propose something new that, so to speak, brings back the force of the rupture of the event. This is anything but a principle of conservation: it is a principle of movement. Fidelity designates the continuous creation of the rupture itself.” (Badiou 2015). This, or similar definitions of fidelity that we find scattered across Badiou’s work seem to be ignored often by his critics, whether they are orthodox Marxists or conservative Lacanians, and we shall abandon now the prototype example of such practice, that will open a terrain for reaffirming the multifocal scope of Badiou’s philosophy.

II. Is Psychoanalysis a Thinking?

In an interview for *Lacan quotidiene*, Jacques-Alain Miller names Badiou along with Slavoj Žižek as contemporary distortions of Lacan’s psychoanalytic teaching in service of philosophy and of radical politics. As he remarks:

But Pandora’s box has been open for a long time! Now we have Žižek, who ‘Žižekianizes’ Lacan after he learned the rudiments of a doctrine that I taught him in my seminar. We have Badiou, who ‘Badiouanizes’ Lacan, and it isn’t attractive at all. Instead, it would be a question of closing Pandora’s box... Laughs are over! Like Lacan says (Miller-Rose, and Roy 2017, p. 10)².

Miller’s declaration here is symptomatic of two contemporary tensions: 1) the politics of psychoanalysis, and 2) psychoanalysis’ relationship to philosophy. At the heart of this issue is the concern that it is possible for Lacanian institutions to make use of their theoretic-clinical framework to delegitimize and segregate intellectuals and militants who search for a new articulation of psychoanalysis and Marxism.

One can find the roots of this dispute in a debate between Jacques-Alain Miller and Alain Badiou in *Cahiers pour l’Analyse* (1966-1969), a journal edited by a group of graduate students at *École Normale Supérieure*. The texts that we are concerned with are Miller’s “Action of the Structure” (1968/2012a) and “Suture (Elements of the Logic of the Signifier)” (1966/2012b) as well as Badiou’s “Mark and Lack: On Zero” (1969/2012a). The stakes of the debate stand on two fronts. On one end, we are concerned with the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis. And on the other end, we are concerned with logic of the origin of logic. By exploring this debate, we are

able to grasp Badiou’s critiques of Lacan and Miller as well as Badiou’s significant philosophical contributions to psychoanalysis in his mature work from *Theory of the Subject to the Being and Event* trilogy.

In “Action of the Structure,” Miller states the commonly agreed concern that inspires this debate between him and Badiou. As he writes:

We know of two discourses of overdetermination: the Marxist discourse and the Freudian discourse. Since the first has today been liberated by Louis Althusser of the obstacle that burdened it with a conception of society as historical subject, just as the second has been liberated by Jacques Lacan from the interpretation of the individual as psychological subject—we think that is now possible to join these two discourses (Miller, 2012a, p. 80).

While Badiou and Miller both agree on this common concern, their strategies vastly diverge. In “Suture,” Miller argues that formulates the concept of suture as the unity that conjuncts Marxism and psychoanalysis into the logic of the signifier. Thus, in respect to the Marxism and psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis is given a privileged priority by making all fields subject to formal functions of the logic of the signifier. And this is the case because the logic of the signifier accounts for the emergence of the logician’s logic—this places the logic of the signifier as the logic of the origin of logic because it is able to account for a structural lacking excess in mathematical logic marked by zero as its suturing point (Miller, 2012b). Therefore, Miller generalizes the logic of the signifier to argue that the suture acts as the effacing knotting of the possibility of logic.

In contrast to Miller, Badiou argues that one can preserve the respective interiorities of Marxism and psychoanalysis by conjoining them through their very disjunction. In this respect, Badiou calls out a certain sleight of hand in Miller’s argument. For Badiou, the generalization of the logic of the signifier to respond to the problems of mathematics and logic is invalid, and it is also unnecessary because one can still account for a way to join both psychoanalysis and Marxism without a generalized suturing of the logic of the signifier (Badiou, 2012a). The problem at hand is not that Miller misunderstood Lacan in extrapolating the concept of suture, but rather that there is a fundamental problem in Lacan’s own mathematical modelling of the psychoanalytic situation. As Badiou writes: “Like Lacan’s accounts of Gödel’s theorem... Jacques-Alain Miller’s discussions of Frege and Boole are ambiguous in that they combine, simultaneously and indistinctly, what pertains to the effective construction of a logical mechanism with what pertains to the (ideological) discourse...” (Badiou, 2012a, p. 165).

The crux for Badiou’s argument is that we can retain the concept of the suture, albeit contained to its proper domain. Here we can understand the difference between science and ideology set out in Badiou’s essay, insofar as he is concerned with what breaks away from ideological capture (Badiou, 2012a). As opposed to the closure that is symptomized by the sutural zero that acts as a mark of lack in Miller, Badiou’s zero acts as a lacking mark of a pure and open space that infinitely produces strata without

² Translated by Simone A. Medina Polo from the original French: <<Mais la boîte de Pandora est ouverte depuis longtemps! Vous avez Zizek qui zizekise Lacan depuis qu’il a appris les rudiments de la doctrine jadis, à mon séminaire de DEA. Vous avez Badiou qui badiouise Lacan, et ce n’est pas joli joli. Il s’agirait plutôt de la refermer, la Pandora’s Box... Fini de rire! Comme disait Lacan.>>

an exclusionary mark. Thus, the proper domain for Miller's suture is ideology whereby the signifier is sutured only to itself. Furthermore, for Badiou, science does not fall under the concept of the logic of the signifier and he argues that the epistemological break from ideology can only thought in science's pure space without subject which acts as "the un-representable auspices of de-saturation... the Outside without a blind-spot" (Badiou, 2012a, pp. 171-172).

As Badiou sees it, the problem is not just that psychoanalysis can subordinate Marxism to it, but that it is also possible for Marxism to subordinate psychoanalysis in a manner that we remain within ideological closure as long as we claim that there is a subject of science which is in fact the subject of ideology. However, Badiou proposes science to a psychoanalysis of no-subject insofar as it preserves both strata of Marxism and psychoanalysis without collapsing them into each other. The moment that these strata collapse into each other, they become unstratified and thus unscientific in a manner that it only reflects science in ideology through the prescription of lack, a constitutive blind-spot.

At this point we can note that there is a significant difference and a significant consistency between Badiou's argument in "Mark and Lack" with his later work. One can note that the early Badiou upholds a rather anti-philosophical outlook in arguing that there is a tension between science as this pure, open space and philosophy which is tasked to close it by localizing what science tore off ideology to reincorporate it into ideology. At this early point of Badiou's thought, science continues to torment philosophy insofar as science eludes any mark that philosophy prescribes to totalize its pure stratified space in such a manner that philosophy lacks science—thus, while there is no subject of science, science is the subject of philosophy.

Badiou's argument in "Mark and Lack" remains a deflation of Miller's argument, and at most it sketches out the prospect of an alternative. However, this argument fails to be representative of Badiou's mature thought with respect to psychoanalysis. We begin to see some groundwork in this direction in Badiou's *The Concept of Model* (1969/2007a) where he argues against the conceptions of model in structuralism and neo-positivism in favour of a mathematical concept of model where models can construct relations of different regions of the same generalized field. This is very much the way in which one can build a model geometrically, algebraically, or logically to reflect other regions of the generalized field of mathematics. For example, logic can be modelled geometrically just like algebra can model geometry. At the core of the mathematical concept of model is this absolute homogeneity which is nonetheless relatively heterogenous. This is best illustrated at the beginning of *The Concept of Model*, when Badiou gives an analogy in thinking of musical variations insofar as they are variations of the same theme, each with their own unique effect happen only within the field of possible variants which he names "the variational space." However, it is ideology that attributes this to the variants themselves rather than to appreciate the open variational space in which these variants are even possible (Badiou, 2007). Thus, it is this latter ideological recapture precisely why Badiou rejects

structuralist and neo-positivist accounts of the concept of model.

Therefore, in reference to his debate with Miller, this is precisely why Badiou finds it unnecessary to designate the suture as link between Marxism and psychoanalysis since we are able to formulate a theory of genericity through the concept of model—and this becomes particularly pertinent in the *Being and Event* trilogy as well as the place of psychoanalysis in Badiou's mature thought (Hallward & Badiou, 2012). As it is well understood, Badiou's philosophy proceeds from the claim that there is truth. Truth is invariant in relationship to thought. However, the variants of truth rest in the conditions of philosophy where truths can be generated. These truth generic conditions are love, politics, art, and science. These conditions are heterogeneous in relationship to each other and their truths are characterized by events that disrupt their given situation by introducing something that creates a hole in its totality. Thus, while philosophy does not make truths itself, it is able to pronounce "the thinkable conjuncture of truths" by weaving a general space for their compossibility therein (Badiou, 1999).

In the *Being and Event* trilogy, we find a systematic exposition of this philosophy. In *Being and Event* (1988/2007b), Badiou provides an account of the universality of truth as a discontinuity digging a hole in the totality of the fabric of being which introduces something new into being as the event. While the first volume is minimalistic in its mathematical ontology, *Logics of Worlds* (2006/2009) phenomenologically thematizes truths as localized and appearing within the constructive logics of a world and the subjective attitudes assumed around this. Lastly, *The Immanence of Truths* (2018/2022) compliments the prior volumes to assert philosophy's task to create the knowledge of the existential possibility of truth within its given temporal horizon—thus, truth is absolute insofar as it oscillates between its universal ontological genericity and its singular phenomenological localization (Badiou, 2022).

Ultimately, Badiou's philosophy argues that Marxism and psychoanalysis are conjoined insofar as they both belong to the same generic invariant space from which each domain sutures itself into its respective condition concerned with their respective singular events (Badiou, 1999). In this sense, each condition—whether it be art, science, politics, or love—suspends philosophy in order to carry out its respective generic procedure. However, if we adopt a position similar to Miller's suture with respect to each of these conditions, then we end up closing them into a totalized domain which can reactively deny truth—or at worse obscure the possibility of truth as impossible altogether. In this manner, we also render the prospect of philosophy into something impossible—a gesture often recurring in declarations of the end of philosophy and the end of metaphysics (Badiou, 1999). Without philosophy, these disparate truths and domains do not share an independent unified conceptual space that conjoins them unless one of these conditions of philosophy sutures its dominance over others as subservient (e.g., Miller's generalization of the logic of the signifier). Instead, Badiou's philosophy attests to a space of de-saturation that nonetheless concerns itself with the consequences of each of these different sutures.

At this time, we can address the question: is psychoanalysis a thinking? For Badiou, thinking is defined as a zero-degree point between concepts and practices as these poles interlock as a truth-event. These truth-operations are localized into each of the conditions of philosophy. Badiou provides some examples for us. Science is a thinking that operates through its theories, concepts, and mathematical formulas, on the one hand, and technical apparatuses and experiments on the others—in the instance of physics, the concepts and practices of science circulate into a movement of unique thinking (Badiou, 2003). Similarly, revolutionary politics is also a thinking whose writings attest to the immanent relationship between its concepts and actions around a unique point. Thus, when we are interested in psychoanalysis as a thinking, we are not strictly concerned with the clinic nor the theory.

Though the practices of science, politics, and psychoanalysis are completely distinct, they share at least these common poles. Nonetheless, the differences are notable insofar as science is concerned with the repetitive reproduction of an experience amounting to the same result, whereas revolutionary politics is concerned with something unrepeatable and irreducible. Psychoanalysis is much closer to politics than science insofar as their subject is a singular subject that is unrepeatable. Politics and psychoanalysis are also concerned with their transmission to others, thereby finding it necessary to build a collective organization of knowledge. However, there is a profound difference between politics and psychoanalysis. While political thinking ruptures with the State and its homogenous totality by displacing its situation through the introduction of some heterogeneity; psychoanalysis, on the other hand, happens at a fixed place and it is not free. One comes to an agreement with an analyst to meet at a certain place and to pay a certain amount—this is unlike politics where everyone has an entry point to politics. Furthermore, while politics works against its structure to disruptively subtract its real, psychoanalysis aims at the subject accommodating its real by inscribing it in its structure. In addition, each domain comes with their respective risks when their respective strata are collapsed into the other. Marxism risks falling prey to dogmatism and psychoanalysis risks losing itself in skepticism—in this respect, both domains can protect themselves from dogmatism and skepticism respectively when they listen to each other.

In order for each of these domains to listen to each, they require a common space that does not collapse them into each other—and philosophy is precisely that space (Badiou, 2003). Psychoanalysis in its specific situation can focus on the client's cure, but this alone doesn't exhaust its goals since it aims to think about the singularity of the human subject tied up in language and sexuality (Badiou, 2003). Thus, we can immediately think of psychoanalysis as a condition of philosophy. But Badiou pushes this question further by comparing psychoanalysis, not to another condition of philosophy, but to philosophy itself since both philosophy and psychoanalysis are formally concerned with truth.

For Badiou, psychoanalysis and contemporary philosophy have a distinct outlook with respect to truth insofar as truth is something other than an

adequate relationship between thought and object. For both domains, thought and the real are separated from each other without a direct and immediate access point—in between, there is a void from which truth emerges as an effect of this rupture. Both philosophy and psychoanalysis try to localize the void in order to propose a thinkable relationship between truth and the void. However, it is here that there is a distinct difference between Badiou and Lacan. Whereas philosophy localizes the void in being qua being, psychoanalysis localizes it in the subject of the unconscious vanishing in the gap between signifiers. The consequence of this is that, for philosophy, being itself thinks, whereas thought is an effect of the subject of the unconscious in psychoanalysis. Therefore, while the subject, truth, and the real are common concerns for philosophy and psychoanalysis, both of these domains think about them differently.

What brings us back to where we started is that mathematics has a crucial importance in localizing the void outside consciousness—psychoanalysis and philosophy have this much in common. The ideal of formalization allows us to think the void without relation to reality by simply knotting letters and the real. This formalization subtracts what separates us from the real, and thereby it facilitates transmission through the *matheme*. Therefore, the *matheme* is a common boundary between psychoanalysis and philosophy. When we take on mathematics as a starting-point, it allows psychoanalysis and philosophy to come into a productive engagement with respect to a number of thematizing questions—specifically, within the condition of love.

In the *Manifesto for Philosophy* (1989/1999), Badiou declared: "A philosophy is possible today, only if it is compossible with Lacan" (Badiou, 1999, p. 84). Love is a unique condition of philosophy insofar as it acts as a fundamental starting-point to philosophy without which philosophy will not come to know itself (Badiou, 2012b; Badiou & Truong, 2012). For Badiou, the crux of Lacan's intervention at the level of love pertains to the ontological function assigned to love in Seminar XX, which claims that love is when we find something where we expect less than nothing in the abyss of the sexual non-relation (Badiou, 1999; Lacan, 1999; Badiou & Truong, 2012). In this sense, Badiou subtracts love as the truth of sexuation from Lacan and psychoanalysis. Therefore, this also re-thematizes Badiou's critique of the logic of the signifier in Lacan and Miller, since the suture of the signifier creates the site where sexuation is assumed to an excruciating point of finitude. Instead, love makes something unsutured and unbound apparent. Rather than a closure into narcissistic imaginary love (such as courtly love), ontological real love is the actuality of the paradoxical Two of sexuation whereby the world is grasped on the basis of difference rather than identity—and there is a potential universality in the radical difference that love infinitely opens up.

III. From the subject of the unconscious to the violence of the proletarian subject

Following the path we pursued so far, it is now possible to understand the leap Badiou makes when he understands the phenomenon of politics in the light of his reading of psychoanalysis and its implications. This leads us to an ontological and gnoseological

consequence of the same type as the one made around psychoanalysis: like the latter, politics will appear as a mode of thought.

If we follow the approach taken by Žižek (2012), we find that the point of confluence that allows us to make this leap is the way in which Badiou takes over the Lacanian conceptualization of “suture”. (p. 582) By maintaining the position of fidelity already addressed above, we could say about the position that Badiou takes on the Lacanian suture that it is precisely this that allows him to remain in that power of the original rupture in order to propose that the suture would in fact constitute something like a failed attempt to accommodate and subsume the new, the event, within that language and knowledge already constituted. Contrary to Miller’s conceptualization of the Lacanian suture, Badiou affirms that what this operation ends up subordinating the real to the symbolic. For Badiou, a true event, as a rupture of the existing order, cannot be sutured by a signifying chain (Badiou, 2009b, pp. 245-246). Later in his book *Logics of Worlds*, he expands on this statement by affirming that truth is not sutured to the body of a subject, but that “the body is subordinated to the signifier” (Badiou, 2009a, p. 478).

In the same course of fidelity towards the point of rupture, we can say that the reading around the suture can be inscribed in the more general terrain on which Badiou conceives the relation between the subject and the unconscious: if for Lacan the subject emerges from a constitutive lack in the order of language, then for Badiou (2018) the subject will be above all an ontological process that will be constituted from an event’s disruptive character that will break the existing situation. It is precisely this that leads Badiou to reject Lacan’s conception of the unconscious structured as language; instead, in order to think the real of the subject, what Badiou proposes is to mathematize the ontology of the multiple and discontinuous being, in order to contest any linguistic reduction (Badiou, 2007b). Then it is this context that will allow him to rethink a subject that goes beyond the structuralist position. It is a matter of being able to preserve what is properly untimely and absolutely novel in a true event, thus rejecting any attempt to capture it in an already instituted horizon of meaning. Faced with Lacan’s attempt to tie the real to the order of the symbolic, Badiou will claim the dimensions of excess and rupture, which can never be fully symbolized; it is a contestation of language in the name of the real. Condensing this point of estrangement between Lacan and Badiou, Žižek states:

We are now in a position to precisely determine how much of a gap separates Badiou from Lacan. For Badiou, what psychoanalysis provides is insight into the morbid intertwining of Life and Death, of Law and desire, insight into the obscenity of the Law itself as the “truth” of the thought and the moral stance which limit themselves to the Order of Being... For Lacan, on the other hand, the Truth-Event operates only against a background of traumatic encounter with the undead/monstrous Thing... (Žižek, 1998, p. 247).

This way of conceptualizing the subject under the aegis of the rupture with Lacan is what allows Badiou

to re-conceptualize the proletariat as an ethical-subjective category, far from any substantialism. If the subject appears as a dimension of excess and rupture with the given symbolic, the same will happen with the proletariat, which will be constituted around the activation of the disruptive overflow beyond the limits of the current order.

Both the subject and the proletariat will be understood as forces of disruption of a given symbolic order. Badiou (2009b) expresses it by saying that: “There is only one political subject, for any given historicization. To ignore this major observation gets one tangled up in a vision of politics as a subjective duel, which it is not.” Further, now affirmatively, “The proletariat exists everywhere where some political outpace is produced” (p. 130) – that is, both subject and proletariat are always a result of an excess that disrupts the order, in this sense, both are conceptualizations that lead us to make an affirmation that implies a new truth and a universality that seeks an emancipatory horizon.

Badiou thinks of the proletariat as simply an eventual site of the event – that is to say, there occurs here a de-substantialization of the vision of a vulgarized Marxism. In *The Rebirth of History* (2012), Badiou unfolds at length this understanding of the concept of the proletariat, in the heat of the distinctions introduced, thus opening the possibility for understanding it as a category that is nothing but an eminently ethical and subjective condition related to the event.

Thus, the re-conceptualization of the proletariat cannot be separated from the ontological theory of the subject inscribed transversally in Badiou’s work: both parts constitute the two poles of the same logic of rupture with the established, of a militant negativity, and of a fidelity to the event that is at the same time an affirmation of a universal truth.

Finally, and returning to what was stated at the beginning of this section, according to Badiou, politics ends up appearing as a mode of thought insofar as it is not a simple exercise of administration or power of the existing, but a creative activity of thought in his conception. Politics is in fact an exceptional singularity and, therefore, it is articulated to singular events and developed in its own intellectual devices. Badiou is clear in this respect: “It is never the incarnation or historical body of a trans-temporal philosophical category. It is not a descent of the Idea, nor a destinal figure of being” (2008, p. 162).

It is precisely these coordinates that ultimately allow Badiou to distance his categorical apparatus from conceptions such as those of “political philosophy”. For him, on the contrary, politics constitutes an autonomous thought that gravitates around the novelty of events that show the fragility of the establishment as well as the probability of changing the establishment itself. In this way, politics is far from being an almost epiphenomenal thought, but politics claims itself as a mode of practical and transforming thought that possesses the possibility of creating new truths in the process of refounding the current coordinates of a given situation.

IV. Conclusion

Badiou’s perspective on psychoanalysis as a form of thinking acknowledges its unique ability to explore the depths of subjectivity and reveal unconscious

processes, offering valuable insights into the complexities of human experience. This recognition positions psychoanalysis as a significant contributor to the broader philosophical endeavor of understanding truth and subjectivity (Badiou, 2012a). However, Badiou's viewpoint goes beyond exclusively highlighting psychoanalysis. He emphasizes the importance of facilitating dialogue and exchange between psychoanalysis and other domains, including philosophy, science, and politics (Badiou 2008). This interdisciplinary engagement serves as a means to prevent isolation and foster mutual enrichment. It recognizes that different areas of knowledge can mutually benefit from one another, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the human condition (Sant, 2012).

In contemporary discussions, there has been tension surrounding the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy. Notably, Jacques-Alain Miller and Alain Badiou engage in a debate regarding the conjoining of Marxism and psychoanalysis in relation to the logic of the signifier (Miller, 2012b). Miller argues for the concept of suture as the unity of Marxism and psychoanalysis, while Badiou proposes preserving their interiorities by conjoining them through their disjunction (Badiou, 2012a). Badiou criticizes Miller's generalization of the logic of the signifier and emphasizes the importance of distinguishing science from ideology.

Badiou's argument extends beyond the debate with Miller. He rejects structuralist and neo-positivist accounts of the concept of model, advocating for a mathematical concept of model that allows for the construction of relations within a generalized field. Badiou's philosophy asserts the existence of truths that belong to different domains or conditions such as art, science, politics, and love (Badiou, 1999). These truths are characterized by events that introduce something new and disrupt the given situation. Philosophy creates a conceptual space that conjoins these truths without totalizing or subordinating them. He delves into the inquiry of whether psychoanalysis can be considered a mode of thinking (Badiou, 2009b). According to him, thinking represents the point of convergence between concepts and practices within a truth-event (Badiou, 2003). While science and revolutionary politics serve as distinct embodiments of thinking, psychoanalysis aligns more closely with politics, given its emphasis on the singular subject and the transmission of knowledge. Nonetheless, psychoanalysis possesses its own unique characteristics, including its fixed position and the inscription of the real within its framework (Hallward & Badiou, 2012).

According to Badiou, psychoanalysis and philosophy share a fundamental concern for truth. Although psychoanalysis focuses on the singularity of the human subject, it can be seen as a necessary component of philosophy (Badiou, 2003). While they possess different perspectives on truth, both disciplines rely on a shared space that permits their coexistence without merging into one another. Philosophy serves as this essential space, providing psychoanalysis with the opportunity to engage with truth while preserving its distinctive viewpoint. This symbiotic relationship allows psychoanalysis to enrich the philosophical discourse while retaining its own specific goals and methods (Badiou, 2012a).

Psychoanalysis and contemporary philosophy have differing conceptions of subjectivity and truth. While contemporary philosophy often embraces postmodern skepticism and rejects grand narratives, psychoanalysis remains committed to exploring the depths of the subject and its unconscious desires (Badiou, 2009b). According to Badiou, psychoanalysis offers a unique approach to truth through its engagement with the unconscious and its emphasis on the singularity of the subject. This complements the more abstract and formal investigations of truth conducted by philosophy (Bell, 2011).

In this sense, psychoanalysis can be recognized as a profound mode of inquiry that navigates the intricacies of subjectivity and its intricate connections to language, desire, and sexuality (Bosteels 2001). It offers a conceptual framework through which one can grasp the unconscious mechanisms that mold human existence, while also presenting a methodology for unearthing concealed significances and inner conflicts (Badiou, 2022). By emphasizing the act of interpretation and the examination of symbolic systems, psychoanalysis creates an expansive domain for introspection and self-exploration. It enables individuals to delve into the depths of their own psyche, fostering a space where reflection and self-discovery can flourish (Badiou, 2012a).

However, Badiou also recognizes the inherent limitations of psychoanalysis as a mode of inquiry. While it undoubtedly provides valuable insights into the depths of the human psyche, it is not immune to certain drawbacks (Sant, 2012). Like any other discipline, psychoanalysis runs the risk of succumbing to dogmatism or becoming excessively preoccupied with its internal workings, thus losing sight of its interconnectedness with the broader philosophical endeavor. Badiou contends that it is vital for psychoanalysis to actively engage in dialogue with other domains, such as Marxism and politics, to prevent it from becoming insular and self-referential (Badiou, 2003). By fostering cross-disciplinary exchanges, psychoanalysis can enrich its own perspective and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of truth (Sant, 2012).

Ultimately, Badiou's proposition suggests that psychoanalysis, as a form of thinking, can find its rightful place within the expansive framework of philosophy (Badiou, 2003). By recognizing the inherent distinctiveness of psychoanalysis and its singular approach to truth, while simultaneously acknowledging its interconnectedness with other domains, philosophy emerges as a fertile ground for the meaningful exchange and mutual enrichment of diverse forms of thinking. In this reciprocal dialogue, psychoanalysis can make valuable contributions to the ongoing philosophical endeavor of comprehending the essence of truth, subjectivity, and the intricate intricacies of human experience (Sant, 2012).

Moreover, the integration of psychoanalysis into philosophy's domain allows for a nuanced exploration of the relationship between language, subjectivity, and social structures. By drawing upon psychoanalytic insights, philosophy can delve deeper into the ways in which language shapes our understanding of reality and influences our subjective experiences. Additionally, psychoanalysis's emphasis on the unconscious and hidden meanings can shed light on

the complexities of social dynamics and power relations, enriching philosophical inquiries into social and political phenomena (Bell, 2011).

Furthermore, the inclusion of psychoanalysis in the philosophical discourse offers an opportunity to bridge the gap between theoretical abstractions and lived experiences. By examining the subjective dimensions of truth and delving into the individual's unique encounter with reality, psychoanalysis brings a valuable perspective that complements philosophy's more abstract and conceptual investigations (Bell, 2011). This interdisciplinary exchange not only broadens our understanding of truth but also facilitates a deeper engagement with the complexities and diversity of human existence (Sant, 2012). By fostering a symbiotic relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy, we can cultivate a comprehensive framework that encompasses both the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete (Badiou, 2007). Through this integrative approach, the ongoing philosophical project gains greater depth and breadth, encompassing a broader spectrum of human experiences and opening avenues for transformative insights into the nature of truth, subjectivity, and the multifaceted dimensions of our existence (Badiou, 2012a).

In conclusion, Badiou affirms that psychoanalysis is indeed a form of thinking. He recognizes its unique position as a domain that explores the depths of subjectivity and uncovers unconscious processes, providing valuable insights into the complexities of human experience. Psychoanalysis has the potential to contribute to the broader philosophical project of understanding truth and subjectivity (Badiou, 2012a). However, Badiou's perspective extends beyond solely emphasizing psychoanalysis. He emphasizes the importance of fostering dialogue and exchange between psychoanalysis and other domains, as this prevents isolation and promotes mutual enrichment. By integrating psychoanalysis into the philosophical framework, a space is created for the exploration of diverse forms of thinking and their contributions to our understanding of truth and subjectivity (Bell, 2011).

This integration encourages an interdisciplinary approach that transcends disciplinary boundaries, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the human condition (Badiou, 2012a). Drawing from the insights provided by psychoanalysis and the broader philosophical discourse, a richer and more nuanced understanding of truth and subjectivity can be achieved. By fostering dialogue and integration with other domains, psychoanalysis enriches the broader philosophical project, contributing to our understanding of truth and subjectivity (Badiou, 2003). The integration of diverse forms of thinking within the philosophical framework enables a more comprehensive exploration of the human condition and opens up new avenues for transformative insights.

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