

## The Idea of Communism and the Communism of the Idea

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**Abstract.** This essay articulates a double helix at work in Badiou's thought on politics as a condition of philosophy and philosophy as such by focusing on what Badiou calls "the Idea of communism" and we will call "the communism of the Idea". The former refers to communism as an Idea par excellence, while the latter concerns the Idea as a philosophical communism. The first section of the essay unpacks the Idea of communism as a composite interaction of politics, history, and subjectivity insofar as each of these elements cannot be taken in themselves. Contrary to post-ideology, Badiou condemns the claim that we should live without an ideological framework insofar as this asks us to live without an Idea. The second section will focus on the communism of the Idea as the result of Badiou's broader philosophical project and its major Platonic gestures. Badiou's broader concerns pertain to the commitment to live with an Idea as finite, infinite, and transfinite to the endpoint that philosophy itself is characterized to be destined for communism. The crux that anyone can become a serious philosopher if, to paraphrase Diotima in Plato's Symposium, they gracefully lend themselves to the process of truths as their fundamental commitment.

**Keywords:** Idea; Communism; Politics; Philosophy; Ideology.

### [es] La Idea del Comunismo y el Comunismo de la Idea

**Resumen.** Este ensayo articula una doble hélice en función con el pensamiento de Badiou, enfocándose en vislumbrar a la política como condición de la filosofía. De acuerdo con este autor, la filosofía como tal, se centra en lo que Badiou llama "la Idea del comunismo" y nosotros llamaremos "el comunismo de la Idea". El primero se refiere al comunismo como Idea por excelencia, mientras que el segundo concierne a la Idea como comunismo filosófico. La primera sección del ensayo desentraña la Idea del comunismo como una interacción compuesta de política, historia y subjetividad en la medida en que cada uno de estos elementos no puede tomarse por sí mismos. Contrariamente a la post-ideología, Badiou condena la pretensión de que deberíamos vivir sin un marco ideológico en la medida en que esto nos pide vivir sin una Idea. La segunda sección se centrará en el comunismo de la Idea como resultado del proyecto filosófico más amplio de Badiou y sus principales gestos platónicos. Las preocupaciones más amplias de Badiou se refieren al compromiso de vivir con una Idea como finita, infinita y transfinita hasta el punto final de que la filosofía misma se caracteriza por estar destinada al comunismo. El quid de que cualquiera puede llegar a ser un filósofo serio si, parafraseando a Diotima en el Simposio de Platón, se presta graciosamente al proceso de las verdades como compromiso fundamental.

**Palabras clave:** Idea; comunismo; política; filosofía; ideología.

**Sumario.** 1. The falling of dusk and the birth of a new day. 2. The idea of Communism. 3. The communism of the Idea. 4. The true life as living with an idea. 5. The future of Philosophy. 6. References.

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### 1. The Falling of Dusk and the Birth of a New Day

Between the tribunal of history and failed revolutions, philosophy's relationship to history and politics is troublesome to say the least. The philosophy of Alain Badiou comes at the height of these issues captivated by declarations of the end of philosophy

and the end of metaphysics. Despite the readiness to abandon philosophy and metaphysics, Badiou insists on a return to philosophy and on fostering a desire for philosophy instead of giving in to both the deconstructive exhaustion of philosophy's historical possibilities and the conceptless messiahism of a redemptive future<sup>2</sup>.

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To borrow Franz Rosenzweig's expression, the contemporary state of philosophy after the Kantian Copernican turn has been characterized by declarations of a "new thinking"<sup>3</sup>. These types of claims suppose that all possible avenues of philosophical thought have been systematically exhausted; however, the future of thinking persists in a manner that cannot be appropriated into the totalization of this systematic comprehension characteristic of philosophy. Such an attitude is adopted by a variety of thinkers in their own respective ways. Nietzsche, for example, dismisses the Platonic category of truth for the sake of awakening free spirits affirming their lives<sup>4</sup>. Heidegger deconstructs the history of philosophy since Plato as an obscuration of the question of being through its contracted appropriation by logical means –instead he proposes a poetic hermeneutic to reconstruct this question and its existential stakes<sup>5</sup>. For Marx and many subsequent Marxists such as Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Lukacs, Althusser and Mao, philosophy can be an ideological domain justifying and redeeming the antagonisms in the state that it seeks to articulate –whereas France had a political revolution, Germany consoled itself with a spiritual reformation<sup>6</sup>. Carnap dismissed metaphysics as nonsense to be filtered out of the philosophical discursivity by means of logic and empirical positivity<sup>7</sup>. For Freud, philosophy ends up being nothing more than a speculative worldview which can be demystified psychoanalytically<sup>8</sup>.

All these declarations of "new thinking" often revolve around a specific nonphilosophical condition of philosophy be it science, politics, art, or love in such a way that philosophy is suspended for the sake of that specific condition. Badiou's philosophy proceeds by acknowledging all four of these conditions as the generic processes where truths are produced at the cracks and disruptions occurring within those conditions. The crux of philosophy is that these disparate truths and domains do not share an independent conceptual space without philosophy, for oth-

erwise they subsume other conditions under a dominant condition –for example, Carnap's dismissal of Heidegger's poetic turn, Miller's suturing of the logic of the signifier as the foundation of both psychoanalysis and Marxism, and Heidegger's suspicions over the state of modern science and modern technology.

When it comes to politics and history, Badiou's outlook on their relationship to philosophy can be contrasted to Hegel's outlook as articulated through the figure of the owl of Minerva in *Philosophy of Right*. In the preface to that text, Hegel concludes by outlining how philosophy comes too late to tell the world what it ought to be. Philosophy can only be a snapshot of its time by seeing its formative process through to the end into a mature reality that the ideal can elevate to the level of an intellectual kingdom. To go beyond this snapshot is to breach philosophy's own capacities. When philosophy comes of age and matures, it reaches an old age when it can no longer be rejuvenated –as Hegel writes, "philosophy paints its grey in grey" Only when everything is said and done as the formative day gives way to dusk, the owl of Minerva takes its flight<sup>9</sup>.

In contrast to the dusk whence the owl of Minerva takes off, Badiou's return to philosophy is premised on the anticipated dawn of a new "day of living truths" which calls for the creative repetition of the philosophical act yet again<sup>10</sup>. What Hegel sees as the comprehended totality of history as the coming-to-be of Spirit that knows itself to be so, Badiou sees as the encyclopedic knowledge of a given situation<sup>11</sup>. What Badiou seeks to articulate, however, is the disruption of the encyclopedic continuity of knowledge in the moment of truth that Badiou calls the event: "a truth is always that which makes a hole in a knowledge"<sup>12</sup>. Like Hegel, Badiou's philosophy does not necessarily tell the world what it ought to be since the site of the event may insist in a different locale, although Badiou is nonetheless concerned with the commitments and attitudes that will shape the world to come. After all, Badiou is concerned with the fidelity of subjects processing an event in contrast to reactionary denials and obscurantist occlusions. History, politics, and subjectivity are three elements of what informs Badiou's approach to politics' relationship to philosophy. Therefore, the challenge that Badiou's philosophy is concerned with is the future of philosophy insofar as philosophy is called upon to progressively adapt and to remain attentive to its conditions whereby truth is generated<sup>13</sup>.

This essay will seek to articulate a double helix at work in Badiou's thought on politics as a condition of philosophy and philosophy as such by focusing on what Badiou calls "the Idea of communism" and what we will call "the communism of the Idea". The former refers to communism as a philosophical Idea par excel-

<sup>3</sup> F. Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking (1925)", in P.W. Franks and M. L. Morgan (eds.), *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000, pp. 110-111.

<sup>4</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 110.

<sup>5</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010, p. 6; Plato, "Sophist", in *Sophist and Statesman: Two Dialogues*, New York, Dover Publications, 2018, pp. 61-62.

<sup>6</sup> K. Marx, "The German Ideology: Part I", in R.C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1972, pp. 111-112; F. Engels, "On Morality", in R.C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1972, pp. 666-668; V.I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Paris, Foreign Languages Press, 2022, pp. 21-23; R. Luxemburg, "Reform or Revolution" in *Reform or Revolution and Other Writings*, New York, Dover Publications, 2006, p. 11; G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, Paris, Foreign Languages Press, 2021, p. 18; L. Althusser, "Lenin and Philosophy", in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 54-55; M. Zedong, "On Contradiction" in *Five Essays on Philosophy*, Utrecht, Foreign Languages Press, 2018, pp. 32-35 and 89.

<sup>7</sup> R. Carnap, "The Eliminations of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language", in A.J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism*, New York, The Free Press, 1959, 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> S. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 1989, p. 219; A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics" in *Philosophy for Militants*, New York, Verso, 2011, pp. 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, New York, Continuum, 2007, p. 327.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 327.

<sup>13</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 2.

lence, while the latter concerns the very notion of the Idea as a philosophical communism. The first section of the essay will unpack the Idea of communism as a composite interaction of politics, history, and subjectivity insofar as each of these elements cannot be taken in themselves and in the abstract. Contrary to the pretenses of post-ideology, Badiou condemns the claim that we should live without an ideological framework insofar as this claim asks us to live without an Idea. The second section will focus on the communism of the Idea as the result of Badiou's broader philosophical project and its major Platonic gestures. Badiou's broader concerns pertain to the commitment to live with an Idea as finite, infinite, and transfinite to the endpoint that philosophy itself is characterized to be destined for communism in the egalitarian discipline of truths. The crux for Badiou is that anyone can become a serious philosopher if, to paraphrase Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, they gracefully lend themselves to the process of truths as their fundamental commitment<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. The Idea of Communism

It may serve us to understand what an Idea is for Badiou before we concern ourselves with the Idea of communism. In the *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, Badiou offers three succinct definitions of the Idea. As he writes:

I name "Idea" that upon which an individual's representation of the world, including her- or himself, is based once s/he is bound to the faithful subject type through incorporation within the process of a truth. The Idea is that which makes the life of an individual, a human animal, orientate itself according to the True. Or, put another way: the Idea is the mediation between the individual and the Subject of a truth –with "Subject" designating here that which orientates a post-evental body in the world<sup>15</sup>.

In short, the Idea pertains to the commitment and orientation towards truth insofar as the subject is called upon to see its consequences through in the process of subjectivation. In the political condition, Badiou goes on to argue that the Idea holds the possibility for an individual to understand their participation in a singular political process as a historical decision by becoming a subject. The Idea of communism acts as a synthesis of politics, history, and subjectivity which are its composite elements.

We may ask: why does Badiou emphasize the Idea of communism? Why not the Idea of liberalism? Or even the Idea of fascism? The issue we find with liberalism and fascism is their subjective attitude towards the event.

In the instance of liberalism, we find that reactionary denials of the event that founds the fidelity to communist emancipatory endeavours which include anything ranging from downplaying financial crashes, rendering the exploitation of labour as a free choice for the labourer,

sanitizing historical injustices, justifying the endeavours of colonialism as foreign aid as a façade for influencing the politics of countries in the southern hemisphere or straight up facilitating coups to install political allies to undermine emancipatory processes<sup>16</sup>. As Badiou has eloquently pointed out, liberalism will hastily favour accounts of politics which emphasize issues of victimhood and political passivity under the name of "human rights" in order to divest from political activities that concern themselves with the singularity of their situation<sup>17</sup>. The pretext of neutrality in political liberalism is best summarized by its claim to not give in to extremes, to be able to indecisively evaluate both sides of an issue –and the problem is precisely that the measure of liberal judgment denies the fundamental antagonisms that come to the fore during the precipitation of a political event, thus skewing its own alleged neutral judgment by denying its historical situation.

On the other hand, fascism operates through an obscurantist occlusion of the possibility of any site for an event. Under notions like God, the motherland, the City, the Race, and others, the obscurantist makes an incorruptible and indivisible body which is transcendental and atemporal in a manner that no event could possibly shake up the constitution of this body which is rigidly totalized<sup>18</sup>. The obscurantist will treat oppression and slavery as a necessity, whether natural or divine, in the constitution of this fictive absolute body. Segregation is treated as order. Misogyny is viewed as a nature or a God-given entitlement. Everyone has their place within this absolute body, and who are they to question it? Even if anyone tries to change things, the obscurantist alleges that nothing changes this absolute body –nothing can change, as time is abolished leaving us without a trace of past, present, or future.

While the liberal may teach history, liberalism pretends to be non-ideological and any political emancipatory events disrupting the given situation are seen as illegitimate projects. Though fascism may fetishize history as the articulation of fate and its ideology as a poetry of the Race, political resistance is viewed as something which will be inevitably crushed. The way that the Idea of communism operates on history, politics, and subjectivity is rather distinct since it is concerned with the capacities of the collective in mobilizing itself, testing the possibilities of collective organization as well as the possibilities that these collectives can open<sup>19</sup>. Unlike liberalism, the Idea of communism is decisive and committed to the truth of the (real) event as opposed to the abstract knowledge that comforts the liberal. And unlike fascism, the Idea of communism does not close the possibility of possibilities characteristic of the political event.

When Badiou articulates the Idea of communism, it offers a singular totalization of politics, history, and subjectivity as its elements. Politics is a condition where we

<sup>14</sup> Plato, *Symposium and Phaedrus*, New York, Dover Publications, 1993, pp. 32-33.

<sup>15</sup> A. Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, Great Britain, Polity, 2011, p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> A. Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>17</sup> A. Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, New York, Verso, 2001, pp. 16 and 90.

<sup>18</sup> A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, New York, Continuum, 2009, pp. 60-61.

<sup>19</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, op. cit., p. 354.

can situate political processes and sequences that characterize political truth generic procedures in particular localizations of events. History is the general becoming of humanity as a whole in a localized form supported by its spatial, temporal, and real indices. And subjectivity is the decisive incorporation of an individual into a political truth procedure, one becomes militant insofar as that denotes its decisiveness and commitment over placing a truth with respect to one's own vital existence and the world that situates it<sup>20</sup>. While liberalism asks us to indecisively live without an idea and fascism makes our participation futile, only communism can be thought of as an Idea proper in establishing and understanding one's participation in a singular political process with historical decisiveness

In an essay titled "The Idea of Communism," Badiou presents politics, history, and subjective ideological commitments as a Borromean knot grasping at their symbolic, imaginary, and real dimensions. The subject as an ideological commitment to the Idea is imaginary since it projects the real political process into the symbolic historic process. But Badiou cautions us to note that the real political project cannot really be projected to the historical symbolic since it can only do so imaginarily, the imaginary alone cannot make history without the real that opens up the possibility of possibilities in that history, and history has no meaning by itself without the real –Badiou goes as far as to strategically reject the existence of history as it is only the real political sequence that exists in order to not subordinate truths to their historical meaning. The Idea is surely ideological when a subject adopts its mantle by being caught up in the concrete impurity of real political sequences and turning to history to situate the meaning of getting involved in politics. In short, Badiou writes:

If, for an individual, an Idea is the subjective operation whereby a specific real truth is projected into the symbolic movement of a History, we can say that an Idea presents truth as if it were a fact. In other words, the Idea presents certain facts as symbols of the real of truth... The Idea, which is an operative mediation between the real and the symbolic, always presents the individual with something that is located between the event and the fact<sup>21</sup>.

The real political process must be presented in a fictional structure because History can help us ideologically allegorize and situate the fragility of truth. History, as Hegel articulates at the end of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, must act as the gallery of spirits which commune amongst each other through the insistent failures and contradictions in the real that absolutize them as a bond of solidarity that knows itself to be so in its resolute commitment<sup>22</sup>. And ideology can help us anticipate the event while acknowledging the aleatory nature of events which makes them surprising and sudden against the background of our historical situations. This is what is at stake in saying that the Idea in general and the Idea

of communism in particular are ideological. The challenge which remains committed to truth demands us to live with an Idea, becoming a philosopher to act as a watchdog for the Outside since we very well know that the day of living truths will come again when dusk gives way to the night of thought<sup>23</sup>.

### 3. The Communism of the Idea

As we continue to flesh out what Badiou calls the Idea, we turn to Badiou's Platonic gestures in the Platonism of the multiple that he declared in the first *Manifesto for Philosophy* and he communism of the Idea declared in the *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*. In a sense, these Platonic gestures act as indexes of different periods in Badiou's work.

The basis of this project takes off from the claims that there is such a thing as the absolute in truths and that a mathematical ontology offers an alternative against the anti-Platonisms of modern and classical sophistry. The central question at the heart of this dispute is: is truth possible if being is multiple? While modern and classical sophists answer negatively and move on to offer replacements for truth –linguistic games and rules, hermeneutic openness in interpretation, difference and pluralities of postmodernism, the affirmation of free spirits despite of truth– Badiou answers this question positively and he goes on to elaborate what such a concept of truth would look like<sup>24</sup>.

The Platonism of the multiple plays a central role in first the *Manifesto for Philosophy* and the first volume of the *Being and Event* trilogy where Badiou formulates the notion of generic multiplicity in sets as the ontology of truths. The Platonism of the multiple means that truth has to be thought of as "both a multiple-result from a singular procedure and a hole, or subtraction, in the field of the nameable"<sup>25</sup>. In *Being and Event*, Badiou establishes a meta-ontological basis for philosophy when he declares that "ontology = mathematics" in a manner that resists making this meta-ontological claim either mathematical or ontological. This meta-ontology treats mathematics as the historicity of the discourse on being qua being, thus placing mathematics as the guardians at the care of being<sup>26</sup>. The point is that this meta-ontological decision delimits the space of philosophy proper, since "ontology = mathematics" stands to contrast to the problem of 'what-is-not-being-qua-being' that is organized around Badiou's theory of the subject and truth which pertain to the event. The event as "what-is-not-being-qua-being" situates an impasse in the structuring of being that characterizes the indiscernible in a manner evocative of the unnameability at the end of Wittgen-

<sup>20</sup> A. Badiou, "The Idea of Communism", S. Žižek and C. Douzinas (eds.), *The Idea of Communism*, New York, Verso, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 492-493.

<sup>23</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>24</sup> A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy, Followed by Two Essays "The (Re)turn of Philosophy Itself" and "Definition of Philosophy"*, N. Madarasz (ed.), New York, State University of New York Press, 1999, p. 104; *Infinite Thought*, New York, Continuum, 2003, pp. 42-44.

<sup>25</sup> A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15.

stein's *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent". However, contrary to Wittgenstein, the concept of generic multiplicities and genericity act as a positive insistence that the indiscernible must be discerned and the unnameable named, as such, the generic accounts for the effects of the event once the site of the event is localized<sup>27</sup>. As Badiou writes in *Being and Event*: "The term «generic» positively designates that what does not allow itself to be discerned is in reality the general truth of a situation, the truth of its being, as considered as the foundation of all knowledge to come"<sup>28</sup>. Badiou elaborates in retrospect that "The pivotal point was to demonstrate that generic multiplicities can exist [...] and then to set as the norm for any activity that aims at producing truths (or universality for it's the same thing) the capacity of creating, in disparate situations, generic subsets of these situations"<sup>29</sup>. This comes to designate the conditions of philosophy as generic procedures that traverse the categories of being and the categories of the event in the generative subtraction of a truth whose consequences are faithfully seen through to the end. Philosophy, at first, is the generic space of these truth conditions as Badiou writes:

I have to say that philosophy does not generate any truths either, however painful this admission may be. At best, philosophy is conditioned by the faithful procedures of its times. Philosophy can aid the procedure which conditions it, precisely because it depends on it: it attaches itself via such intermediaries to the foundational events of the times, yet philosophy itself does not make up a generic procedure. Its particular function is to arrange multiples for a random encounter with such a procedure. However, whether such an encounter takes place, and whether the multiples thus arranged turn out to be connected to the supernumerary name of the event, does not depend upon philosophy<sup>30</sup>.

What philosophy must do is propose a conceptual framework in which the contemporary compossibility of these conditions can be grasped. Philosophy can only do this –and this is what frees it from any foundational ambition, in which it would lose itself– by designating amongst its own conditions, as a singular discursive situation, ontology itself in the form of pure mathematics. This is precisely what delivers philosophy and ordains it to the care of truths<sup>31</sup>.

In short, Badiou's project configures being, subject, and truth as follows: If mathematics is at the care of being and if the conditions of philosophy are at the care of their events and their subjectivations, then philosophy is at the care of truths in their inscription and compossibility<sup>32</sup>.

When it comes to the communism of the Idea, on the other hand, it is characteristic of Badiou's work at the time of the *Second Manifesto for Philosophy* and *Logics*

*of Worlds* where he is concerned with the lived embodiment of truth in a series of decisive points in the real. If *Being and Event* offered a minimalist account of ontology and the event through his concept of genericity, then *Logics of Worlds* acts as the objective phenomenology of how worlds are structured such that truth can both appear in those worlds and be incorporated by subjects<sup>33</sup>. To live with an Idea, the philosopher must retrieve life from being collapsed into mere bodies and languages of a totalized world, but rather truth must be introduced to redefine life around the appearances of truth. As Badiou writes in defining life:

*The most significant stake of Logics of Worlds is without doubt that of producing a new definition of bodies, understood as bodies-of-truth, or subjectivizable bodies. This definition forbids any capture by the hegemony of democratic materialism... To live is to participate, point by point, in the organization of a new body, in which a faithful subjective formalism comes to take root*<sup>34</sup>.

Instead of mathematical ontology and its negative universality, this next step in Badiou's systematic philosophy concerns "the material process of appearing, existence and development in a given world, as well as the subjective type attached to this process". While we have discussed these subjective attitudes and exemplified the points in the real that these subjects are confronted by. The particular integrations of truths in their appearances are always point by point localized, delocalized, and relocalized with the aid of the separatist doctrine of being whose negative universality allows for such a conception of truth. In this way, when we commit ourselves to live with an Idea, what we end with is in fact an affirmative vision of universality through what Badiou calls the pragmatics around the becoming of the ontology of true universality as the "integrative doctrine of doing"<sup>35</sup>. To live like an immortal, as Badiou would say, is to acknowledge the transfinite availability of truths between their generic invariance and their punctual/indexical variance each time the event is localized, delocalized, and relocalized. In this sense, the communism of the Idea is evocative of Hegel's gallery of spirits as this aether of the True life over bare life which is barely living at all. In this aether, we commune among those who come before us or are along us in the attestation of truths. History becomes an allegorical connection between subjective fidelities, and the transfinite availability of truths opens the possibility for anyone to become a serious philosopher as long as they become a subject searching for truths<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, insofar as the communism of the Idea is an attestation to the egalitarian discipline of truth through the True life, philosophy is destined to communism<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>28</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, op. cit., p. 327.

<sup>29</sup> A. Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>30</sup> A. Badiou, *Being and Event*, op. cit., pp. 340-341.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> A. Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

<sup>33</sup> A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, op. cit., pp. 8 and 38.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>35</sup> A. Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, op. cit., p. 557.

#### 4. The True Life as Living with an Idea

In his rendition of *Plato's Republic*, Badiou asserts that anyone can become a serious philosopher<sup>38</sup>. This is followed up by the addendum that under communism, citizens have to be philosophers as part of their actualization of liberation<sup>39</sup>. Badiou elaborates:

Because, remember, we said that our guardians, our communist citizens, had to combine real courage in the realm of the affects with a genuine philosophical nature in the realm of the intellect. The whole problem is how to harmonized the two, which will give the Subject steadfastness and self-restraint. If there's a conflict between them, however, the individual will turn out to be cowardly and brutal<sup>40</sup>.

The latest works in Badiou's oeuvre concern themselves with the absoluteness of truths and the commitment to the True life. We begin to see this change in orientation at the end of *Logics of Worlds*, where "the True is the calling of the immortal part of men, of the inhuman excess that lies in man"<sup>41</sup>. The erosion of this dimension of life results in the contemporary compulsion to live without an Idea which reduces life to the bare obligations of survival.

What calls for the return of philosophy ask us to reinvigorate the desire for philosophy so that it is not smoothed out into the mere communicative exchange of information between thoughtless bodies<sup>42</sup>. Accordingly, the philosophical care of truths concerns a fundamental ethics such as the one articulated in Badiou's *The Immanence of Truths*. Rather than the generic negative universality and the incorporation of singular truths by subjects in the worlds that situate them, the imperative to the infinite and the absolute reframes the systematic project behind the *Being and Event* trilogy as an emancipatory project against oppressions grounded in the imperative to finitude common to much of contemporary philosophy<sup>43</sup>.

The relationship of the infinite and the absolute to the finite and relative in *The Immanence of Truths* is two-fold. The first concerns the process of committing to an Idea, which Badiou characterizes through a systematic uncovering of the immediacy of finitude that cover-up the higher and higher types of infinity. This movement becomes its own absoluteness when the ultimate infinite is shown not to exist and when we are left with the realm of Ideas<sup>44</sup>. Thus, the absolute is forever and without a witness to the extent that there are absolute truths but no truth of the absolute since at best this would be half-said<sup>45</sup>. Nonetheless, this is the task of the works through which the truth appears. Thus, the second movement

brings us from the absolute realm of Ideas back to the finitude of the work which is now imprinted by the absolute. In this way, the finite work becomes an index of the absolute, thus rendering these works into works of truth.

This is the point of the True life: even if we are capable of truths, we need to know that this capacity exists. The active concern for the True can start with an encounter with a philosopher that hits us with the pang of philosophy which awakens this realization—a theme which characterizes the last passages of Plato's *Symposium* as well as Badiou's discussions of Plato in *The Immanence of Truths*<sup>46</sup>. In the end, the immortal task of the philosopher becomes apparent in the absolute realm of Ideas: "to create, in the conditions of its time, the knowledge of the existential possibility of truth"<sup>47</sup>. Therefore, we can see the sketch of a fundamental ethics in Badiou's work through to the end in three imperatives: committing to an Idea; contributing to the work of uncovering; and freeing ourselves from finitude by opening thought up to real infinity<sup>48</sup>.

#### 5. The Future of Philosophy

For Badiou, the return to philosophy centers around the rehabilitation of the category of truth that is under fire or diminished by various sophistries such as the linguistic turn, cultural relativisms, postmodernism, historicisms, Nietzschean philosophy and the like<sup>49</sup>. As Badiou writes in "The (Re)turn of Philosophy Itself": "Philosophy is possible, philosophy is necessary. And yet for it to be, it must be desired"<sup>50</sup>. At the moment that we seem to be at the end of philosophy and the end of metaphysics, Badiou thinks we need to rehabilitate both our desire for philosophy and philosophy itself under the conviction that there are truths.

As I've written elsewhere in my dissertation: eros without logos is unable to declare the truth of itself and logos without eros loses all its force without the capacity to seduce as its rhetorical supplement. Badiou's return to philosophy and Plato's *Symposium* are exemplar of this concern with the cultivation of the desire for philosophy rather than letting it wither away in the halls of academia and the blabbering mouths of sophists<sup>51</sup>. In *The Immanence of Truths*, Badiou has provided his own version of Diotima's Ladder of Love with the addendum that this is only half of the work, as we have to climb back down to inspire others among us to such heights. This is what is meant by the communism of the Idea as an inherent destiny to philosophy and its fundamental commitments: everyone, absolutely everyone, is capable of becoming a philosopher as their realization in the knowledge of the existential possibility of truth, they just need to be seduced into this commitment that characterizes the love in the love of wisdom so to speak.

<sup>38</sup> A. Badiou, *Plato's Republic: A Dialogue in 16 Chapters*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 166-167.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 103.

<sup>41</sup> A. Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, *op. cit.*, p. 511.

<sup>42</sup> B-H. Han, *Saving Beauty*, Great Britain, Polity, 2018, pp. 8-10.

<sup>43</sup> A. Badiou, *The Immanence of Truths: Being and Event III*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2022, pp. 244-247.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 467-468.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 435 and 589

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 468.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 590.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 235.

<sup>49</sup> A. Badiou, "The (Re)turn of Philosophy Itself", *op. cit.*, pp. 113-122.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> Plato, *Symposium and Phaedrus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-39.

It is in this that the future of philosophy depends, as the existential possibility of truth has to be adapted from world to world and our rhetorical supplements have to learn new languages of seduction. In short: "...the future of philosophy depends on its capacity for progressive adaptation to the changing of its conditions"<sup>52</sup>. While the communism of the Idea implies the egalitarian discipline of truth, the current reality is that this truth is all but liberated. The Platonic desire for truth is alienated into the whims of the privileged with degrees and status, and the point is to expand it to the popular collective as a whole<sup>53</sup>. This is to say that the communism of the Idea implies the Idea of communism in a way.

Thus, the political work on the way to the emancipation of the desire for truths is inspired by the Idea of communism. One gets involved among comrades, inspired by a History of revolutionary spirits and facing the real which disrupts our given situations by bringing systematic oppressions to the fore to be overcome. The Idea of communism cannot be defeated for, even if ostensive and empirical failures rest in the mishandling of a decisive point, the point that inspires the Idea

of communism remains unresolved and unincorporated through-and-through<sup>54</sup>. In order to succeed properly, politics must declare that its thought is the thought of all<sup>55</sup>. This is to say that the Idea of communism implies the communism of the Idea such that: "...if we are all together, then all are communists! And if all are communists, then all are philosophers"<sup>56</sup>.

Therefore, it is in this sense that the future of philosophy rests in the political stakes of communism as well as the future of communist politics rests in philosophical stakes. On both ends, we must recognize that we must sustain the anticipation of a new day with every falling of dusk. While the philosopher cannot prescribe the actions of the militant, the philosopher nonetheless helps sustain the memory of what they are fighting for in the Idea. While the militant cannot dominate the space of philosophy such that they overshadow other conditions of philosophy, the militant nonetheless aims to actualize a space that can nurture the desire for philosophy. Along with that insight, what remains is that we must make space for each other and among each other to uphold both the communism of the Idea and the Idea of communism to be free both intellectually and in the worlds we share.

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<sup>52</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> A. Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, New York, Verso, 2010, p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> A. Badiou, *Metapolitics*, New York, Verso, 2006, p. 142.

<sup>56</sup> A. Badiou, "The Enigmatic Relationship Between Philosophy and Politics", *op. cit.*, pp. 29.

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