The Political Community?:
Alain Badiou's Politics of Truth❖

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to read Alain Badiou's politics of truth as a vision of establishing the political community. In his works, Badiou shows a certain ambiguity toward the notion of community. On the one hand, he designates the word "community" and its correlates—such as "communism," "communist," and "collective"—as an inadequate name for what he means by politics. As his "Philosophy and Politics" indicates, the dominant political and economic climate is to celebrate community as impossible, which causes him to assume the term as improper for his political imagination. However, the idea of community recurs frequently in his metapolitical articulations. In *Being and Event* (1988), politics is depicted as a generic and collective process. In *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, Badiou even affirms twice that "communism is the right hypothesis" (97, 115). These seemingly conflicting attitudes make it worthwhile to further examine the possibility and necessity of adhering to the "community" and its cognates as effective categories in his political vision. Instead of siding with Badiou's reservation about "community" and thus renouncing its political efficacy, in this paper I insist upon understanding this term as the core of his politics. My argument is that Badiou's fundamental political prescription is to formulate politics as such in the communal form, even when other terms such as "collective" or "generic" rather than "community" or "communism" are referred to. More important, his political and communal, or political-as-communal, hypothesis has to be grasped in light of a third term: truth. Badiou's political community is after all constituted and traversed by the (political) truth, making his community a community of truth and his politics a politics of truth. To foreground the import of truth in the Badiouean politics, I further contend, is to maintain the validity of "community" against

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discourses that assert its impossibility.

To clarify my thesis, the paper will consist of four parts. The first section copes with Badiou's review of the several accounts that put into question the possibility of community and probes into his consequent concern about community as a valid name for politics. The second part explores Badiou's formulation of the truth procedure and explains his politics as a politics of truth. Based upon this understanding, the paper then broaches the nature of his political imagination and thereby justifies communism as the core of his politics. In conclusion, I will return to Badiou's crisis of confidence regarding the pertinence of community to politics and demonstrate how his later resumption of the faith in the collective form of politics helps to nullify his earlier doubts and the discourses exalting the impossibility of community.

政治共同體？：
巴迪烏的真理政治學

楊志偉[*]

摘　要

　　對於「共同體」（community）一詞，巴迪烏似乎顯露出種種的懷疑與保留。一方面，他在〈哲學與政治〉（"Politics and Philosophy"）一文中說到，當代的政治經濟論述企圖否認「共同體」的有效性，使得巴迪烏認為「共同體」與「共群」辭彙已無法涵蓋他的政治企圖。然而，在《論薩柯奇》（*The Meaning of Sarkozy*）一書中，巴迪烏卻再三強調「唯有共同體的命題才是正確的命題」(97)。本文的基本論調是，共同體一詞實乃巴迪烏的政治想像的核心概念，不可偏廢。同時，在政治與共同體之間，必須還要加上「真理」這個關鍵詞才能窮盡其政治構想；亦即，政治、真理、與共同體這三者在巴迪烏的政治藍圖之中，實乃缺一不可。全文分成四部分。第一部分重探巴迪烏在〈哲學與政治〉一文中所討論種種將共同體視為不可能的論述，並說明巴迪烏對「共同體」一詞的政治適切性所呈現的保留態度。第二部分則闡明巴迪烏真理過程（truth procedure）的構想，釐清政治與真理的關係，藉此廓清巴迪烏的政治學如何做為一種真理政治學（politics of truth）。接著，本文探討巴迪烏的真理政治學如何以共同體作為根基，證明其真理政治想像必然同時是一種共同體的想像。最後，立基於此一共同體政治學，本文則企圖解決早期巴迪烏對於共同體的所產生的信心危機，並說明其政治思想如何能對抗將共同體視為不可能的論述潮流。

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This paper aims to read Alain Badiou's politics of truth as a vision of establishing the political community. The question mark given in the title is to stress "community" rather than "political": while politics constantly counts as one of Badiou's major concerns, his writings demonstrate a certain ambiguity toward the notion of community. On the one hand, he regards the word "community" and its correlates—such as "communism," "communist," and "collective"—as an inadequate name for his politics. As "Philosophy and Politics" (1992) indicates, [1] the current political climate is tainted with postmodern philosophy and capitalist parliamentarianism that celebrate ethnic differences, economic individualism, and, most important, the impossibility of community (*Conditions* 148-49). This causes Badiou to assume, even though hesitatingly, that community is "unable to stand as the [philosophical] name" (171) for his emancipatory political vision. However, the idea, or, to follow faithfully Badiou's diction, the "Idea," of community permeates his other metapolitical articulations. [2] As early as *Being and Event* (1988), politics is depicted as a generic process "in which the collective becomes interested in itself" (340). His later works, including "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'" (1998), *Metapolitics* (1998), *The Meaning of Sarkozy* (2007), *The Communist Hypothesis* (2008), and "The Idea of Communism" (2010) also attempt to confirm the correlation between politics and community/communism. The most explicit example is in *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, in which Badiou twice asserts firmly that "communism is the right hypothesis" (97, 115). These seemingly conflicting attitudes raise the question as to whether Badiou adheres to "community" and its cognates as effective

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[1] The year of publication of Badiou's works is given in its French original. For clarity and convenience, frequently cited works by Badiou will be abbreviated as follows: *Being and Event* as *Being*; "The Idea of Communism" as "Idea"; *Infinite Thought* as *Infinite*; *Logics of Worlds* as *Logic*; *The Meaning of Sarkozy* as *Sarkozy*; *Theoretcal Writings* as *Theoretical*; and *Theory of Subject* as *Subjects*. Two pieces—"Philosophy and Politics" and "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'"—, since they highly concern what is at issue in my paper and foreground the different times and conceptions by which Badiou comes to invest the interrelationship between politics and community, will be referred to as such in the main text; yet, when cited, only the title of the books in which they are included will be given ("Philosophy and Politics" is from Badiou's *Conditions* and "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'" his *Infinite Thought*).

[2] "Metapolitics" is Badiou's term for the philosophy that takes politics as its condition, in contrast with the "political philosophy" that takes politics as an object of reflection (*Metapolitics* xxxiii). Thus, "metapolitical" means "philosophical" as understood in Badiou's sense. His capitalization of "Idea," though reminiscent of Plato's "Idea of the Good" ("Idea" 1), reveals the idiosyncratic usage of the term. For example, "Idea" is axiomatic and enacted intuitively rather than according to some predetermined program (*Being* 511). Also, "Idea" suggests a subjective operation with respect to truth ("Idea" 1), i.e., an intellectual action taken in producing truth (*Sarkozy* 99).

categories in his politics.

Instead of siding with the early Badiou's reservation about "community" and the consequent renunciation of its political efficacy, in this paper I insist upon understanding this term as the core of his political vision. My argument is that Badiou's fundamental political prescription aims to formulate politics as such in the communal form, even when other terms such as "collective" or "generic" rather than the more connected ones (i.e., "community" or "communism") are addressed. Although the early Badiou demonstrates a certain skepticism about "community," his later works are unanimous in propounding the communal form as indispensable to his political thinking. Moreover, his political and communal, or political-as-communal, hypothesis has to be grasped in light of a third term: truth. Badiou's political community is constituted and traversed by the (political) truth, making his community a community of truth and his politics a politics of truth. To foreground the import of truth in the Badiou, I further contend, is to maintain the validity of "community" against its impossibilization by philosophy, multiculturalism, and bourgeois capitalo-parliamentarianism.

To justify my arguments, in this essay I will examine closely Badiou's articulations of community, truth, and politics. For this purpose, the paper will consist of four parts. The first section copes with Badiou's review of the several accounts that put into question the possibility of community and probes into his consequent concern about community as a valid name for politics. The second part explores Badiou's formulation of the truth procedure and explains his politics as a politics of truth. Based upon this understanding, the paper then broaches the nature of his political imagination and thereby affirms communism as the kernel of his politics. In conclusion, I will return to Badiou's crisis of confidence regarding the pertinence of community to politics and reveal how his later resumption of the faith in the collective form of politics helps to nullify his earlier doubts and the discourses claiming the impossibility of community.

Community! No, Thanks?

As mentioned, Badiou's problematization of "community" is discussed chiefly in his "Philosophy and Politics." This piece begins with an exploration of the reason for the disaster, known as "the retreat of the political," that

befalls emancipatory politics (*Conditions* 147). [3] To Badiou, politics is deprived of its subversive force due to a fundamental cause: the designation of community as "the inherent impossibility of our world" (148). Such an assertion, if it comes to be true, is devastating to the power of resistance promised by politics. After all, the name "community," as Badiou observes, is metapolitically received as "a descendent of revolutionary fraternity" and "has governed the philosophical reception of the avatars of emancipatory politics since 1789"; it is "that by means of which philosophy understands first the socialist, and then the communist proposition" (148). Put differently, community is the modern version of emancipatory politics and the founding logic of communism (and extensively, the collective and even the common). Since community (including communism and collective) and resistant politics are rendered as identical in modern times, they unquestionably come to share a similar fate. The decline of one part means the downfall of the other. If community is impossible, any political claim to insurrection will naturally fall prey to the same plight. The consequence is disastrous: once politics loses its rebellious potency, confrontation with economic neoliberalism and political conservatism will be out of the question. [4]

The source of the impossibilization is fourfold. First, infected with the poststructural and postmodern anxiety about presence, center, totality, and boundary, contemporary philosophy is desperate to demand that community be necessarily impossible. The underlying fear is that once community is present or completed, or once its boundary is fixed and stabilized, community in itself will paradoxically become impossible. That is, it is assumed that the consummation of community will lead to its own death (as the double sense of the word "consummation" suggests). To preserve the possibility of its everlasting existence, community has to be opened up and maintained as

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[3] Badiou usually refers to his politics as emancipatory politics, whose old name is revolutionary politics (*Conditions* 147). Thus, in this paper, "politics" and "emancipatory politics" will be used interchangeably. For the semantic equivalence between the two terms, consult *Being* 340 and *Conditions* 147.

[4] According to David Harvey, neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade"; "The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices" (2). In Badiou's understanding, neoliberalism usually intersects and coincides with political democracy and parliamentarianism, in particular in terms of the celebration of globalization and property individualism and the denunciation of socialism and communism.

decentered; its boundary has to stay unstable and unsettled; and its actualization should always remain belated and to come only in the future. These propositions appeal to one and the same thing: to impossibilize community in order to possibilize it. To Badiou, nonetheless, this is only a dead-end, whose exemplifications, among many others, are Maurice Blanchot's "unavowable community," Jean-Luc Nancy's "inoperative community," and Giorgio Agamben's "coming community" (*Conditions* 148). The shared belief is that the realization of community has to be philosophically or metapolitically proposed as impossible.

In addition, "[c]ommunity, communism" is to be understood as being detached from the real world and is therefore tagged as the "criminal traversings of an inconsistency of world" (149). The modern world, on the contrary, is looking for something that can give itself a "consensual consistency" (149). What can meet this requirement, as is generally promoted by economic and political liberalism, is globalization (which promises deregulation and free trade) and an individualism beyond the communal grip. In this regard, due to its fixation on boundary and command, community has fallen out of favor. Under the liberalist-democratic ambiance, an insistence upon community and communism has become an out-of-dated utopianism. The present economic-political atmosphere is symptomatic of the belief that "reasonable management, capital and general equilibria are the only things that exist" (149). Only the political and economic rationality guaranteed by modern democracy and neoliberalism will enable the world to operate consistently. Community and communism, by contrast, can only leave a criminal and insane imprint of inconsistency upon the world. Community is thus assumed as pragmatically impossible.

Multiculturalism also contributes to the trend of declaring the being of community an impossibility. In place of the project of establishing a universal and transcendental community believed to negate difference and multiplicity is communal pluralism. As Badiou puts it, it is now "communit*ies*" written in the plural that are supposed to "exist" (149; emphasis original). The turn to communal diversity is grounded in identity politics and the ethics of difference, which underscore such key words as recognition and tolerance, especially in relation to the racial and cultural other or Other (*Ethics* 26-27). Nevertheless, multiculturalism has its own problems. The first one is its triviality: it attests to "nothing more than infinite and self-evident multiplicity

of humankind, as obvious in the difference between me and my cousin from Lyon as it is between the Shi'ite 'community' of Iraq and the fat cowboys of Texas" (26). What is worse, the adherence to such a politico-ethical multiculturalism usually backfires. The over-emphasis upon cultural diversity can easily result in an ethnic fundamentalism, expressed both ontologically and economically. In the name of difference, each cultural community is tinged with a "communal substance" (*Conditions* 149) and shapes itself as an impenetrable and exclusionist bloc beyond the interruption of any ethnic outside. The dreamed-of "peaceful coexistence of cultural religious, and national 'communities'" (*Ethics* 26) ends up at best in a mutual indifference and at worse in self-interestedness and inter-communal hostility. The worst situation occurs when "the economy" aligned with political parliamentarianism and "communitarian cultural territories" (*Conditions* 149), finally converge. As Badiou indicates, "'community' today is one of the names used in reactionary forms of politics" (172) and manipulated by capitalo-parliamentary politics. Phrases such as "the 'Arab community,' the 'Jewish community,' or the 'protestant community'" merely compose a "national, or even religious reaction" (172). The result of the politico-ethical movement of multiculturalism is the very obverse of what Badiou is seeking: there are only differences but no truths.[5] Meanwhile, these communities are subordinate to the power of the State: they are represented as different parts/parties of the State and thus confined within the political metastructure.[6]

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[5] "What matters to" Badiou "are not differences but truths" (*Conditions* 172).

[6] Here it is worthwhile to specify the meaning of Badiou's ontological terms. To begin with, everything is a one-multiple, a multiple of multiples. A thing is said to exist in a given situation (which is also a multiple) if it is counted as one(-multiple) in this situation. Once counted-as-one, the thing is understood as one "consistent multiplicities" and as being "presented" in the situation (*Being* 24-29). Or, put in the language of set theory, if the given situation is regarded as a set, then this counted multiple serves as an element that belongs to the situational set (60-61). Structurally speaking, the operation of the counting-as-one is also known as the structure or structuration of the situation (24). Before counting, there exist only "inconsistent multipliticies," the void or the nothing that still *is*, though only in an inconsistent way (25). This understanding is derived from Badiou's re-reading of Plato's maxim "if the one is not, nothing *is*" (that is, "nothing" as such exists) in *Parmenides*; his recognition of every single thing as a one-multiple thereby breaks the opposition between one and many, between unity and multiplicity (31-35).

At the same time, each situation has its own state, or, in Badiou's wordplay, State. This state/State is also structurally known as the metastructure of the situation/structure. While the ontological situation operates through the counting-as-one of multiplicities, the state/State of the situation performs a second count, "a count of the count" (94) of the elements of situation and the situation itself. This second counting is referred to as the "forming-into-one" or "singleton," whose operation counts the situational elements as the "parts" or "subsets" of the state/State. Viewed structurally, these formed-into-one parts are "represented" in the state/State; set-theoretically speaking, they are

Community in its singular form is denied representation and becomes "the [impossible] real of the world" (149). This way, community is made ontologically and representionally impossible.

Last but not least, the possibility of community is refuted because it is not "real politics" (149). According to Badiou, this "real politics" eagerly "debars every Idea," constituting the political injunction of the present time "to act in the absence of Idea" (149).[7] That is, this real politics feeds upon the failure of Idea as "the synthesis of politics, history and ideology" ("Idea" 4). This amounts to the political prohibition of the subjective operation of any Idea that allows the interference of politics (the political truth procedure) with the historical narrative (or History as narrative) (5).[8] The ultimate consequence is the impossibility of the subjective decision that transforms and historicizes the world. Due to the foreclosure of "the communist Idea" (6), the political truth cannot be presented "as if it were a fact," nor can "certain facts" in the world be introduced "as symbols of the real of truth" (8). Eventually, the production of truth becomes impossible. In this scenario, community at best "perpetuates sense, under the embrace of finitude," without touching upon the "ontological infinity of situations" (*Conditions* 172), as is attributed by Badiou to the true politics. In this way, as the real politics hopes, community is denounced as operationally and subjectively impossible.

Considering its philosophical, pragmatic, ontological, and operational impossibility, community seemingly becomes the Achilles's heel of emancipatory politics. Imprisoned under the assigned forms of impossibility, this term is deprived of its power of truth production and hence, as Badiou asserts, cannot "stand as the name for this process of the infinite [of the

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"included" in the state/State (82, 93-98).

To sum up, Badiou's ontological language can be categorized into following pairs: situation and the state/State of the situation, counting-as-one and forming-in-one, presentation and representation, and structure and metastructure (though later Badiou broadens the referential scope of "structure" to include both the level of presentation and that of representation; see *Infinite* 127).

[7] For Badiou's reinvention of "Idea", see notes 2 and 8.

[8] In "The Idea of Communism," Badiou aligns his triad of politics, history, and subject with Lacan's Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary. Politics corresponds to the Real since it is existentially impossible in the world; History is the equivalent of the Symbolic since it is a narrative construct; Subject is Imaginary because, modeled upon the Althusserian interpellation, the subjective decision enacts the intervention of the political Real into the historical Symbolic ("Idea" 3-5). All in all, "the communist Idea is the imaginary operation whereby an individual subjectivation projects a fragment of the political real into the symbolic narrative of a History. It is in this sense that one may appropriately say that the Idea is (as might be expected) ideological" (5).

situations]" (*Conditions* 172). Ultimately, this leads him to propose "equality" as *the* proper name for his politics. Community then seems to lose its weight in Badiou's political blueprint. However, while his worries make sense, it is not groundless to propose a reclamation of the word as an efficient political category. In line with Badiou's tactical reinvention of old terms (such as democracy, equality, justice, freedom, just to name a few) with new truthful meanings attached to them,[9] I suggest a similar restoration of the word "community." My argument is that "community" does not have to be enclosed within the dungeon of impossibility and thus easily cast away. Instead, it is worthwhile to reconnect it to the political truth pursued by Badiou. To cling to the name "community" is not to be obstinate. It in fact helps to foreground Badiou's vision of the true politics as the politics of truth. The kernel of his political thesis is the understanding of politics as a community of truth. Of course, this is not to replace equality with community; equality is possible and valid only when it is associated with community. On the other hand, it is evident that, despite his momentary loss of faith in community, Badiou gradually resumes this notion as essential to his politics. His later writings, including "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'" and *Metapolitics*, and more recent ones, such as *The Communist Hypothesis* and "the Idea of Communism," clearly help to prove this. What accounts for Badiou's return to community, I suggest, is exactly his articulation of politics as a procedure that produces truth. Hence, before an explanation of his politics as a politics of community, I will first deal with how Badiou relates politics to truth.

Politics as Truth Procedure

Perhaps the better way to understand what Badiou means by politics is to commence with a juxtaposition of what it is and what it is not. In his conception, politics does not work in the service of the State superpower and its representational mechanism; it instead stands in a diametric opposition to them. Whilst "the State is precisely non-political" (*Being* 110), politics "puts the State" and its errant measurement "at a distance" (*Metapolitics* 145). The power of the State (both in the sense of "the State's ruling power" and the "powerset of the Statist representation") is problematic mainly because it is

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[9] Badiou's recasting of these terms will be addressed in the third section of this paper.

excrescent with respect to the situation (*Being* 108). Insofar as the subsets of a set always outnumber the elements of such set, the Statist representation overwhelms the presentation of the situation.[10] The task of politics is then to dissociate the situation from the representational exorbitance of the State. Nevertheless, this is not to argue for de-statification. As Jason Barker, translator of Badiou's *Metapolitics*, explains, Badiou's politics aims "not […] to take on the State directly, but rather to *work around it*" (xv; emphasis added). In other words, it focuses on "distancing the State" (xv) rather than destroying it. Neither can politics be equated with the class struggle between the working class and the bourgeois. The subsumption of politics under parties—be it in democratic parliamentarianism or in the Communist/Stanlist party-State—will only re-enact the logic of representation and result in the impotency of politics.[11] Nor does politics pivot upon discourses of human rights or "the State of Right" (*Conditions* 166). For one thing, the appeal to human rights reduces humanity into its animality that revolves around self-interests and survival (*Ethics* 44-45), which are guided by "the capitalist name" of "competition" (*Sarkozy* 100). The humanitarian discourse works as a "democratic materialism" also known as "bio-materialism" in which "'human rights' are the same as the rights of living" (*Logics* 2).[12] For another,

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[10] To simplify the matter, here I take a finite set as an example. A set S {1, 2, 3} has three elements, say, 1, 2, and 3 and its cardinality (the number of the elements of a set) is 3. This set S has seven subsets—{} (the empty set, also notated as Ø), {1}, {2}, {3}, {1, 2}, {1, 3}, {2, 3}, and {1, 2, 3}—and the cardinality of its powerset—the set of all subsets of a set—apparently exceeds its own cardinality.

[11] Interestingly, to Badiou, it is Stalin who pushes communism to its disaster by making communism a party-State and conflating "philosophical definitions […] with the immanent names of a [political] truth" (*Conditions* 155; also see *Subject* 315). Likewise, leftism is apolitical as the "clear classification 'on the right' and 'on the left'" merely reiterates the "exclusive parameters of parliamentarianism" (*Subject* 269).

[12] According to Badiou, bioethics and Foucault's biopolitics imply the equation "existence = individual = body" and propose a "humanist projection of all living bodies" into a bio-materialism (*Logics* 2). Appalling as it may be, Badiou's warning is not completely meaningless. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault himself observes that the problem of modern neoliberalism, which is derived from German Ordoliberalism and imported into the United States to grown into such form as is known today, is its concentration upon the question whether "the individual has fallen below a given [economic] level" (205). What is assigned to the government is simply to assist those who are below the given economic level to rise above the level and resume a certain capacity to consume and compete. Such governmental reason exercises a policy of absolute poverty but not that of relative poverty and fails to introduce the real distribution of incomes and the diminution of economic gaps (205). In this regard, while Badiou criticizes biopolitics/bio-materialism, he does not really separate himself that much from Foucault. The similarity between two regarding the issue of human rights is worth further discussion, which, owing to its complexity and the scope of the paper, can only be

"a State 'of right'" once again leads back to the representational dogma: even when the State deals with the issue of rights, it never touches "a subject or an individual" but "only ever relates to parts or subsets" (*Conditions* 168). Lastly, politics has nothing to do with sense (and extensively, opinions, consensus, and communication), which is coupled solely with the State (165).[13] Rather, it relates to the production of truth; the emancipatory politics worthy of the name and able to "put the State at a distance" is a politics of truth.

Politics can be authentically termed a politics of truth and a true politics *only when* it operates as a truth procedure. Badiou offers the major account of this procedural operation in *Being and Event.* A truth procedure is generally formulated around a series of constituents: the event, intervention, fidelity, truth, and subject. The starting point is the event, a set or one-multiple composed of the evental name (the name of the event) and the uncounted elements of its evental site (the site where the event is determined to have taken place) (*Being* 179). The evental name denotes "the signifier of the event," which "is necessarily supernumerary to the site" (181). "From the standpoint of the situation," the name of the event is a signifier of the ontological excess or an "ultra-one" that "adds itself" to the situation (182). This signifier is basically an empty name, or, a name naming the emptiness: in naming the event, it signifies the void and the nothing (i.e., the unpresented terms) immanent in the situation. The evental site, on the other hand, is "a multiple such that none of its elements are presented [i.e., counted-as-one] in the situation" (175). The elements of the site-multiple are uncounted and unpresented in the situation; what is accessible to the situational set is only the site, making the latter a multiple "on the edge of the void" (175). What gives an event its special weight is its undecidability: whether it has taken place and whether it belongs "to the situation of its site are undecidable from the standpoint of the situation itself" (181). The elements of the event are not presented in the situation and thus cannot be counted as belonging to the

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addressed elsewhere.

[13] Different forms of State bear different relations to sense and truth. As Badiou asserts, Stalin in his identification of philosophical concepts with political categories causes a "disastrous excess of sense," in which "sense [is presented] as a truth," and therefore "a disaster of truth through sense, under the effects of sense" (*Conditions* 165). "Modern capitalism" and the "consensual parliamentary State," in contrast, "contain neither sense nor truth" or in fact "market this lack of truth and absenting of thought as 'natural sense'" (166).

situation.[14] Only the evental name as a supernumerary signifier can index the occurrence of the event and "deploy the being of non-being, namely, existing" (183) of the event.[15]

To decide "the belonging of the event" to the situation requires an "interpretative intervention" (183), defined as "any procedure by which a multiple is recognized as an event" (202). The function of the recognition is twofold. First, it is capable of "making a name out of an unpresented element of the site in order to qualify the event whose site is this site" (513). Second, it is engaged "in identifying that there has been some undecidability, and in deciding" the event's "belonging to the situation" (202), thereby putting into circulation the evental name. Put simply, intervention designates a double naming process: it names the event and, affirming that the event "has already been named" (203), generates nominations about the named evental name. "Interpretative intervention" therefore concerns both the naming of the event and the naming of the first naming. However, even though the name of the event is named and its belonging to the situation decided, "the consequences of an event [still] cannot be discerned as such" (211). Without the recognition of the evental effects, it is impossible to launch any radical transformation of the situation. The event is after all the cause of the situational or historical change but *not the change as such*.[16] Therefore, "the entire effort" should consist "in following the event's consequences, not in glorifying its occurrence" (211). To explain what it means to identity and follow the evental

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[14] For the definition of "presented" and "belonging," see note 6.

[15] Badiou's example is the French Revolution. "French Revolution" (or, specifically, "the Revolution" declared by Saint-Just in 1794) is the name that signifies the having-taken-place of the event called the French Revolution, with France indicated as the site where the event has taken place (*Being* 180).

[16] In this sense, Badiou's event resembles the Lacanian Real: it is the fundamental cause that initiates a series of symbolizations or, understood in the language of Badiou, nominations (such as the naming of the event and the naming of the evental name). Yet, this is not to say Badiou is just a Lacanian. He reinvents Lacan as much as he follows his master. Or, his way to be "faithful to" Lacan, as Badiou himself puts it, is "to go beyond" (*Conditions* 227). Consequently, although Žižek mentions that "Badiou's relationship with Lacan is the nodal point of [Badiou's] thought" ("From Purification to Subtraction" 171), it is perhaps better to recognize Badiou as a (post-)Lacanian. The association between the two is a noteworthy but complex issue, the exploration of which cannot be exhausted by this paper. However, considering Lacan's influence on Badiou, I will still endeavor to discuss how Badiou accommodates Lacan's vocabulary to his own theory, especially with respect to the key word of the paper, namely, truth. To maintain consistency in the main text, I will deal with these issues in footnotes, especially notes 8, 20, 21, 22, 27, 29, and 30. These notes are designed to resemble Baruch de Spinoza's scholia in his *Ethics*. "Each scholium" or note, as Gilles Deleuze describes, "refer[s] to" one another, "like a lighthouse that exchanges its signal with the others, at a distance and across the flow of" (146) of the main text and other footnotes.

and interventional consequences, Badiou brings forth another operation: fidelity.

Fidelity is referred to as "the set of procedures which discern, within a situation, those multiples whose existence depends upon the introduction into circulation (under the supernumerary name conferred by an intervention) of an evental multiple" (232). It works "as an apparatus which separates out, within the set of presented multiples, those which depend upon an event" (232). That is, fidelity is the very process by which each term in the situation is put into examination, with regard to its connection or disconnection to the event. If a multiple is determined to be connected to the event, it is written mathematically as $(a \,\square\, e_x)$; if not, then $\sim (a \,\square\, e_x)$.[17] This operation is called fidelity in that the process of interrogation implicitly admits the occurrence of the event and the circulation of its name and thus demonstrates a certain faith in the having-taken-place of the event. Chronologically speaking, the fidelity procedure is post-evental. Since it operates by acknowledging that the event has already happened, it is at work *after* the event. Put set-theoretically, fidelity is an infinite process: it examines every element of the situation, which is composed of infinite elements, and thus bears the characteristic of infinity. Badiou hence states that a fidelity procedure is "commensurate with the situation, and so it is infinite if the situation is such" (235).

The compatibility with the situation or presentation, nonetheless, does not promise a corresponding representational commensurability. In fact, fidelity is "counter-state: what it does is organize, within the situation, another legitimacy" (238) that opposes the excessive representation made by the State. This is possible because fidelity involves the production of truth, which is opposed to knowledge. As Badiou maintains, knowledge functions by discernment, the assignment of properties to a term, and classification, the grouping together of terms with the same property. Both mechanisms can be understood in light of set theory. "Discernment concerns the connection between language and presented or presentable realities. It is oriented toward presentation. Classification concerns the connection between the language and the parts of a situation, the multiples of multiples. It is oriented toward representation" (*Being* 328). For example, if a multiple x is described as red

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[17] In Badiou's language, a is a given element or multiple, e_x the name of the event, and $\square$ the operator of connection (*Being* 234, 236). $(a \,\square\, e_x)$ therefore reads "the multiple a is connected to the event e_x for a fidelity" (234).

and a second multiple *y* as green, this description *discerns* the color property of *x* and *y*. The only condition of this property assignation is that the terms *x* and *y* have been counted-as-one and presented in the situation (it is unlikely to attach any property to a pure or inexistent multiple—a multiple that does not exist or "inexists"—as it is impossible to know of their existence, let alone their color). Then, if a third multiple *z* is also red and a fourth multiple *w* also green, *x* and *z* are *classified* into the class of red and *y* and *w* into that of the green. This classification is also representational: categorization re-counts these elements, which are hence represented and included in the state/State of the situation. Further, both discernment and classification are judgments (of properties and parts, respectively). Knowledge is therefore "realized as an encyclopedia," which means "a summation of judgments under a common determinant" (328). The color property "red" can be once again taken as an example. It is an "encyclopedic determinant" (328) used to judge the color property of every element of the situation and, based on these judgments, to divide these elements into subsets (the subset of red and the subset of non-red).[18] In this regard, the knowledge system works in tandem with the State. Since the former functions by encyclopedic determinations and all-encompassing representations, it necessarily supports the predominance of the latter.[19]

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[18] More specifically, a determinant is "encyclopedic" in that it judges *every element* in the situation and forms subsets that take into account all the terms that belong to the situation. A linguistic designation is an encyclopedic determinant when no presented element belonging to the situation can escape from its operations of discernment and classification. Knowledge consists of all encyclopedic determinants.

[19] This can be read as Badiou's version of Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm, whose complexity is certainly beyond the scope of this paper. Here I can only give a brief and quite simplified comparison between Badiou and Foucault on this issue. Juxtaposing power and knowledge, Foucault suggests that "power produces knowledge […]; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (*Discipline and Punish* 27). The "highly ritualized" examination in hospital or in school, for example, produces individuals as subjects of power relations and objects of knowledge or "documentation" (189), contributing at once to "the deployment of force and the establishment of truth" (184; also see 185-91). Although Badiou's representation also marks the place where power and knowledge intersect and imply each other, it is misleading to treat him as a Foucauldian. After all, in developing his own episode of the power/knowledge alliance, Badiou borrows a lot from set theory, which is at odds with discursive practices characteristic of Foucault's power relations. In addition, Foucault's power "comes from below" (*History of Sexuality* 94) and formulates itself based upon micro-powers; by contrast, Badiou's power is more overarching and "comes from above" (since representation re-counts the situational elements and exceeds presentation). Perhaps Badiou is close to Foucault when it comes to the latter's thesis that "[w]here there is power, there is resistance and […] this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (95). Since Badiou affirms the possibility of political

Now, to breach the knowledge system and its correlate, the State, it requires truth.[20] As mentioned, truth is involved in the fidelity procedure. In the process of examination, a term can be evaluated to be connected or non-connected to the event. If a term is deemed positively related to the event, it is judged to belong to the truth-multiple. As Badiou puts it, "a truth[-multiple] groups together all the terms of the situation which are positively connected to the event" and "as the total result of a procedure of fidelity, is made up of all the encountered terms which have been positively investigated" (335). What gives special weight to the multiple of positively related terms resides in its power to disrupt the Statist power/knowledge apparatus and to allow the transformation of the present situation into a different one. As Badiou maintains, a truth forms a "new multiple" (335) and "bores a hole in knowledge" (525; also see *Theoretical* 126).[21] This multiple

resistance within the situation/State and the construes the rebellious potency as grounded upon, to use Foucault's phrase, "a multiplicity of points of resistance" (95), or, in Badiou's language, a community of militant subjects (see my following discussion on Badiou's subject), he is wittingly or unwittingly influenced by Foucault (though this is never openly admitted).

[20] It is important to note that Badiou's truth, even though written by himself from time to time in the plural form, can never be treated in the poststructuralist sense. In fact, to him, truth as a multiple of multiples is simultaneously singular, plural, and universal. Singular, because a truth is true *within* a singular situation (*Theoretical* 123-24) and intrinsic to each singular political truth procedure. Plural, since a truth as such is a multiple of multiples; that is, a truth is always a set composed of subsets of truth. Universal, in that a truth, while immanent to its situation, traverses different situations and distinct modes of truth processes. As Badiou quotes Thucydides, truth is "something for all time" (154). What is true in one situation is also true in another situation; there is no parallel universe in terms of truth. To avoid confusion, in my paper I will refer to truth in its singular form.
    The coincidence of universality and singularity (or particularity) in truth is reminiscent of the Lacanian deployment of the same term. As Lacan observes, "the truth that we are looking for" is "a particular truth," though "the form of the articulation that we find in everyone" is "the same" (*Séminaire VII* 32). It is specific and singular in each analysand, whilst its form is universal. Yet, this is exactly where Badiou differs from Lacan: unlike the Lacanian formalistic universality, Badiou's truth is *materially* universal as expressed in the phrase "the *body*-of-truth, the *material existence* of a truth" ("Idea" 3; emphasis added) manifests.
    Truth production is embedded in the truth procedure. Different procedures (love, art, science, and politics) generate qualitatively different truth-multiples. By contrast, the Lacanian truth "always refers to the truth about desire" (Evans 215), whose production is limited to the psychoanalytic situation. Truly, Žižek maintains that this "truth about desire" is tantamount to the "desire for truth" ("Desire") and, because of the transference(-love), psychoanalysis is a "science of love" ("From Purification to Subtraction" 171). Yet, as Badiou specifies, in terms of the mode of thinking and the relation to the Real, psychoanalysis is neither science nor politics, no matter how comparable and supplementary the former is to the latter (*Infinite* 61-64). Psychoanalysis does touch upon love, but its main focus is still desire. To Badiou, nonetheless, it is love as such that produces truth, while desire is mainly "its misunderstanding" (*Conditions* 192).

[21] Indeed, Badiou's formulae about the split between truth and knowledge can be traced back to Lacan. As Lacan maintains, "the experienced division of the subject" can be formulated as "the division

is new because it "does not fall under any encyclopedic determinant" or because "no statement of the language of the situation separates it or discerns it" (*Being* 512). In other words, no designation can discern any element that belongs to the truth-multiple, let alone classify it into any representational class. Truth is as a result "indiscernible and unclassifiable" (338) to the situation and the state/State.

Other characteristics of the truth-multiple are worth elaboration, which will further illustrate the opposition between truth and knowledge. First, a truth is procedural: it is produced in the fidelity procedure and shares the same working logic with the latter. Hence, this multiple of truth is, in Badiou's terminology, interchangeable with the truth procedure. Also, a truth is post-evental. The event has to have taken place first before terms can be determined to be positively related to it. Yet, this is not to say that the negatively related items are equally post-evental. They are instead "indifferent" (336) to the event and merely "repeat the pre-evental situation" (335). The features of indifference and repetition reflect that these negatively

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between knowledge and truth" (*Séminaire XIII*, December 1 1966), with truth looked upon as cause ("La science et la vérité" ["The Science and the Truth"] 869). Cause is also associated by Lacan with "*la chose*"—the French translation of Immanuel Kant's "*Das Ding*"—since the French "*chose*" derives from "*causa*," the Latin word for "cause" (*Séminaire VII* 55). Thus, the "truth as cause" has to be located in the Real. The idea of splitting between truth and knowledge is further developed in Lacan's Seminar XVII, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, though in a much different manner. Here knowledge is represented by the matheme "S2" (the battery of signifiers and hence the Symbolic), whilst truth becomes one topological (not necessarily Symbolic, or, to borrow from Žižek, "the symbolic Symbolic") position in the four discourses. Only in the discourse of the university does S2 occupy (or even cover) the position of truth (39); yet, for this to be possible, it still presupposes the splitting between truth and knowledge. Put synthetically, Badiou's prescription that truth resists knowledge can be re-expressed in the Lacanian terminology: the Real truth resists the Symbolic "S2," echoing Badiou's conception of the association between politics and narrative (see note 8).

But this does not mean that there is no difference between Badiou and Lacan. On the one hand, while truth avoids knowledge, it is not really without a signifier. It is arguable that Badiou appropriates Lacan's "S1" (again from the four discourses)—the empty signifier—and makes it into the truth language indiscernible to the "S2." On the other, Badiou argues that "politics searches for the most radical consequences of such disorders [of the State], and therefore works *against* structure" (*Infinite* 64), while psychoanalysis does not necessarily warrant this. Or, for "psychoanalysis, the relation is always finally inscribed in a structure" and for "politics, the relation to the real [sic] is always subtracted from the State" (64). Nevertheless, Badiou aims at more than subtraction. To clarify this, it requires an explanation of Badiou's conception of subject and forcing, to which I will come back in note 29.

Lastly, the statement that truth "bores a hole in knowledge" brings to mind Lacan's "pas-tout" ("not-all" or "not-whole"). In addition to woman, "pas-tout" is also assigned to truth, which is consequently "half-said" (*Seminar XX* 92-93, 103). By contrast, Badiou's "pas-out" characterizes both knowledge and truth. Truth bores knowledge and thus creates the "not-all" of the latter (though this is unknown to the latter). In addition, truth bears what is fundamentally unnameable to itself; the unnameable is what the signifier of truth fails to name and serves as what is "pas-tout" to truth. For example, in the truth procedure of love, jouissance is the unnameable (*Ethics* 86).

related terms can bring no new multiple to the situation and produce no truth. For example, knowledge and its encyclopedic determinants present and represent the situational items according to the existing rules; they "have no connection to the supernumerary name" and "will not enter into the new multiple that is a post-evental truth" (335). If a given statement made according to knowledge is correct (for example, "the sky is blue"), it is veridical (332) but not true.

Moreover, a truth is infinite.[22] Again, this nature derives from the

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[22] The infinite fidelity procedure and truth process consist of an infinity of finite sets, known as "enquiries" (*Being* 333). According to Badiou, an enquiry as a finite set is characteristic of the minimal "encounter between the multiple of situation and a vector of the operator of fidelity" (330). If, among all the elements of the situation, at least one single item is interrogated with respect to its connection or non-connection with the event, it constitutes a finite set of the fidelity process and an enquiry. As for truth, since a finite set of truth necessarily examines at least one situational element in terms of its linkage to the event, such set is no doubt an enquiry as well.

The correlation between fidelity/truth and enquiry can be expounded at the finite and local level. As a finite part of fidelity and truth, an enquiry similarly "avoids an encyclopedic determinant" (335). To illustrate, "[i]f *x* possesses a property, and *y* does not, the finite part {*x*, *y*} made up of *x* and *y* […] is indifferent to the property because of one of its terms possesses it, whilst the other does not. Knowledge considers that this finite part, taken as a whole, is not apt for discernment via the property" (335). The color example is again helpful. If a red *x* and a non-red *y* are made into a subset, this subset resists discernment and classification by the property of red. In this view, {*x*, *y*} breaks down the determinant "red" and turns into an enquiry. Now, if this finite part avoids "every encyclopedic determinant" (337), it will be indiscernible and unclassifiable to knowledge as a whole and becomes the truth-multiple. Thus, Badiou defines truth as an "infinite positive total—the gathering together of x(+)'s [the matheme "x(+)'s" indicates the terms positively related to the event]—of a procedure of fidelity which, for each and every determinant of the encyclopedia, contains at least one enquiry which avoids it" (338).

The idea of infinity also allows a nuanced investigation of the similarity and difference between Lacan and Badiou regarding their conceptualizations of such terms as "woman," "phallic function," and "truth." As Lacan argues in Seminar XX (*Encore*), the woman's jouissance, or the jouissance of the Other is "promoted on the basis of infinity" (7-8). This "infinity" arises from the "pas-tout" of feminine enjoyment in relation to the phallic jouissance, notated as Φ_x. "When I say that woman is not-whole […], it is precisely because I raise the question of a jouissance, that with respect to everything that can be used in the function Φ_x, is in the realm of the infinite" (103). This stress put on the dimension of infinity is important. According to the classical, Aristotelian logic, what negates the universal is the particular. Understood this way, the "not-all" of the woman's jouissance can be interpreted to mean "there exists at least one woman who is not subject to the phallic function." But this is exactly *not* what Lacan means with the "pas-tout." Set "in the realm of the infinite," namely, in terms of the infinite set, this "not-all" suggests a universal negation with regard to the phallic jouissance. This does not mean that there is no phallic function but rather that there exists what is indiscernible to the Φ_x. The same logic was explored by Lacan in his Seminar IX (*L'identification*), where he follows Georg Cantor and dissociates the pair of universality/particularity from that of affirmation/negation (January 17 1962).

Now this "pas-tout" best illuminates the relation between truth and knowledge, both of which are infinite sets to Badiou (*Conditions* 304, n.7). If a truth is a finite set, its negation of knowledge will still take place at a local level and thus remain confined within the knowledge/power system, since it is always possible to assign at least one encyclopedic determinant to a given finite set (*Being* 333). Only when a truth is infinite will its refusal of the knowledge be universal. This is where Badiou's truth equals Lacan's woman: both are infinite. Now, it is possible to comprehend the enigmatic statement by

fidelity procedure. As a part of the process of fidelity, a truth concerns every situational multiple, the multiples of these multiples, and so on to infinity. This infinite concern makes this truth-multiple a set of infinity as well. What matters more is the corollary of the truth-set's infinity: the disparity between truth and knowledge. As Badiou observes, "the true only has a chance of being distinguishable from the veridical when it is infinite" (333). The reason is simple: "every finite part of the situation is classified by at least one knowledge" (331), i.e., by at least one encyclopedic determinant. Therefore, a "truth (if it exists) must be an infinite part of the situation, because for every finite part one can always say that it has already been discerned and classified by knowledge" (333). Only by being infinite can the truth-multiple be authentically produced and enabled to dispense with the encyclopedic determination and representation.

Furthermore, a truth is generic, similarly owing to the fact the fidelity process is so. In Badiou's conception, a procedure of fidelity is generic when it contains at least one part that refuses any encyclopedic determinant (510). Its genericity, in other words, comes from its obstruction of discernment and classification, i.e., of knowledge and the State representation. The very part that avoids encyclopedic designation constitutes a generic set, a set whose ontological name is truth as such (510).[23] Put synthetically, a truth procedure is a post-evental multiple positively related with the event; this multiple is an infinite and generic set which disrupts the power/knowledge mechanism. This accounts for why politics, to reiterate what I have underscored at the beginning of this section, has nothing to do with sense. Sense is endorsed by knowledge and the State; truth, in repudiating the power/knowledge operation,

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Lacan: "that is at the level at which *woman is truth*. And that is why one can only half-speak of her" (*Seminar XX* 103; emphasis added). It also becomes clear why Lacan's infamous formula "Woman does not exist" (*la femme n'existe pas*) questions not so much woman as the "*la*" (the French feminine singular definite article for "the") (Evans 220-21). After all, the definite article constitutes a finite part and recalls the knowledge/State mechanism.

Curiously, Badiou is not aware of the affinity between woman and truth. Even so, his many critiques of Lacan's "pas-tout" are convincing: the non-phallic jouissance is equated with the God's jouissance and thus mystified (*Conditions* 219); the feminine enjoyment is rendered as "an imaginary object" and "a fiction of the inaccessible" (219); Lacan reduces the infinite to "a modality of the finite" and hence to what is representable (224). To Badiou, inaccessibility and finitude are what makes truth lose its power against knowledge and the State.

[23] It is also possible to tease out the generic nature of fidelity and truth via enquiry (*Being* 330-31). As Badiou holds, a "procedure of fidelity is generic if, for any determinant of the encyclopedia, it contains at least one enquiry which avoids this determinant" (510). In the same vein, if an enquiry nullifies all encyclopedic designations by knowledge, it turns into a generic set, a.k.a. truth.

is nonsensical and meaningless.

So far, it is clear that one feature of truth usually lends weight to another. Truth is indiscernible because it is generic; it is generic since it is also infinite; and it is infinite thanks to its indiscernibility. No matter what characteristic is addressed, the political implication is one and the same: truth defuses the knowledge system and the Statist representation. This defusion, however, is not so much a destruction as a creative transformation. To better grasp the creative potentiality of the new truth-multiple, it is necessary to introduce two other terms, subject and forcing. A truth is locally and finitely supported by the subject, which is "the local configuration of the generic procedure from which a truth is supported" (391) and "a finite series of enquiries" (522).[24] The moment of subjectivization tells of the time when the animal "some-one is internally and imperceptibly *riven*, or punctured, by [the] truth that 'passes' through that [...] multiple he is" (*Ethics* 45-46).[25] This moment of passing through does not imply passivity. Instead, it refers to a subjective decision, corresponding to the "Idea," elaborated before as a subjective operation or an intellectual action enacted for truth production. A subject is capable of this because "every subject generates nominations" (*Being* 397), also known as "the subject-language" (401) in response to the event. It puts the evental name into circulation and yields subjective statements that bear witness to the correlation between situational terms and the event *in one and the same gesture*. With its nominations, a subject connects the "interventional nomination and the rule of faithful connection" (394).[26] It practices the Idea—"the incorporation of the event into the situation in the mode of a generic procedure" (393)—and then "realizes a truth" (396), rendering itself the local and finite bearer of the truth-multiple. More important, as a finite part of truth, this subject suspends the knowledge system. While knowledge is "the work of an expert," this suspension makes the subject "a militant" (329).

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[24] For the definition of "enquiries," see note 22.

[25] The animal "some-one" is an individual who lives simply based upon interest and survival; when punctured by truth, this individual "some-one" turns into a subject. Yet, as portrayed in the set-theory, Badiou's subject is not necessarily human. For example, "the subject-points of art are works of art" (*Ethics* 44). Considering this, in the following discussion, I will use "it" rather than the personal pronouns "(s)he" to denote Badiou's subject.

[26] Hence, Badiou states that the subject is "the advent of the Two" (*Being* 393), that is, of intervention and fidelity. In *Theory of Subject*, Badiou has conceived of the pertinence of subject to the two operations, named there respectively as "subjectivization" and "subjective process."

As the local support of the generic procedure, the subject *cannot know* the truth-multiple. Truth is intrinsically infinite and global, remaining indiscernible to the subjective finitude (396, 395). All that the subject can do is to *believe* in truth, which is actualized through its subjective nominations. Meanwhile, since the language available to the subject is nothing but the encyclopedic determinants of knowledge, it "believes that there is a truth […] *in the form of knowledge*" (397; emphasis added). And "this knowing belief" is designated as "confidence" (397). Here, it is easy to see that the subject is split between truth and knowledge.[27] As the local configuration of the generic process, it is punctured by the set of truth. The confidence expressed via the subjective nominations further accentuates the correlation of the subject with truth. Yet, what is at its disposal is no more than the statements of knowledge, which stand for no access to the truth-multiple.

Does this suggest Badiou's postulation of a unbridgeable hiatus between truth and knowledge? Not necessarily. In fact, the key to the bridging of the gap between truth and knowledge consists in the fundamental law of the subject called forcing. By forcing, the meaningless truth of a given situation "will have become" the veridical knowledge in the coming situation.[28] Whereas truth has nothing to do with sense, and the names that uphold the new multiple in the situation are merely empty signifiers, the subjective forcing can transform what is originally indiscernible into something discernible and equipped with referential value.[29] To exemplify,

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[27] This does not imply that Badiou's subject is equal to the Lacanian splitting speaking subject (notated as $). Even though it speaks subject-language, it is not overshadowed by the signifiers it uses. For the discussion of the cleavage between truth and knowledge, see also note 21 and 29.

[28] Badiou's "coming situation" or "situation to come" is irreducible to the "coming" in Agamben's "coming community." Whereas the hypothesis of the latter focuses upon the impossibility of this coming, the former emphasizes its possibility.

[29] The concept of forcing anticipates what Badiou later designates as "Idea." Rendering what is indiscernible discernible, forcing is equal to the Idea, i.e., the Imaginary subjective operation by which the political Real (the indiscernible truth) is transfigured into the Symbolic (the veridical and discernible knowledge). Now, with the ideas of subject and forcing, it is possible to pick up what has been left unaddressed in note 21, that is, how Badiou copes with something more than subtraction from the gap between truth and knowledge. As I have suggested, truth is close to S1 as the empty and meaningless signifier and knowledge to S2 (the battery of signifiers). Through the Idea of the subjective operation, truth/S1 is likely to transform into knowledge/S2. In this way, though similarly split between truth and knowledge (for Badiou's subject experiences both at the same time), the subject is neither eclipsed by the Symbolic nor traumatized by the Real (for the relation between the Lacanian subject and the Symbolic/the Real, consult Fink 26, 49). It can by contrast find a way to resist the power of the Other and bring the Real to the Symbolic via its subjective operation of forcing. In this way, the subject exhibits agency and possibility, which in turn expresses the potency of truth

Badiou borrows from Mallarmé's poetic manifesto: "The poetic act consists in suddenly seeing an idea fragment into a number of motifs equal in value, and grouping them" (*Being* 404). In Badiou's understanding, this statement in itself is "a statement of the subject-language"; "idea" and "motif" are empty words bearing no meaning or referential value; and the poems by Mallarmé are enquires that support "the truth of French poetry after Hugo" (404). Forcing is exerted when "a knowledge," such as an analysis, "can discern […] the relation between the above statement and this or that poem (or collection)," that is, when it can conclude that "this poem is 'representative' of post-Hugo poetic truth" (404). In this way, "the statement concerning the poetic act will be verifiable in knowledge—and so veridical—in the situation to come in which this truth still exists (that is, in a universe in which the 'new poetry' […] is actually presented and no longer merely announced)" (404-05). The analysis affirms the referential value of the empty words ("idea" and "motif" now have a concrete referent, that is, the ideas expressed in the enquiry-poem) and thereby reshapes the nonsensical statement into a meaning designation. It therefore forces the indiscernible truth into veridical knowledge.

Bridging the gap between truth and knowledge, subjective forcing initiates the transformation of a given situation into a new one to come. The reason is clear. By forcing, the indiscernible multiple of truth is made into discernible knowledge. Since the truth-multiple is a new multiple with regard to the situation in which it is produced, the multiple transformed into the veridical also brings in something new to the situation (and the analysis that gives concrete value to the empty words/statement is new to the situation as well). What ensues is the addition of some new encyclopedic determinant(s) to this situation and the reconfiguration of the knowledge system; as a result, a new situation with a new knowledge paradigm is to come. Put in the language of set-theory, when forcing is realized, the generic set known as truth and the situation to which it is immanent will combine into a new situation. This coming situation is termed as the "generic extension" (510) in that it extends from the original situation without destroying it (407). In other words, the new "situation to-come is obtained via supplementation" of the generic set of truth;

(*Theoretical* 126). This reveals one more conceptual difference between Lacan and Badiou: whereas the Lacanian four discourses are invested mainly with impossibility and impotency (*Seminar XVII* 174; *Seminar XX* 16), Badiou is speaking of possibility.

"all the multiples of the fundamental situation" are hence "also presented in the new situation" (407). Now it is possible to understand why truth, in defusing knowledge, does not really destroy it: the former merely interrupts the latter, with the promise of turning it into a new knowledge system. This creative transformation enacted via forcing constitutes another potency of truth, in addition to that of its disruptive capacity with respect to the State knowledge/power mechanism.[30]

In this section, I have shown how truth serves as the core of Badiou's politics: it contributes to the transformation of a given situation into a new one and obstructs encyclopedic designation and Statist representation. In this regard, truth, to bring back the phrase quoted in the very beginning, "puts the State at a distance, in the distance of its measure." While it is obvious that politics as the truth procedure "puts the State at a distance" via the resistance to knowledge and representation, it remains obscure how the latter part of the phrase—"in the distance of its measure"—is realized. To explicate how truth politically distances the Statist measure, in the following section I will probe into Badiou's *Metapolitics*, where his idea of politics is further developed. Since the political task of measurement, I contend, will naturally lead to the formation of the political community of truth, I will also demonstrate why the politics of truth is founded upon the model of a political community.

The Political Community of Truth

After *Being and Event*, Badiou keeps refining his theory of the truth procedure. Among many others, the work specifically concerned with politics is *Metapolitics*.[31] Here, to further elaborate his political vision, Badiou takes

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[30] Forcing has only one limit: the unnameable (see note 21). This unnameable is "the real Real" (to borrow again from Žižek), which can never be named by any subject-language, produced as truth, and transfigured into knowledge. In this way, it marks where truth is powerless (*Theoretical* 136). This powerlessness of truth brings us back to Lacan's impossibility and impotency, but also unfolds something more than that. To Badiou, if the naming by the subject-language is completed, the consequence is disaster and the third type of Evil (*Ethics* 85; the other two are simulation/pseudo-fidelity and betrayal); the power of truth will then turn into fascism. The unnameable thus defends truth against the disaster and preserves its power and potency.

[31] What also deserves attention is Badiou's theoretical reformulation in *Logic of Worlds*. In this sequel to *Being and Event*, Badiou revises the correlation between situation (now called "world") and site, and between singularity and event. The event is now more definitely referred to as traces and more closely associated with its site, as Badiou claims that he is "now able to fundamentally to equate 'site' and 'evental multiplicity'" (361). Both the situation and site involve change; yet, only the latter gives rise to the "real change" (374) and radically transforms the original situation. Site can be further

up the name "sequence"—seen in the phrase "a singular sequence of politics" (68)—, a term corresponding to his mentor Sylvain Lazarus's "historical mode of politics" (39-40). Each historical mode or singular sequence of politics bears its own time span and place, such as the 1792-1794 sequence of the revolutionary mode in France and the 1902-1917 Bolshevik mode (39). Each political sequence is a "rare existence" (68) since it rarely happens and remains elusive to knowledge.[32] Each sequence of political singularities in "distancing of the State" produces a singular type of truth, which is both irreducible and transferable to the truth-multiple embedded in other historical modes.[33]

The political prescription to "put the State at a distance" is, according to Badoiu's design, grounded upon "the interruption of [the Statist] errancy" and the manifestation "of a measure of this Statist power" (145).[34] Here Badiou,

subdivided into two types: fact, "a site whose intensity of existence is not maximal," and singularity "a site whose intensity of existence is maximal" (*Logics* 372; and *Communist Hypothesis* 215).

More important, Badiou's event gains a clearer definition. Not only is event identified with site, but the principle that evaluates whether the site/event is worth the name is now shifted onto "the links of consequence" this site/event "establishes with […] the world" (374). When the "force of a singularity lies in making its consequences, and not just itself, exist maximally," this singularity is an event/site or a "strong singularity" (374). Otherwise, it remains a weak singularity. September 4 1870 is a weak singularity, for it brings no fundamental change to the world. By contrast, March 18 1871—one of Badiou's favored examples—denotes the site of the commencement of the Paris Commune and constitutes a strong singularity. It contributes to the "making something appear in a world which had not existed in it previously" (*Communist Hypothesis* 220). Specifically, this site/event brings forth "the appearing of a worker-being" (204), of the "workers unknown even to specialists of the revolution" (220). It therefore generates "the existence of an inexistence" (222), as the coming-into-being of the originally inexistent workers helps to show.

[32] In the same logic, subject is also rare. Here it is important to note that since truth and subject resist recognition by the situation and encyclopedic determinants, they are rare *as such*. In Badiou's language, truth is not the product of a given truth-producing process; it is this process in itself. In this view, if the production of truth is understood as rare as well, this is because truth is synonymous with this truth-making procedure. This semantic and referential equivalence also applies to the tie between subject and subjectivization: a subject is not the fruit of the subjectifying process; it is this process.

[33] Political modes are mutually relevant because they are similarly "inscribed in the general becoming of Humanity" and each truth procedure suggests "a local form" of the "universal" or "eternal" truth ("Idea" 2). This "interplay between types of truth that are different from one another" is derived from the "transtemporal availability of truths" (2). His example is that the "(workers') movement of the nineteenth century and the (Communist) party of the twentieth century were forms of material presentation" (*Sarkozy* 114) of the same hypothesis—the communist hypothesis.

[34] Badiou's "political prescription" refers to the political function and more narrowly to the statements or nominations made in a political sequence. The political function and statements are prescriptive in that they *do not describe*: they are beyond the predicative description and errant representation, breaking the confine of the State and knowledge. The word "Statist" in *Metapolitics* is originally in the lower case. Here I capitalize it to stress its relation with the State. After all, as Barker puts, despite

as Barker describes, "outlines the ontological characteristics of the political truth procedure" (xxv) by analyzing the "conditions" that involve a political truth. These conditions are the material of the event, infinity, the opposition between the political sequence and the State/state of the situation, and the numericality of the political function and that of the State representation. Without elaborating upon these terms one by one, I will go directly to Badiou's ontological picture of politics, the effectiveness of which is grounded upon these conditions. In the first analysis, Badiou depicts the situation and the state of the situation as both numerically infinite. To express the numericality of the two different infinite sets, Badiou writes the mathemes σ and ε respectively. The first symbol denotes the "infinite of the situation" and the second that of the State (*Metapolitics* 146). The State operates by means of its representational superpower and excrescence. The Statist power(set) is excrescent in that "[t]here is no answer to the question about how much the power of the State exceeds the individual, or how much the power of representation exceeds that of simple presentation" (144). This power is simply errant, indeterminate, excessive, alienating, and repressive (144, 146). For the superiority and errancy of this representational mechanism to the situation, Badiou writes the formula $\varepsilon > \sigma$.

Now, to attain the proper political distancing of the State, it is necessary to measure the excess of the Statist power. As Badiou argues,

> The real characteristics of the political event and the truth procedure that it sets off is that a political event fixes the errancy and assigns a measure to the superpower of the State. It fixes the power of the State. Consequently, the political event interrupts the subjective errancy of the power of the State. It configures the state of the situation. It gives it a figure; it configures its power; it measures it. (145)

Specifically, the political measurement and determination of the Statist power is mathematically inscribed as $\pi(\varepsilon)$: π suggests the political function, and the parenthetical circumscription indicates the containment of the Statist superpower (147). More significantly, the political function itself has to be

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Badiou's playful usage of the "State" and the "state," a difference can still be told: "the former denoting the political, the latter the ontological 'state of the situation'" (xxv).

evaluated in light of its efficacy, which hinges upon not only a measuring but also a doubling of the political function as well. The π thus has to be re-exerted to truly empower itself. Badiou's matheme for this reads $\pi(\pi(\varepsilon))=>1$ (150), a production of a super One in the political field.

The basic question is: what does the 1 here indicate? Does it refer again to the counting-as-one or the forming-into-one? The answer is: Neither. The latter is not a concern: it only reflects the excessive and repressive Statist power. Nor is the former a better option: although counting-as-one is the ontological operation that counts the elements of the situation as one-multiples, it does not guarantee an immediate or lasting political consequence. The political effect of the super One has to be linked to the core of Badiou's political vision: egalitarian politics, or, "the egalitarian maxim proper to every politics of emancipation" (149). With this "egalitarian maxim," Badiou is seeking a political collective which "provides the vehicle for a virtual *summoning of all*" and "*immediately* [sic] *universalizing*" (141; emphasis added). This "vehicle" alludes to the formula that, as Badiou prescribes, "for every x, there is thought" (141).

Nonetheless, this thought is not any kind of thought, much less the encyclopedic determinants of knowledge. Instead, it involves the political truth as such, which can penetrate every single person in the situation and make them "the militants of the [political truth] procedure" (142). A political truth procedure is worth of its name only when it is accessible to everyone in a given situation beyond the control of the State. As Badiou emphasizes, "every truth is addressed to all" but only "in the case of politics [is] the universality intrinsic" (141-42). This means only politics concerns a collective regime, in contrast to love, art, and science, which are "aristocratic truth procedures" (142). The collectivity provides the basic condition of Badiou's politics as a politics of truth: this politics is a political truth procedure whose production of truth *concerns everyone in the situation*.

The prescription of making the truth-thought accessible to all tellingly manifests the idea of the political community. As Badiou elaborates:

> In politics, the possibility of the thought that identifies a subject is at every moment *available to all*. […] That the political event is *collective* prescribes that all are the virtual militants of the thought that proceeds on the basis of the event. […]
>
> Only politics is intrinsically required to declare that *the*

thought that it is is the thought of all. (142; emphasis added)

"Available to all, "collective," "the thought that it is is the thought of all"—these phrases identify one and same thing: Badiou's politics is centered upon founding a community of truth, thought, and subject—since thought "is the name for the subject of a truth procedure" (141).[35] This politically prescribed collective consists of singular thought-subjects that are punctuated by a truth-multiple and therefore suggests a political community of political truth and militant subjects. Put differently, a politics is properly a truth procedure when it is a universalizing operation by which every individual or animal "some-one" is transformed, if not immediately, at least potentially, into the militant subject of the procedure. This concern with all and the collective is exactly the political function axiomatically prescribed in Badiou's formula of $\pi(\pi(\varepsilon))=>1$. The political function has to count, against the ontological counting-as-one and the representational forming-into-one, *every single individual* as the potential militant subject. The set composed of these politically counted militant subjects constitutes the community of truth, which, under the guidance of the political function $\pi(\pi(\varepsilon))=>1$, circumscribes the errancy of the Statist representational power.

    In fact, the political community of truth is also a collective of equality. The figure 1 of the political counting connotes an in-difference and equality of all the counted subjects. In this view, the political collective can be understood as another name for Badiou's egalitarian politics. As Badiou observes in "Philosophy and Politics," what he is seeking is "a communism of singularities" (174). In this political community, every single individual traversed with the singular truth-multiple and counted as one political militant

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[35] Here one may wonder why thought can function as "the name for the subject of a truth procedure," considering that thought is something mental, while subject in its political action sounds more material. This is, nevertheless, Badiou's challenge to the separation of mind and matter as seen both in idealism and materialism. To him, action always involves thinking and thinking is always an action. It is no wonder his Idea, as note 2 shows, is a subjective action in thought. In *Infinite Thought*, Badiou claims that thinking is "a unique movement" or "circulation" between theory (including concepts, formulas and writings) and practice (such as technical apparatuses, experiments, treatments of concrete situations and transformations) (60). The key point is still that thinking is both theoretical and practical, and both mental and material. In this sense, Badiou is a Spinozist since Spinoza calls for a parallelism between thought and extension, i.e., between mind and body.

    In addition, thinking (or Idea) takes the central role in the political prescription. Following Lazarus, Badiou underscores that "people think" (*Metapolitics* 50) and that "[p]olitics is also a thinking" (*Infinite* 60). This association between thinking and politics is noticed and clarified by Nina Power: "people [...] are capable of the thought that also constitutes the post-evental political subject" (337).

subject is treated as equal and the same, therefore divested of "any differential trait that would allow [itself] to be placed in a hierarchy on the basis of a predicate" (*Conditions* 174). After all, a predicative statement implies the recurrence of the Statist representation and classification, while the renunciation of "any differential trait" helps to shatter this predicative and representational logic. Hence, Peter Hallward writes that "the sole criterion of true political engagement is an *unqualified equality*" (224; emphasis added). The political community established thereby "opens onto a strict logic of the Same" (*Conditions* 173). It "presents itself as the same of the same" and "the same without the other" (174) that confronts the Statist predication.

The ultimate state of the community of truth, as Badiou describes, is "the nondescript […] and the egalitarian anonymity of [the] presentation" (174): the pure and universal presentation of a singular political thought. In this community of pure presentation, every thought-subject is a specific singularity or "*la chose politique*," ("the political thing," a phrase Badiou borrows from Jean-Luc Nancy) that "presents itself without being represented" (174). The logic of the political community "as the result of a subjective mobilization" has to remain "indifferent to the logic of recognition and re-presentation as such" (Hallward 227). This political indifference leads to "putting the State at a distance through the collective establishment of a measure for its excess" (*Metapolitics* 145). This "collective establishment" clearly reveals the political effectiveness and significance of the political community, now understood as the collective of equality. The formulation of the political community even warrants the advent of freedom. As Badiou prescribes, when politics successfully builds up the egalitarian community and distances the State, the moment of freedom can be pronounced as arriving (151).

In light of the anti-differential axiom and "egalitarian anonymity," it is now possible to gain a better idea of Badiou's super One. This politically produced 1 is "the figure of equality and sameness" (*Metapolitics* 151) in its numerical fight with the State. This political figure in fact dis*figures* the numerical excess of the State and deters its alienating power. In addition, this super One accounts for why Badiou characterizes the political truth procedure as working "according to the criteria of the eternal return" (94). What recurs is the political summoning to every individual as a militant subject and their incorporation into the multiple of truthful thought. Moreover, this universal

evocation is absolutely subjective. As Nina Power highlights, Badiou's equality is purely subjective rather than objective: it is the subject that is traversed by the truth procedure and in turn serves as the support of this sequence (337). The figure of 1 therefore signifies the eternal return of the same and subjective equality.

What deserves further attention in Badiou's version of community of equality is that whilst his politics refutes the predicative differentiation, it does not liquidate difference. As Badiou articulates in *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, "in the situation (call it: the world) *there are differences*" (98; emphasis original). Once the authentic political sequence is at work, "whatever people's opinions and customs, once gripped by a truth's post-evental work, their thought becomes capable of traversing and transcending those opinions and customs *without having to give up the differences* that allow them to recognize themselves in the world" (99; emphasis added). In fact, despite its egalitarian principle, the political community "would assume the form of universalist militarianism by making of it a bearer of differences and particularities in turn" (100). Do these claims—"there are differences" and "without having to give up the differences"—imply the return to difference and the smuggling of Statist representation and multiculturalism back into Badiou's theory? Certainly not. The nub is once again the putting in abeyance of the errancy and repression of the State. "It is," Badiou maintains, "the obscurity and measurelessness in which this power is enveloped" and "the errancy of the excess that impedes the egalitarian logic" (*Metapolitics* 149) that have to be encountered politically. Differences are only where the State exerts its excrescent re-counting *but not the wrong* (le mal) *as such*.

To clarify things further, these differences are even necessary for the formulation of the universal political community. As Badiou asserts, there should be what "must be traversed in order for universality itself to be constructed, or for the genericity of the true to be *immanently* deployed" (*Saint Paul* 98; emphasis original). In other words, these different particulars are the basis upon which the punctuation by the universal truth comes to work. Once differences are traversed by the truth procedure, they are also recruited as militant subjects and political singularities. Since the truth-multiple in itself is universal, the political collective formulated by the mustered subjects is one of the universal truth. In the end, what comes into being is a political universal

community of singularities, of truthful thoughts, and of militant subjects. The process is predicated upon the play between in-difference and differences, and between universalism and particularities, which are "interpellated" as political singularities.[36]

To this "universality" that takes place through "the traversal of differences" (*Saint Paul* 98), Badiou attaches another name—democracy. Certainly, the word is not used in its conventional sense, which is contaminated by neoliberalism and parliamentarianism. Instead, it is reinvented as being "related from the beginning to the particular character of the stakes of the political prescription" (*Metapolitics* 91-92). Democracy now becomes what "authorizes a placement of the particular under the law of the universality of the political will" (92). The universal traversing of differences is democratic in so far it attains "the conjunction between particular situations and a politics" (92), between particularity and universality. The newly developed idea of democracy in turn reformulates the meaning of politics:

> the universality of the political prescription, being singularly subtracted from the State's authority, can only be deployed as such in accordance with particular stakes and, when deployed in such a manner, is required to assume the democratic figure simply in order to remain political. […]
>
> […] the effectiveness of politics [… now is] in […] conjunction with particular stakes" (92).

Orienting politics to democracy, Badiou in fact proposes an equation between them: what is truly political is democratic and vice versa. Once politics fails to address the "particular stakes" by counting each and every of them in the universal truth, it stops being political and democratic. Within this political collective, every single individual can—be it actually or potentially—count (grasped in its double sense) as a militant subject without losing their own idiosyncrasy. Ultimately, democracy turns into the name for community. As Badiou writes elsewhere, the generic political procedure "provides the

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[36] Žižek makes the criticism that Badiou's subjectivization working according to the truth procedure is "ideological" and "uncannily close to Althusser's notion of ideological interpellation" (*The Ticklish Subject* 141). Yet, despite the formal similarity, the resemblance stops right there: while the Althusserian interpellation runs the risk of conforming to the State, or, to the "Ideological State Apparatus," Badiou's truth process sheds light upon a way of non-conformism.

ontological concept of democracy, *or* of communism" (*Infinite* 98; emphasis added). This "or" faithfully reflects the equivalence between the democratic and the communal, making the political synonymous with the communal once again.

Finally, the egalitarian and democratic political community allows the emergence of justice, a word once again used by Badiou in the non-conformist sense. When philosophy—metapolitics in stark opposition to the traditional political philosophy—is able to grasp "the egalitarian axiom […] present in political statements, […] we are in justice" (*Metapolitics* 99). Justice "is simply one of the words through which a philosophy attempts to seize *the egalitarian axiom* inherent in a genuine political sequence" (99; emphasis added). It hence denotes a philosophical or metapolitical name that serves "as an operator for seizing an egalitarian politics, which is the same as a *true* politics" (99). This, Badiou continues, "also means: either there is politics—in the sense in which philosophy encounters political thought internally—or there is not. But if there is, and we are immediately related to it, then we are in justice" (99-100). The political universalization of the militant subjects into a political community of truth is the moment that justice *is*.

This "is," understood in the meaning of being, existing, and happening, controls the significance of Badiou's political community of truth. What Badiou envisages is not a political project or program that awaits its fulfillment in the future or promotes the postponement of its consummation so as to maintain its possibility. On the contrary, in this "is" reverberates the political prescription that the political community (of equality, democracy, freedom, and justice) ought to be, at the present time and in presence, in order to properly confront the errancy of the State. It is through this "ought to be" that Badiou's politics of truth has to be conceived as a demand for community. This is, to quote from *The Meaning of Sarkozy* once again, why Badiou argues that "communism is the right hypothesis." If there is no politics, there will be no way to claim "the absolute pre-eminence of multiple-presentation over representation" and to make "the vow of an end to the State" (*Infinite* 98). If the community of politics is impossible, what remains will be Statist "objective solitude" and "subjective abandon" (104). Once the "[e]galitarian passion, the Idea of justice" are lost, there will be no access to "the will to break with the compromise of the service of goods, the deposing of egotisim, [and] the intolerance of oppression" (98). Therefore, Badiou concludes at the

end of "Philosophy and the 'death of communism'": "This is why the ruin of the Party-State is a process immanent to *the history of States*. […] The anarchic confused deplorable spectacle […] of this ruin testifies, not to the 'death of communism,' but to the immense consequences *of its lack*" (emphasis original). Indeed, "this ruin" refers specifically to the Stalinist Party-State. Yet, the designation of the ruin as "a process immanent to *the history of States*" reveals that it is the common fate for all the States if they "succumb by the absenting of politics, and singularly of any politics deserving the name 'communist'" (*Infinite* 104). The cause of the disaster, Badiou stresses, is not the "death of communism" but "the immense consequences of its lack"—that is, the lack of communism.

Conclusion: The Return to Community

Now, it is possible to tackle Badiou's early suspicions of community and argue for his later insistence on the term. What disappears with the exploration of the Idea of communism as seen in the above is his early doubt and hesitation in "Philosophy and Politics." The titles of *The Communist Hypothesis* and "The Idea of Communism" have displayed his adherence to the idea/Idea of community and its correlates. Along with these two pieces, *Metapolitics* and "Philosophy of the 'death of communism'" furnish his political vision with a communal spirit and a "community manifesto." In Sections II and III, I have displayed how community grounds Badiou's political imagination. Here I will focus on how he cleaves to the name of community and its political efficacy against discourses announcing its death or impossibility.

In "Philosophy and the 'death of communism,'" Badiou observes that "it is for thought in general that there was no other conceivable 'we' than that under *the banner of communism. 'Communism' named the effective history of 'we'*" (96; emphasis added). Earlier in *Being and Events*, Badiou assigned collectivity to his political militant subjects (340). Ten years later, he more openly proclaimed that these subjects will lose their efficacy against the State if they are not formulated "under the banner of communism" and into a communist "we." Though entitled "Philosophy and the 'death of communism,'" this essay actually attempts to caution against the consequence of the death of communism rather than to come to terms with it. No matter how many endeavors have been made to pronounce community as impossible,

Badiou now shows no hesitation in repudiating the claim to impossibility: "The glancing light of the semaphore, the illumination of centuries by the rare pivoting insurrection of this light; would this all be extinct because a mediocre tyranny decided to take it upon itself to announce that it was dead? *This is exactly what I do not believe*" (*Infinite* 101; emphasis added). This thundering "*I do not believe*" pinpoints the alteration of the object of his disbelief from community in itself to the death of community. In this way, his early "repression" of the name "community" appears no more than impulsive. In 1975, Badiou resolutely appealed to the expression "communist invariants" (*Infinite* 99) as being the fundamental political name. Subsequent writings, including *Being and Event*, *Metapolitics*, "The Idea of Communism," just to name a few, extended his vision to a more concrete and embodied form. Even in "Philosophy and Politics," Badiou did not really give up naming his politics a politics of community or communism. The only condition is that it exists as "a communism of singularities."

The return to community is certainly not just Badiou's "return of the repressed." It aims at a more radical and subversive challenge to the dominant political climate. Does Badiou's political prescription, while resolving the crisis of confidence in community as an efficient political category, also successfully fight back against the philosophical, pragmatic, ontological, and operational assertions of the impossibility and death of community? The answer, I believe, is yes.

Philosophically speaking, Badiou's politics of community in no way champions the metaphysics of presence, center, totality, and boundary. Indeed, it looks for presence, but not the one immediately and necessarily present. A series of operations and procedures, known as event, intervention, fidelity, truth, subject, and forcing, are engaged in the production of a political truth and militant subjects. Nor does this community has anything to with sense, whose ontic logic of discernment and classification is innate to the metaphysics of presence. Rather, Badiou's political spotlight is upon truth, the multiple indiscernible to the encyclopedic determinants of knowledge. If presence stays in Badiou's metapolitics, it is no more eclipsed by the metaphysics of presence. What is at stake is instead the ontologically absent or unpresented—namely, the void, the "inconsistent multiplicities," and the "pure presentation" (Hallward 26)—against the operations of presentational counting-as-one and the representational forming-into-one. The political

naming of the void via the evental name and the faithful examination of the evental consequences constitute a super One, whose universality connotes no arborescent hierarchy. The community stands in tune with the horizontal and rhizomatic traversal of singularities, rejecting the elevation of any singular item into an overwhelming ultra-One. As Badiou asserts in "Philosophy and Politics," political communism puts into brackets "the ecstasy of the site" and "the sacredness of the name" (*Conditions* 158) and thereby renounces the figure of center or centralization. More significantly, it goes against the terrorism of the full naming or the excessive conflation of political multiplicities and philosophical names (165-66). What is unnameable to the empty signifiers of truth further prevents this infinite, generic, and open set from the disaster of totalization and boundary. The politics of truth removes the poststructuralist and postmodern fear of the metaphysics of presence and "undermine[s] the linguistic, relativist and neo-sceptical parenthesis of contemporary academic philosophy" (*Logics* 7). Community is therefore metapolitically and philosophically possible.

This political community is also possible in a practical sense. Badiou's frequent references to the various sequences or historical modes of politics exemplify how community has been at work. His own Organisation Politique (OP), on the other hand, serves "as part of an answer to much the same question" of carrying out "a subjective mobilization" and creating "a 'political distance' from the State" (Hallward 227). The two campaigns for workers in Nillancourt and Montreuil as sponsored by OP attest to the production of truth "*en acte*, in the detail of an ongoing commitment or campaign" rather than in tandem with "philosophical speculation" (234). It is understandable why political communism would be indicted as criminal and insane; insomuch a political community disrupts the stability of Statist regulation and linguistic meaning, it would be naturally demonized by capitalo-parliamentarianism, which takes itself as the only prop of the safety of power/knowledge system. But this call for revolution and madness is indelible; otherwise, there will be no way to fight against the excrescent power of the State.

True, as Hallward warns, Badiou's anti-unionism and divorcement of politics and economics is dangerous (283). Yet, this does not mean he unplugs the dimension of survival and interest from his political Idea. After all, it takes the animal "some-one" for the production of truth to be possible; the "foundation-point" (*Ethics* 45) of the truth procedure and subjectivization is

the Spinozist "perseverance in being" (46-47). The individual punctured by a truth and interpellated into a militant subject is "simultaneously himself" and "in excess of himself" (45). This individual-subject "manifests itself as disinterested interest": "It concerns interest, in the sense that it engages the motivating forces of perseverance (the singular traits of a human animal, of 'some-one')" and "is disinterested in a radical sense, since it aims to link these traits in a fidelity […] that constitutes the truth-process" and "its perpetuation" (49). To illustrate with a concrete example, OP is, though akin to many unions, concerned with the welfare of workers. Nonetheless, the greatest difference between OP and these unions resides in its pursuit of the benefits of laborers without resorting to the capitalo-parliamentary "institutional power" (Hallward 282-83). This "without" is important: it holds at bay the overwhelming power (and powerset) of the State in the arena of political economy. If Badiou's presentation is construed to echo Karl Marx's use value and his representation the exchange value, then the suspension of the excrescent superimposition of representation over presentation by means of the political community of truth is his solution to the alienating surplus value. Founded upon the logic of the super One, political communism is able to confront the capital-based politics and bear a certain practical efficiency.

Ontologically, the true, truthful communism reconciles particularity and universality, appealing to one without effacing the other. In Badiou's political community, there are both truth and differences. What the community is seeking is a "universal singularity" (*Saint Paul* 13), or, a universality of singularities. It produces a universal truth that transcends and traverses diversity, avoiding the fundamentalist claim that "only a homosexual can 'understand' what a homosexual is, only an Arab can understand what an Arab is, and so forth" (12). In the meantime, this turn to the universality of truth does not cancel racial and cultural variety; it takes differences as its foundation-points and finite support. In this way, it facilitates the dissolution of the exclusionist logic of multiculturalism. With its production of truth, the political community attains, to quote once again from "Philosophy and the 'death of communism,'" "the absolute pre-eminence of multiple-presentation over representation." It thereby shields singularities from the State representation and precludes the reactionary insistence upon cultural essentialism. This is how Badiou is an anti-Hegelian Hegelian: the political community "cancels" differences by preserving them.
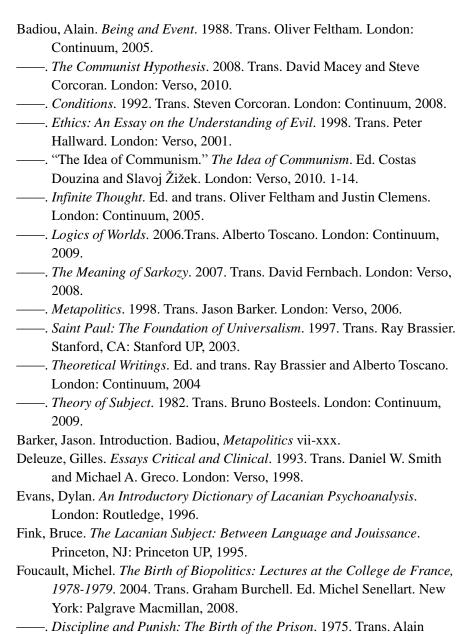
Neither does triviality become an issue in the communism of singularities. What can never be over-emphasized is the rare existence of the truth procedure and militant subjects (*Being* 392). No element of the situation is immediately positively related to the event, no individual is gratuitously a subject, if there is no subjective operation that connects intervention and fidelity and counts as the finite part of the truth-multiple. The rarity of the truth production and subjectivization does away with the problem of triviality in multiculturalism. In terms of representation, community is again possible, but not in the way subordinate to the State. The multiple of truth, being inaccessible to knowledge but immanent to the situation, composes "an indiscernible inclusion" (*Being* 338). It forms, in the phrase of Jacques Rancière, "the part of no part" that displaces the power/knowledge mechanism not from without but from within. Its disruptive power makes itself an inclusive exclusion (to play with Giorgio Agamben's phrase)[37] inside the State, which is not a marker of its own extinction but of its possibility. Community is then ontologically and representationally possible.

Lastly, Badiou's political community, unlike the "real politics" that annuls the Idea, maintains the subjective and operational possibility. The political multiple of truth consists of an infinity of finite militant subjects. The above-mentioned rarity or rare being of truth and subject suggests not so much an impossibility in operation as a rigor in definition and practice. The subject can generate subject-language that connects intervention and fidelity, produce nominations that construct the finite part supportive of the truth-multiple, and enact the fundamental law of forcing. It underpins the disruptive power of truth against representation and actualizes the transformation of the original situation into a new one. In this regard, it is no exaggeration to say that only subject allows the production of truth and the formulation of the true and truthful community. Only subject, through its operation of Idea, projects the Real of the politics into the Symbolic of knowledge and activates creative transformation. Badiou's political community is thus much more "real" (in the sense of being actual and possible) than the nihilist "real politics." This communism is subjectively and operationally possible.

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[37] Playing with Rancière's "the part of no part" and Agamben's "inclusive exclusion," I do not mean that Badiou's political vision is equal to theirs. The references to Rancière's and Agamben's terms are no more than my own appropriations of their vocabulary.

To conclude, by means of the four mechanisms—the metapolitical nominations, the concrete subversion of capitalism and parliamentarianism, the formulation of the universality of singularities, and the subjective decision of Idea, the political community of truth is philosophically, pragmatically, ontologically, and operationally possible. It is therefore unnecessary to shun the communist hypothesis. Thanks to the inherent political efficacy and possibility of political communism, Badiou returns without any hesitation to community in works subsequent to "Philosophy and Politics." More significantly, he now takes this word as the core of his political vision; his politics is in consequence nothing if not a political community of truth.

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