

ALAIN BADIOU'S ONTOLOGY AND UTOPIAN THOUGHT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ŞEREF ANIL KAHVECİOĞLU

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION

SEPTEMBER 2015

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Ayata  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. R. Ömür Birler  
Supervisor

**Examining Committee Members**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. M.Nedim Karakayalı (Bilkent Uni,POLS) \_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. R. Ömür Birler (METU,ADM) \_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Çağatay Topal (METU,SOC) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last name :

Signature :

## ABSTRACT

### ALAIN BADIOU'S ONTOLOGY AND UTOPIAN THOUGHT

Kahveciođlu, Őeref Anıl

M.S., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. ReŐide mr Birler

September 2015, 205 pages

This thesis analyzes Alain Badiou's ontology in a utopian framework. Surprisingly, there is no serious academic study in literature to examine his ontology in a utopian context, even though his ontology involves significant concepts that may connote utopian impulses. Hence, the main purpose of this thesis is to fill this theoretical gap. In this regard, firstly, the thesis categorizes utopian thought as traditional and contemporary, which display utterly opposite characteristics. Secondly, Badiou's interpretation of Plato, who is seen as one of the most prominent figures of utopian thought, is discussed in order to provide the transition between utopian theory and his ontology. Following, his key terms such as the void, the state of the situation, infinity, event, subject and truth are analyzed respectively. From this theoretical analysis of the concepts, the thesis positions Badiou against the traditional utopian values which simultaneously brings him closer to the contemporary utopian perspective. The assessment of the position of Badiou's ontology between these two utopian approaches presents the picture of radical politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century within the context of Badiou.

**Key Terms:** Badiou, Utopia, Event, Truth, Void

## ÖZ

### ALAIN BADIOU ONTOLOJİSİ VE ÜTOPYACI DÜŞÜNCE

Kahveciođlu, Şeref Anıl

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Reşide Ömür Birler

Eylül 2015, 205 sayfa

Bu tez Alain Badiou'nun ontolojisini ütopyacı bir çerçevede incelemektedir. Şaşırtıcı bir şekilde, Badiou'nun ontolojisinde ütopyik dürtüleri çağrıştıracak kavramlar olmasına rağmen, literatürde onun ontolojisini ütopyacı bir bağlamda inceleyen ciddi hiçbir akademik çalışmaya rastlanmamaktadır. Bu nedenle bu tezin ana amacı bu teorik boşluğu doldurmaktır. Bu bağlamda bu tezde ilk olarak ütopyacı düşünce, birbirine tamamen zıt özellikler gösteren geleneksel ve çağdaş düşünce olmak üzere ikiye ayrılmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Badiou ile ütopya teorisi arasında bir geçiş sağlamak amacıyla ütopyacı düşüncenin en önde gelen figürlerinden biri olan Plato'nun Badiou tarafından nasıl yorumlandığı tartışılmaktadır. Devamında ise Badiou'nun ontolojisinin anahtar terimleri olan boşluk, durumun devleti, sonsuzluk, olay, özne ve hakikat kavramları sırasıyla analiz edilmektedir. Kavramların bu teorik analizinden yola çıkarak, bu tez Badiou'yu geleneksel ütopyacı değerlerin tam karşısında konumlandırıp aynı zamanda onu çağdaş ütopyacı perspektife yaklaştırmaktadır. Badiou'nun ontolojisinin bu iki ütopyacı yaklaşım arasındaki konumu Badiou bağlamında bir 21. Yüzyıl radikal siyaset resmi sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Badiou, Ütopya, Olay, Hakikat, Boşluk

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Reşide Ömür Birlir for her guidance, advice, criticism, encouragements and insight throughout the research.

I would also like to thank Gökhan Şensönmez and Burak Sönmez for their creative comments that helped me to develop my ideas. Special thanks also to Kemal Türkeri and Erolcan Talas who provided intellectual instruments for my theoretical imaginations.

This thesis project would not have been possible without the permanent support of my family. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my father, mother and sister.

And lastly, this thesis could not have been completed without her existence in my life. I am forever indebted to Sezin Çırak for her understanding, endless encouragement and patience.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO UTOPIAN THOUGHT .....	8
2.1 Ambiguity of the Term Utopia.....	8
2.2 Traditional Utopian Thought vs. Contemporary Utopian Thought.....	13
2.3 Utopia as Perfection .....	18
2.4 Utopia as Finitude and Infinity.....	22
2.5 Utopia as Hope and Faith .....	28
2.6 Utopia as Newness .....	36
2.7 Utopia and the Uncounted.....	41
3. UTOPIA AS TRUTH.....	43
3.1 Who is Plato?.....	44
3.2 Platonic Truth, The Good and Philosopher Kings .....	48
3.3 Badiou, Plato and Truth.....	55
3.4 Platonism of the Multiple .....	65
4. BADIOU’S ONTOLOGY: THE VOID AND INFINITY.....	69
4.1 The Decision: The One is not.....	71
4.2 The Void.....	76
4.3 The State of the Situation .....	84
4.4 Infinity.....	93

5. EVENT, SUBJECT AND TRUTH .....	102
5.1 The Definition of Event .....	102
5.2 Subject, Intervention and Fidelity .....	112
5.3 Truth .....	124
5.4 Event, Subject, Truth and Politics .....	135
6. BADIOU AND UTOPIANISM .....	149
6.1 Utopia, Event and Subject .....	150
6.2 Hope and Faith: Traditional or Contemporary? .....	161
6.3 Truth as the One: Universality, Equality and Utopianism .....	166
6.4 Final Comment .....	170
7. CONCLUSION .....	172
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	177
APPENDICES	
A. TURKISH SUMMARY .....	193
B. TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU .....	205



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Those who are oppressed, who feel the humanitarian and ethical responsibility of advocating the rights of the dominated fundamentally share a common point: what reproduces inequality, what adjusts and defines justice according to the advantage of the dominant, what sustains the order by exploiting those who are obliged to sell their labor, should be changed just because it is not right. What makes these people say that “this is not right” is not based on the books they read, nor imaginations of a peaceful world, nor intellectual discussions concerning what should be, but rather on what they are exposed to as an individual or a community; it is utterly a scream of experiencing something violent, something unjust and in fact something wrong.

Radical politics<sup>1</sup> has always been one of the most significant and influential parts of this scream of the oppressed. One should acknowledge that radical politics is in a crisis and without doubt, it is searching for new ways, both at theoretical and practical levels, in order to overcome the impasse reproduced permanently by the global order. In other words, radical politics strives for founding new forms of political struggle so as to raise the voice of the people whose screams are not heard by anyone. Firstly, it is necessary to answer the following question: what does radical politics refer to today? To be sure, radical politics is grasped through several different ways and various strategies are developed accordingly. The desire for radical change is the common basis of all variants of radical politics but without doubt, they do not share the same vision with regard to the questions that what to achieve and how to achieve. “Creative artists, suicide bombers, anti-

---

1 Radical politics is a comprehensive term and may contain manifold ideological stances both from left and right. Yet one should note that I am specifically referring to radical left by the concept of radical politics.

capitalists, tree-huggers and anarchists” might be labeled as radicals despite their disparate concerns and methods of struggle.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, it is argued that the plurality of radical political perspectives “is the weakness of contemporary radical politics,” simply because of the lack of a grand alternative, which may provide an anchor point around which different approaches might gather.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, some argue that the plurality of such perspectives “is the strength of radical politics.”<sup>4</sup> It acquires its strength from the capability of producing a plural political field in which distinct political approaches can fight against the system in various ways. According to this perspective, an overarching radical alternative does nothing more than suppressing people who do not believe the values imposed by this alternative. Hence, such an alternative is out of question and “it is better to deal with injustices as they arise in particular situations, rather than produce a single solution for all.”<sup>5</sup> In brief, in the light of these oppositional approaches, one can divide radical politics into two: One suggests a grand alternative mainly advocating the classical understanding of radical politics in Marxian sense, which has certain rules and limitations, and postulating the emancipation of all. The other rejects any attempt to transform the status quo with a grand alternative by defending the idea that a total solution is unnecessary owing to its non-realism. Rather, what is necessary is to struggle in particular fields with particular purposes.

Both approaches are problematical in themselves. For instance, the latter approach, Zygmunt Bauman argues, provides an opportunity for various ways of struggle to detach itself from the rest of the world. He states that it is not possible to “defend our freedoms here at home while fencing ourselves off from the rest of

---

2 Jonathan Pugh, “What is Radical Politics Today?”, in *What is Radical Politics Today?*, ed. Jonathan Pugh, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2009), 3.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

the world and attending solely to our own affairs.”<sup>6</sup> For Bauman, “the resurgence of the essential core of the socialist 'active utopia' (...) would be indispensable,” as the object is neither this nor that part of the world, but “humanity as a whole”.<sup>7</sup> In a globalized world, it is futile to give struggle unless the concern is whole humanity; as “the plight of everyone everywhere determines the plight of all others while being determined by them in turn.”<sup>8</sup> Hence, it is not at stake to discuss freedom, equality, justice or many other values by locating them into separate fields of the world, but one should conceive of them as the problem of humanity.

On the other hand, the former approach is capable of providing an anchor point, but is incapable of persuading people about following a single route due to people's distinct concerns. Gregor McLennan therefore argues that “radical politics today has no viable institutional programme,” simply because it is not possible to “agree about what socially and humanly desirable, never mind achievable.”<sup>9</sup> The non-possibility of agreeing upon strategies, tactics and the desired world produces nothing but, once more, futile attempts, which may also engender devastating consequences within the path to achieve it. The non-achievability of the ideal and disagreements with respect to how to attain it are the main reasons of the decision of pursuing the political goal with different methods in various fields of struggle.

Both approaches, for justifiable reasons, involve certain deadlocks which pushes one to search for new modes of thought. So one should deservedly ask the following question: Is there any possibility for a third way? Before I met Alain Badiou, I was stuck between two approaches stated above. I was captivated by the Gezi Movement in Turkey and aware that politics of the peoples was evolving into

---

6 Zygmunt Bauman, “Getting to the Roots of Radical Politics Today”, in *What is Radical Politics Today?*, ed. Jonathan Pugh, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 23.

7 Ibid. 24.

8 Ibid. 23

9 Gregor McLennan, “Progressivism Reinvigorated”, in *What is Radical Politics Today?*, ed. Jonathan Pugh, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 145.

a new form. In the light of the Gezi Movement, I was trying to formulate a new theoretical insight in my mind, or at least wanted to develop my ideas within the light of an available political theory. When I first read a part of Badiou's magnum opus *Being and Event* I was impressed. It was fascinating, as it was promising much more than what it presented in a few pages. His philosophical masterwork was offering a political ontology endowing one with a functional tool in order to grasp and explain the major events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first impression I had was that it was including certain clues in order to constitute a third way in radical politics.

As a beginning, I thought that I could combine Badiou's ontology, as far as I understood, with John Holloway's book, which proposes a model of change without capturing power, specifically focusing on the case of Zapatista movement.<sup>10</sup> It made sense, because Zapatista movement was a ripe case and an analysis of the movement with Badiou's ontology could open a new thought path in order to develop my experiences in Gezi Movement theoretically and to develop a different insight concerning political movements taking place all around the world.

However, I maintained to read Badiou and found the opportunity to take a glance at his other studies which furnished me with the insight that there was something profound in his ontology and it deserved to be studied in a more elaborated way. Hence, I decided to analyze his fundamental concepts, the void and infinity, and discerned that these concepts were quite significant so as to develop a political understanding despite their abstractness. I started to interpret what I read, what I observed, and most importantly what I experienced in a Badiouean context. My enthusiasm to read and comprehend Badiou reached such a level that I wrote a story based on Badiou's political ontology and composed a series of songs telling the story of a man's struggle for existence by taking his

---

<sup>10</sup> John Holloway is a sociologist and philosopher who specifically studies and practically participates the Zapatista movement in Mexico. For further information about John Holloway's study, see *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*.

ontology as a reference.

In this reading and learning process, I formed several questions in my mind, but one of them prevailed over the others because of its fundamentality: Does Badiou offer any kind of utopian politics by his political ontology? If he does, then what kind of a utopia is in question? The importance of this question stems from its capacity to touch the perspectives mentioned above and its capability to imply a third way in a Badiouean context. The term utopia has gained such a meaning that if one would like to revile a political perspective in terms of its realizability, he labels that as utopian. Let alone the idea that utopia involves a positive content in politics, it is used in a pejorative sense. “Today, in all dictionaries, the meaning of 'utopia' is pejorative.”<sup>11</sup> There is a certain tendency to dismiss all radical political attempts by the claim that they are utopian. Neo-liberalism “feels itself as strengthened by the fall of the Wall, seen as the death of the idea that 'another world is possible'. But the praxis of utopian ideas is necessary today so as to combat neo-liberal powers.”<sup>12</sup> To show that another world is possible, utopian ideas should be revived, but with a different analysis and different implications. Badiou's position in utopian thought is significant, because it will provide a picture of the current values of radical politics in a Badiouean context. This thesis will argue that Badiou's utopianism offers a third way which emancipates itself from the pejorative meaning of the word without losing its anchor points. He is a contemporary utopian, which has a capacity to open a new path for radical politics in which traditional utopian attributes are inverted.

In this respect, first of all, I categorically distinguish utopian thought as traditional and contemporary, which have not only different characteristics, but also stand at the opposite poles. After an analysis of utopian theory, I chose four

---

11 Laurent Loty, “Which Utopias for Today? Historical Considerations and Propositions for a Dialogical and Paradoxical Alterrealism”, *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*, no.1 (Spring 2006), 100.

12 Ibid. 102.

main features that I can compare traditional and contemporary utopian approaches which also helped me to elaborate Badiou's ontology in a utopian context. I categorize these four features under four titles in Chapter 2 which are perfection, finitude/infinity, hope/faith and newness. Needless to say, utopian theory cannot be limited to these attributes, it has not already a specific content. Hence, in my view, these features are the most appropriate ones in order to make a distinction between traditional and contemporary utopian thought and to make a decision with regard to Badiou's position.

In order to provide a transition between utopian thought and Badiou, in Chapter 3 I analyze Plato, who is one of the keystones of Badiou's ontology. Keeping in mind that Plato has been considered as one of the first utopians particularly because of his famous dialogue the *Republic*, this chapter specifically focuses on the significance of truth in Plato and the question that how Badiou understands Plato and Platonic truth.

Chapter 4 and 5 are the chapters in which I examine Badiou's ontology and its important concepts with a comprehensive analysis. I discuss Badiou's decision that the one is not and its ontological consequences in Chapter 4. In this context, I scrutinize on the concepts of the void, the state and infinity and constitute a theoretical ground so as to discuss the utopian features in Badiou's ontology. Following, in Chapter 5, I explain his three major concepts, event, subject and truth and attempt to explicate them in a political context by specifically referring to Badiou's own studies.

Lastly, I assess Badiou's event-subject-truth triangle, and generally his whole ontology, in a utopian context in order to decide the position of Badiou between traditional and contemporary utopian perspectives in Chapter 6. I will present 10 statements with regard to the analysis of Badiou in a utopian context in order to clarify the involvement of him with the utopian thought. While doing this I will explain them under three categories: (1) utopia, event and subject, (2) hope and faith, and (3) truth. Analyzing hope and faith in a different category stems

from the fact that hope and faith may refer to both traditional and contemporary utopian thought which automatically generates a problem. Truth is also separated as a category, since the strict character of the term deserves to be analyzed so as to decide in which category one might understand Badiou's conceptualization of truth.

So we will begin with a philosophical approach to utopia in order to initiate the discussion.

## CHAPTER 2

### A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO UTOPIAN THOUGHT

#### 2.1 Ambiguity of the Term “Utopia”

Beyond any doubt, it is possible to constitute a consensus pertaining to a desire, which history has not been able to demolish, and in fact, forms the ground of the existence of history: the desire for change. Whatever the system was or whatever the dynamics of an order were, the desire for change, either by revealing or hiding itself, has remained as a part of men's thinking. The most extreme cases of the desire for change expose themselves in utopias. They are attempts to transcend the boundaries of human mind and strive for delineating “the best”. The common concern of those extreme approaches is nothing but a pure rejection of the existing world; as the world involves numerous weaknesses and contradictions and it might be restored so as to reach a world in which any problem will not find the opportunity to show itself. The rejection of the existing world is followed by imaginations of a new world. All utopian aspirations start off its journey with the same slogan: “Another world is possible.”<sup>1</sup> Portraying the possibility of another world indicates a simple fact: there are worlds desired more than the existing world. Utopias draw its strength from the possibility of more desired worlds, which might be conceptualized only through the desire for change. In other words, the link between the idea of change and more desired worlds displays itself in the literature of utopia.

However, utopias are not simple cases of desire for change; indubitably there is more than that. As it has already been stated, they consist of the most extreme examples of the desire for change. The extremity reaches such a level that

---

1 Michael Marder and I. Patricia Vieira, “Existential Utopia: Of the World, the Possible, the Finite”, in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, ed. Michael Marder and I. Patricia Vieira, (New York: Continuum, 2012), 35.



utopia is identified with nowhere. And in fact, the meaning of utopia literally corresponds to nowhere. The word utopia is composed of Greek words τόπος<sup>2</sup>, meaning a determined place, and οὐ τις<sup>3</sup>, corresponding to nobody.<sup>4</sup> Οὐ is used as a negative prefix and thus utopia basically refers to nowhere. Therefore, one may possibly define utopia as desirable but unrealizable.<sup>5</sup> The literal meaning of utopia will likely be confusing, because if it designates a place, which is nowhere, then why is a broad political literature inclined to analyze the concept of utopia? If utopia is a place which is unrealizable, why are certain political projects associated with utopian thought? The answer of these questions point out the fact that the meaning of utopia has gone beyond its literal meaning and attributed several characteristics. On the one hand, utopia has protected its “as if impossible” character; but on the other hand, it has become a part of mundane politics by acquiring distinct features. Krishan Kumar emphasizes this so-called contradiction in a reasonable way: “Utopia describes a state of impossible perfection which nevertheless is in some genuine sense not beyond the reach of humanity.”<sup>6</sup> Despite its impossible perfectionist character, utopia is conceptualized not as a place which is nowhere, but as a place that humanity has the chance to reach. It is not simply dreaming a fictitious world, but “is a way of looking at the world that has its own history and character.”<sup>7</sup>

It is necessary to state that doing a consistent and encompassing research with regard to utopia is nearly impossible which stems from the ambiguity of the term. Receiving various answers to the question of “what is utopia?” would not be

---

2 τόπος: topos

3 οὐ τις: outis

4 Jean-Luc Nancy, “In Place of Utopia”, in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, ed. Michael Marder and I. Patricia Vieira, (New York: Continuum, 2012), 3.

5 Ibid., 6.

6 Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 3.

7 Ibid.

an abnormal result. It is possible to witness different characteristics of utopia in answers varying from perfection to simplicity; equality to universality; happiness to justice or individualistic pleasures to collective harmonious organizations. The problem of this ambiguity comes to surface owing to the use of utopia as a catch all concept. Christopher Yorke draws attention to the seriousness of this problem via J.C Davis in utopian studies: “The difficulty that we are laboring under at the moment is that the adjective 'utopian' is being used as a catch-all label for all forms of ideal society.”<sup>8</sup> That is to say, since all researchers label the ideal society they create as utopia, since ideal states are made identical to the term utopia, subjective interpretations of it automatically engender conflicts as to what the characteristics of utopia can be. The attempts to proclaim universal statements concerning the features of utopia therefore are difficult processes, because everything, being parts of subjective ideals, are striven to be put into the pot of utopia. Categorization of utopias, such as “rationalist utopias, hedonist utopias, ascetic spiritual utopias, paradisaal utopias, agrarian utopias, mechanized utopias, utopias of virtue or craft or play” is not a solution for obviating the difficulty of the ambiguity of the term, because still they are put on a common ground by being identified as “x utopia” or “y utopia.”<sup>9</sup>

This ambiguity of the term reflects itself in the writings of popular researchers of utopia in various ways. For instance, H.G Wells defines utopia as kinetic rather than static and stresses the importance of movement instead of fixity. Utopia is not therefore a permanent state, but rather it should involve a hopeful stage which will generate “long ascent of stages.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, for example, Moritz Kaufmann approaches utopia in the opposite sense. For

---

8 J.C Davis, *Utopia & the Ideal Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), quoted. in Christopher Yorke, “Three Archetypes for the Clarification of Utopian Theorizing”, in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, ed. Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 86.

9 Ibid., 96.

10 H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2009), 13.

Kaufmann, utopia can be nothing but “nowhere land”, in which “perfect social relations prevail” and in which human beings “enjoy a simple and happy existence, free from the turmoil, the harassing cares, and endless worries of actual life.”<sup>11</sup> It is provided by this definition that, unlike Well's definition, utopia is the land of nowhere where everything is static rather than kinetic because of the elimination of all problems. Kaufmann presents a theorization of utopia which is closer to perfectionist approaches, thereby pinpoints a distinct aspect of utopias. Following Kaufmann, Judith N. Shklar specifically stresses utopia's nowhere-ness: “Utopia is nowhere, not only geographically, but historically as well. It exists neither in the past nor in the future.”<sup>12</sup> A different perspective is discussed by Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor who state that utopia is “the 'good place' which is nevertheless 'no place,' helps us to escape from the existent.”<sup>13</sup> Goodwin and Taylor, beyond the emphasis of the good place, remark the negation of the present and thus envisage another world where the existent world is no more desired. The dimension of future is also underlined by Victor Hugo, who construes utopia as “the truth of tomorrow.”<sup>14</sup> Hugo's viewpoint additionally equates utopia with the notion of truth and differentiates utopia from illusions and deceptions.

Furthermore, it is possible to address one more reason as to ambiguity and ambivalence of the term utopia. It is possible to observe that there is a transition between old and new utopias with regard to certain characteristics of the term.<sup>15</sup> Whilst the popular sense of the term refers mostly to the “impossibly perfect

---

11 Moritz Kaufmann, *Utopias*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1879), quoted in Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 15.

12 Judith N. Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffman, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 164.

13 Barbara Goodwin and Keith Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 22.

14 Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 14.

15 I will specifically explain and scrutinize on the difference between old and new utopias in the following pages.

place,” contemporary studies prove that utopia is no more impossibility, nor perfect place, but is rather “process, conflict, temporality, and choice.”<sup>16</sup> Traditional utopias inherently focus on timeless spheres which makes them impossible and attributes a “beyond” character for this world, whereas new utopian trend is interested in the time itself. The concern is no more the design of a perfect society, but rather the action for seeking the ways to reach utopia. What one probably may witness in recent utopian studies is the significance of invention and improvisation whereas traditional utopias leave no place for improvisation in particular, there is nothing to be improvised, because everything is statically determined in order to create the perfect place.<sup>17</sup>

One might detect, from all these discussions, that utopia is not considered in a singular and total understanding; rather disparate meanings and characteristics are granted to utopia by various scholars which specifically stems from that utopia has not a stable context. Ironically, the traditional and contemporary utopias, even though they share the same name “utopia”, stand at the opposite poles which generates an impasse for the thesis. Notwithstanding, this impasse makes the argument of this thesis more precious, because this opposition will provide a discussion field concerning the utopian position of Alain Badiou's political ontology. In this chapter, my purpose is to sketch four features of utopia in general<sup>18</sup>, which I regard significant to be analyzed in order to scrutinize on Badiou's political ontology in a utopian framework. Whilst endeavoring to surround some basic shared stances about utopia, my real purpose will be deciding whether it is possible to conduct a relationship between utopian thinking and Badiou's ontology. These sub-headings are (1) perfection, (2) finitude and infinity,

---

16 Davina Cooper, *Everyday Utopias: The Conceptual Life of Promising Spaces*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014), 25.

17 Ibid., 34.

18 In fact it is six, but I will consider finitude and infinity in the same sub-heading, hope and faith alike.

(3) hope and faith and (4) newness. I am not borrowing these sub-headings completely from a utopian study or theory, but combining the standpoints of different utopian studies so as to find a common basis for studying Badiou in a utopian context and to differentiate traditional ones from new approaches.<sup>19</sup> It should be kept in mind that these features reflect not solely traditional or contemporary utopian thought, but rather sometimes subsume both of them that will provide a platform in which it is possible to find explicit traces with regard to Badiou's ontology. Not to be confused, it should be stated that because of utopia's contradictory-seeming character, some features may display themselves in both traditional and contemporary utopias. By the same token, some features are intertwined such as finitude and infinity which refer to each other and it is not possible to think one without the other. Nevertheless, I will try to categorize those characteristics as traditional or contemporary. This categorization will also provide a research field in order to decide which one is more appropriate for Badiou's ontology.

## **2.2 Traditional Utopian Thought vs. Contemporary Utopian Thought**

Why do we need such a division? Before the analysis of utopian features separately, owing the reasons arrayed above, a crude division is sufficient in order to indicate the sharp distinction between traditional and contemporary utopias which will help one to notice which trend is closer to Badiou's ontology. Note that there is no general theory that separates utopias as traditional and contemporary. Therefore one should keep in mind that this is a distinction based on the research I

---

19 There are specific studies that evoked the idea of separating utopian thought into two whilst I was doing my research on utopian thought. Cooper's *Everyday Utopias* is one of them. *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought* is another study in which the concept of existential utopia is conceptualized by several scholars. In addition, Russel Jacoby's *Picture Imperfect* was quite helpful in order to distinguish utopian approaches as traditional and utopian, as I found a very similar categorization in this study which will be emphasized in Chapter 5. Also Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Times* persuaded me to categorize utopian perspectives because of his emphasis on staticness and movement. All these studies specifically imply disengagement with the popular sense of the term and therefore give the idea of a new approach in utopian thought.

did so as to sharpen Badiou's utopian position, and its meaning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What I label as contemporary utopias are the attempts to formulate a new understanding of utopia. Hence, this distinction is based on theoretical detachment of some scholars interested in utopias.

In fact, H.G Wells approaches utopias in a sense suchlike. The break point of utopias, Wells says, is the Darwinian revolution. Before Darwin, utopias:

were all perfect and static States, a balance of happiness won for ever against the forces of unrest and disorder that inhere in things. One beheld a healthy and simple generation enjoying the fruits of the earth in an atmosphere of virtue and happiness, to be followed by other virtuous, happy, and entirely similar generations, until the Gods grew weary. Change and development were damned back by invincible dams for ever.<sup>20</sup>

As far as the Wells' statement is concerned, his emphasis on perfection, being static, ignoring change and development, exclusion of disorder is quite remarkable. Wells ascribes these attributes to pre-Darwinian period, which is mostly associated with Platonic and Moreian utopias. In other words, after Darwin "Platonism is longer possible" in utopian context.<sup>21</sup> Rather, particularly with William Morris' *News From Nowhere*, fixity was abandoned and kineticism burst into prominence. Wells argues that instead of citadels, ships became the main components of utopia.<sup>22</sup> Wells, without doubt, emphasizes infinity of movement rather than finitude of fixity and stability, hopeful steps rather than permanency of states, imperfection rather than perfection, and the possibility of newness as a ship sailing on endless seas rather than reproduction of the old in the citadels. Wells' distinction can also be categorized as a distinction between classical and modern utopias.

---

20 Wells, p.13

21 Tony Pinkney, "Kinetic Utopias: H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*", *The Journal of William Morris Studies* 16, no.2/3, (2005): 51.

22 Wells, p.14

Hence, in the light of the four attributes, I will make the following distinction. Perfection as a utopian attribute is no more shared by the new utopian trend. One of the most influential factor concerning the exclusion of perfection as a utopian attribute is the high cost of the search and struggle of attaining perfection in a utopian place, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It would not be wrong to assert, in this context, that contemporary utopias are interested in not the best as an ideal, but the search itself. Hence, infinity is a component of contemporary utopias, whereas finitude belongs to traditional thought as a utopian feature. Properly speaking, idealness is a thing that should be found within the moment for new utopian understanding rather than as an imaginary place which means that new utopian insight does not imprison the term utopian within the boundaries of an ideality. Rather, the ideal is something decided within the movement itself which implies infinity of the becoming process of the ideal. The emphasis on infinity done by contemporary utopias automatically subsumes hope as a utopian attribute. It should be noted that hope can be counted as a feature of both trends, since utopia is a desire for change in the end and this desire must involve hope in order to make itself real. However, the difference between these two is that whilst traditional approach grasps hope with finitude, new trend comprehends it with infinity. Indubitably, the hope of old utopias is the hope of a finite place in which finite rules and patterns are valid, whereas the rules and patterns are not static and certain in the new approach, which conceptualizes hope within infinity. Therefore, it is more appropriate to understand traditional comprehension of hope as faith just because of its relevance with finitude. The discussion of hope and faith will be one of the most problematic parts of Badiou's utopian position according to the conceptualization of this thesis. And lastly, since a traditional utopia is labeled as finite, it is necessarily nothing more than the reproduction of the old. Contemporary thought, however, permanently stresses the importance of newness. If there is no possibility of new, if there is no opportunity to invent something new, then it does not connote more than a utopian thought interested in finitude and

idealness.

So the following distinction of these two approaches can be made:

<b>Traditional Utopian Thought</b>	<b>Contemporary Utopian Thought</b>
Perfection	Imperfection
Finitude	Infinity
Hope for the completed	Hope as Incomplete
Faith for the One	Faith for the infinite
Oldness	Newness

It should be reminded one more time to avoid from possible misunderstandings: Traditional and contemporary utopias is not a categorization model used by scholars. What I label as contemporary utopias are innovative approaches, mostly conceptualized in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, concerning utopias. The significance of this categorization can be summarized by three steps: First, it is interesting that there is an obvious attempt to invert the traditional values by contemporary utopian approaches. This inversion seems like an attempt to get rid of the bad reputation of traditional utopian attributes.<sup>23</sup> So it might be argued that utopianism searches for a new understanding of the term in order to save radical political attempts from this bad reputation. Second, traditional utopian approach is

---

23 This bad reputation of the term is also emphasized by Slavoj Žižek. As he comments on health care system, and the things that can be done concerning the globality of health care, he states that if we can select issues that can practically be dealt with, namely that “something that can be done”, then “we cannot be accused of promoting an impossible agenda- like abolish all private property or what.” So for Žižek, only then “we cannot be accused of being utopians in the bad sense of the term.” (Slavoj Žižek, “Don't Act, Just Think” Big Think (2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgR6uaVqWsQ>.) The bad sense of the word is also stressed by Timothy Kenyon who argues that “Marx and Engels undoubtedly contributed to the development of a pejorative view of [utopianism].” (Timothy Kenyon, *Utopian Communism and Political Thought in Early Modern England*, (London: Pinter, 1989), quoted in Paul B. Smith, “Utopia and the Socialist Project”, *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*, no.2, (Summer 2006), p.101.



basically identified with radical politics by liberal discourse in particular. For instance, Francis Fukuyama portrays communism as a utopia, which will “end class struggle once and for all.”<sup>24</sup> Isaiah Berlin, on the other hand, assesses Marx and Hegel as utopians, because of dreaming a world which is the best of the worlds.<sup>25</sup> The reason that liberal thinkers accuse radical politics of being utopian simply stems from the traditional utopian values, which draw a picture of a closed box. Hence, making a categorization of two different utopian approaches is useful for the possibility of saving oneself from these critiques. And thirdly, it is important to which category one can place Badiou, who is a prominent representative of radical politics; as it will show a sign concerning the evolvement of radical politics, at least within the context of Badiou. As a notable philosopher of politics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Badiou's position between these two utopian approaches is significant about giving one hints with regard to the current condition of radical politics and its relationship with utopian values of both categories.

To summarize, traditional utopias represent mostly the general utopian literature and interpretations done for them, whereas contemporary utopias represent a trend searching for new ways and so to speak inverting the values of traditional thought so as to re-conceptualize the term. In order to sharpen this distinction with the arguments of different scholars of utopia, perfection, finitude/infinity, hope/faith, and newness will be examined respectively. In order to clarify the complicated structure of utopias, it is appropriate to begin with utopia as perfection.

---

24 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of the History and the Last Man*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 65. To be sure, the identification of radical politics with utopianism, in the bad sense of the term as explained above, stems from radical political attempts to abolish all illnesses from the world. In other words, the liberal critique is done through the justification that utopian radical politics tries to establish a total and finite place, which is perfect and therefore which is impossible. And without doubt, impossibility of perfection, totality of finitude, hope for a closed system are main features of the traditional utopian thought.

25 Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, (London: John Murray, 1990), p.44

### 2.3 Utopia as Perfection

When the term utopia is heard by someone, he would probably in the first place imagine a world in which human beings live in a harmonious way, there is no problem to be solved, happiness is the ordinary reality and everything is ordered and patterned in such a way about which nobody finds a reason to complain. All the implications of this imagination will create a picture of perfection. Despite the normative aspect of the imagination, perfection embraces a problem-free, harmonious world. But still, it requires various interpretations to clarify the notion of perfection, since the ambiguity of the meaning of the term engenders different comprehensions of the concept.

First: perfection as a permanent desire of impossibility. Utopia is “the perfect society” or “a state of impossible perfection.”<sup>26</sup> The perfect society, however, is not labeled as something beyond the reach of humanity. Even if it seems paradoxical, that impossibility is a possibility for humanity, utopia gets its meaning from this paradox. Possibility of perfection remains as a desire to acquire itself as an actuality. In other words, perfection exists as a possibility, which is desired for its actualization. Utopians believe that this problem-free, harmonious world, that is the perfect world, might be attained. What unites traditional utopians is the notion that “there are no fundamental barriers or obstacles to human earthly perfection.”<sup>27</sup> The problem of the utopian perspective at this point is that the claim that the absolute lack of obstacles for perfection always remains at the level of belief. It cannot actualize itself, as it is already, by definition, impossible. Therefore, perfection, as the heart of utopia, attributes an ideal character to it. In this context, perfection is defined at ideal level. That is why utopians are usually called believers or dreamers. To be clearer, Kumar draws a parallel between

---

26 Laurence Davis, "History, Politics, and Utopia: Toward a Synthesis of Social Theory and Practice", in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, ed. Michael Marder and Patricia I. Vieira, (New York: Continuum, 2012), 129.

27 Ibid.

utopians and religious believers. He puts forward that just as the God who incites believers to find the perfect truth, and motivates them to achieve the perfect morality, “so utopia's nowhere-ness incites the search for it.”<sup>28</sup> Hence, one may deduce from this argument that perfection is nowhere and there is a permanent attempt to acquire it. The inquiry of perfection as a possibility, which is impossible by definition, forms the main body of utopia as perfection. “It is here, if not now.”<sup>29</sup> It is here as a possibility which carries the dream of its own actualization. In brief, utopia includes perfection in itself solely as a perpetual desire of impossibility.

Second: perfection as radical alteration of material conditions. Howard P. Segel prefers defining the concern of perfection of utopia in an utterly different perspective. For Segel, perfection of a utopia requires “a radical improvement of physical, social, economic, and psychological conditions.”<sup>30</sup> What one may witness in this definition of perfection is a more material-based, more actualizable and thus more possible. He argues that unless perfection is given a definite content, it is nothing but an empty term.<sup>31</sup> Segel's attempt here is to reformulate the place of perfection in the theory of utopia and to materialize it in order to render it possible. As he states “perfection does not come automatically,” he rather argues that perfection might materially be reached through struggles to obtain it. Hence, this kind of conceptualization of perfection in utopia leads one to a different conclusion: perfection is possible. George Kateb takes the same stance by using the term ideal society. He asserts that, if utopia is at stake, then it should be acknowledged that ideal society is not an imagination, nor a personal dream, yet instead, it is a place where welfare of inhabitants of the utopia is the chief

---

28 Kumar, 3.

29 Ibid.

30 Howard P. Segel, *Utopias: A Brief History from Ancient Writings to Virtual Communities*, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 5.

31 Ibid., 6.

concern.<sup>32</sup> In sum, attaining a different standpoint of perfection in utopian thinking is inevitable with a different understanding of perfection.

Third: perfection as unity. The problem of perfectionist understanding of utopia, either ideal or material, emerges as a result of inclusive structure of the term perfection. Since it does not hold any defect in itself, it does not allow any rupture to break its unity. Perfection, as a unity, with all of its being resists against disorders. Perfection represents a pure order and system. E. M. Cioran severely criticizes utopia in this sense. He notes that in utopias darkness is forbidden, because only light is allowed. There is no trace of duality and for this reason, utopias cannot include in themselves any kind of abnormality, deformity or disorder. But real life is nothing but rupture and deviation.<sup>33</sup> Isaiah Berlin also draws attention to the same problem of perfectionism. He contends: “no perfect solution is, not merely in practice, but in principle, possible in human affairs.”<sup>34</sup> What he specifically emphasizes is again the unifying character of perfectionism and that it does not allow any disorder to crack its own harmony. Following, he maintains that “any determined attempt to produce it is likely to lead to suffering, disillusionment and failure.”<sup>35</sup> The occurrence of suffering, disillusionment and failure is grounded on the denial of possible existences of disorders, ruptures and cracks. One might therefore deservedly claim that perfectionist utopianism excludes the possibility of inconsistency and denies the very reality of contradictions.

Fourth: perfection as inaction. Despite different evaluations of the different approaches towards perfection, one crystal clear conclusion might be reached. Whether it is ideal or material, whether it is potential or actual, whether it is

---

32 Ibid., 7.

33 E. M. Cioran, *Tarih ve Ütopya*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013), 86-87

34 Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, (London: John Murray, 1990), quoted in Davis, 128.

35 Ibid.

impossible or possible, the common concern of perfectionist utopias is to formulate “the best”. Perfectionist utopias, on the common ground, exclude the possibility of problem, failure or defect and constitute a place, either ideal or material, which is static. As J.C Davis sets forth “the dynamic utopia is a myth” and thus “utopia is by definition a society without change.”<sup>36</sup> That is why, to exemplify, Manuel and Manuel stress the “changeless character of utopia” as arguing a “perfectly reconstructed society.”<sup>37</sup> In this context, it would not be wrong to assert that perfectionism brings with itself a changeless world design.

Considered the characteristics concerning perfectionist utopias, it should be added that perfectionism, as a motivation of some kind of utopias, denotes traditional understanding of utopianism. What one may clearly see in these explanations is attempts of extreme achievements which leave no room for the imperfect. The reason of labeling perfectionism as a feature of traditional utopianism is fade of perfectionism in new perspectives with regard to utopia. As it has been stated, contemporary utopias consider utopianism with a more realist standpoint which concedes the possible imperfect points in utopia itself. Conversely, traditional utopian understanding endeavors to annihilate all the imperfect circumstances and to create a closed box which excludes all kinds of imperfect threats that can come from the outside.

This is the best moment to move to the second popular characteristic of utopias: finitude and infinity. In the following parts, the characteristics have crudely been stated above are going to be analyzed in more detail. In fact, what was discussed within the context of perfectionism could open a field in which finitude and infinity as main features of utopianism might be investigated.

---

36 Ibid., 129.

37 Ibid.

## 2.4 Utopia as Finitude and Infinity

The term finitude evokes several terms such as beginning and ending, closure, limitation, completion or reproduction of the old. It is not erroneous to argue that the condition of being static, discussed as an element of perfection, also reflects a finite character. The reason of equating utopia to finitude is obvious: Utopias are designed, in traditional approaches indeed, as a future project not having a beyond owing to its perfectionist character. In fact, that utopia involves a perfectionist character automatically leads to a finite world which is closed. Nevertheless, the finite character of utopia is tricky. On the one hand, utopia appears as if it is infinite; it will last forever, since there is nothing to break its perfect harmony. When viewed from this aspect, utopia transcends the limitations of time and gains an infinite character. On the other hand, however, utopia is finite, because it presents a closed box where no occasion exists as to deviations. The paradoxical position of utopia with regard to infinity and finitude is reflected by Jean-Luc Nancy. He states that “utopia is, in and of itself, an evidence of finitude: but not of finitude understood as simple limitation; on the contrary, of finitude insofar as the finite being exists precisely at its own limit, where it opens itself to the unlimited, to the simultaneously active and passive power of an unlimitation.”<sup>38</sup> The same paradox is also stressed by Louis Marin: “From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards these Utopias paradoxically attempt to define the infinite by a harmonious and rigorous totalization.”<sup>39</sup> The former statement identifies finitude paradoxically with unlimitation, the latter one, paradoxically again, identifies infinity with totalization. What one could easily notice that utopia is imprisoned within diametrical opposites that leads to the oscillation of utopia between opposite poles.

---

38 Nancy, “In Place of Utopia”, 7.

39 Louis Marin, “The Frontiers of Utopia”, in *Utopias and the Millennium*, ed. Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann, (London: Reaktion, 1993), 8.

It could be asserted that this paradoxical dichotomy engendered two separate paths, one is finite utopias involving limitations and referring to completion and the other one is infinite utopias containing no boundaries and corresponding to incompleteness. Frederic Jameson expressly pinpoints this separation. He elucidates that two distinct approaches have risen after Thomas More's *Utopia*: “the one intent on the realization of the Utopian program, the other an obscure yet omnipresent Utopian impulse finding its way to surface in a variety of covert expressions and practices.”<sup>40</sup> According to Jameson's categorization, the former represents a utopian program which can be likened to a text that has beginning and end. The latter, on the other hand, signifies an impulse not drawing a framework, but is perpetually present. The traditional utopias, referring to the former, commit to closure and totality. The commitment of finite utopias to closure and totality entails, no doubt, system and order. This type of utopias “search for a simple, a single-shot solution to all our ills.”<sup>41</sup> It is obviously seen that traditional understanding of utopia constitutes the system of the One<sup>42</sup> and subsumes all multiplicities<sup>43</sup> within its frontiers. Put it differently, multiplicity is annihilated through the process of oneification, it is once and for all oneified. For this reason, traditional utopias evoke a finite character in the sense of being closed and completed.<sup>44</sup>

---

40 Frederic Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, (New York: Verso, 2005), 3.

41 *Ibid.*, 11.

42 I intentionally prefer using the “One” because of the importance of the term in Badiou's ontology. The following chapters will explain the meaning of the term and its specific relation with utopias particularly in the sense of finitude.

43 Again, the term multiplicity is intentionally emphasized which is used as the opposite of the One by Badiou. Contrary to the One, multiplicity evokes infinity rather than finitude which will be discussed in the following chapters.

44 At this point, it should be clarified that neither traditional utopias, nor contemporary utopias imply any positivity or negativity. I do not categorize utopias as positive or negative, but only as traditional and contemporary. Nevertheless, as arguing Badiou's political ontology, I will

Burrell and Dale in their article associate utopias and gardens with each other and point out the common attributes of both. The six attributes they share demonstrate a very interesting fact about traditional utopias. These are protection, boundaries, *beastliness* of the outside and *bestliness* of the inside, control, patterns and formality.<sup>45</sup> All these features, without doubt, imply the finite aspect of utopia. Those utopias need protection, because they have an order needed to be protected. There is an inside which is the best and outside which is the beast, because they need to exclude what is bad in order to constitute the best. And for this very reason, it must have certain boundaries to set a strict line between the best and the worst. Control is necessarily a part of utopias, because there is a harmony that should be controlled. Patterns are unconditional requirements of a utopia so as to reproduce the order and preclude potential disorders happening. Formality, as the last attribute of utopias, creates a resistance against change and builds up a structural stability. All these principles serve to a finite world comprehension which is summed up by the authors as principles securing “organization in the face of 'disorganizing' tendencies.”<sup>46</sup> For Burrell and Dale, this is what every utopia attempts just as every garden does.<sup>47</sup>

Bauman also explicitly reveals the two paths of utopia by using the metaphor of, again, gardeners and hunters: “For the gardeners, utopia was the end of the road; for the hunters it is the road itself.”<sup>48</sup> He conceptualizes the gardeners, who imagine a closed world as representatives of finitude. That is why he argues that the gardeners' utopia is the end of the road, as there is no more way to be got

---

scrutinize on the concepts, both in traditional and contemporary utopias, in order to make a subjective assessment.

45 Gibson Burrell and Karen Dale, "Utopiary: Utopias, Gardens and Organization", in *Utopia and Organization*, ed. Martin Parker, (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 2002), 108.

46 Ibid., 109.

47 Ibid.

48 Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 109.



over. The utopia of the hunters, on the other hand, is the road itself and the road, in this case, has not any boundaries and limitations restricting or circumscribing. Whilst traditional utopias, that is the gardeners' utopias, predict a world in which time will stop, it is not probable in the hunters' envision that things are completed; it invariably remains incomplete, for the hunters' utopia acquires its meaning from incompleteness.<sup>49</sup> The hunters' utopia does not plan an action but realizes itself within the action. The hunter can never reach a garden. If he reaches, then that he is a hunter does not mean anything anymore. Hence, the hunters' utopia clearly indicates a utopia having no end and therefore a utopia which is based on infinity, whereas the gardeners' utopia refers to a kind of utopia having plain limitations because it is completed and therefore signifies a utopia which is based on finitude.

Utopias of infinity, on the other hand, are considered with multiple perspectives. Claudia Baracchi analyzes the concept of utopia in her article *Theater of Utopia: Deleuze on Acting and Politics* by using Deleuze's notion of becoming. She quotes the thoughts of Carmelo Bene's, who was an Italian actor, poet and film director, with respect to the concept of becoming via Deleuze. Deleuze argues that Bene is not "interested in the beginning or end of something."<sup>50</sup> The interesting thing is neither origin nor termination, but rather the middle, because things happen in the middle. "Becoming, movement, velocity, whirlwind are in the middle... Things grow from the middle."<sup>51</sup> If Bene's standpoint is seriously considered, one would notice that the middle always has the possibility to disclose infinity in the process of becoming. The notion of becoming implies an open-ended process; it does not have a starting point, nor does it include a horizon. Hence, becoming does not contain any feature of finitude by any means,

---

49 Ibid., 108.

50 Claudia Baracchi, "The Theater of Utopia: Deleuze on Acting and Politics", in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, ed. Patricia I. Vieira and Michael Marder, (New York: Continuum, 2012), 70.

51 Ibid.

but rather inherently denotes infinity. In her book, Barrachi shares Virginia Woolf's representation of becoming, a long but impressive one, presents a clear explanation for this particular issue:

One moment does not lead to another. The door opens and the tiger leaps. You did not see me come. I circled around the chairs to avoid the horror of the spring. I am afraid of you all. I am afraid of the shock of sensation that leaps upon me, because I cannot deal with as you do – I cannot make one moment merge in the leap of the moment you will be on me, tearing me to pieces. I have no end in view. I do not know how to run minute to minute and hour to hour, solving them by some natural force until they make the whole and indivisible mass that you call life. Because you have an end in view... your days and hours pass like the boughs of forest trees and the smooth green of forest rides to a hound running on the scent. But there is no single scent, no single body for me to follow. And I have no face. I am like the foam that races over the beach or the moonlight that falls arrowlike here on a tin can, here on a spike of the mailed sea holly, or a bone or a half-eaten boat. I am whirled down caverns, and flap like paper against endless corridors, and must press my hand against the wall to draw myself back.<sup>52</sup>

This long portrayal of Woolf's own life underlines a striking point. Woolf consciously refrains to place herself to finite areas of life. Her specific emphasis on being teared to pieces, having no end, transcending time, rejecting singularity and wandering like a foam intentionally signifies the victory of infinity over finitude in her own life. Deleuze stresses Woolf's interest in the infinite aspect of becoming. He states: “without future and without past, she has only a becoming, a center.”<sup>53</sup>

After Bene's attitude towards “the middle” and Woolf's depiction of life, one may ask the relationship between the concept of utopia and Deleuzeian notion of becoming. The author of the article identifies utopia with the efforts performed

---

52 Ibid., 72.

53 Ibid.

in the process of becoming. Barrachi argues that utopia should not be grasped as a dream which has not any chance to realize itself under any circumstances, “but rather as 'revolution,' as 'a plane of immanence, infinite movement.”<sup>54</sup> So for the author, also for Deleuze, utopia “designates *this conjunction of philosophy or of the concept with the present environment (milieu)*”.<sup>55</sup> Deleuze's emphasis on infinity dimension of becoming is palpably discernible. Approached in this way, utopia is not conceptualized as a future project or a limited design; rather it grows up from the heart of becoming. Therefore, Barrachi's utopia provides a field where possibilities are infinite and permanently in the condition of becoming and thus closes the possibility of a closed world.

In the light of the foregoing, finitude and infinity highlight two different types of utopias: On the one hand, finitude comes to the forefront as a common feature of traditional utopias because of its certain implications to closure, end and totality; on the other hand, infinity demolishes all implications of finitude and gives a new shape to utopia which is liquid, in the state of becoming and thereby of in itself. Briefly, finitude is an identical characteristic of traditional utopias, whereas infinity is *sine qua non* for contemporary utopias just because they exclude all types of limitations and boundaries. Whilst discussing Badiou's ontology in the sense of being or not being a utopian, it is necessary to remember that this two opposite poles simultaneously share the same name: utopian. Hence, one may claim that in either case Badiou is a utopian, which is true in this sense. At this point, the distinction between traditional and contemporary utopias is important, because it will give us clues concerning the current condition of radical politics in terms of Badiou's political ontology. Whilst it will show the transformation of utopias from traditional to contemporary, at the same time it will present a clear picture of the position of Badiou's radical politics.

---

54 Ibid., 78.

55 Ibid.

The analysis on finitude and infinity yields clues for another common feature of the concept of utopia: hope and faith. The connection between hope and faith and utopia will enrich the discussion of infinity and finitude in the case of utopia, since hope and faith will incorporate both finitude and infinity in itself.

## **2.5 Utopia as Hope and Faith**

Previous discussions concerning perfection, finitude, and infinity connote certain elements of utopia: hope and faith. Following the paradoxes of perfectionism on the one hand, of finitude and infinity on the other, hope and faith compose a new paradox not detached from the preceding arguments.

Hope directly refers to a future which transcends here and now and involves therefore the condition of not yet. Being, which becomes a part of now, contains hope as an element of itself; but hope springs to life only by pointing out things not yet existed. Hope exists within here and now, but actualizes itself in the midst of the future as a dream and sustains its existence by rejecting what is happening at the present time. Ernst Bloch scrutinizes on the concept of hope by specifically relating it to utopia. His analysis of here and now facilitates to understand what hope means and to what extent it might be associated with the concept of utopia. “Only if a being like utopia itself” Bloch says “were to size the driving-content of the Here and Now, would be the basic state of mind of this driving: hope, also be totally included in the successfulness of reality.”<sup>56</sup> If a stable being, which is in the condition of being static, was a utopia, then hope would be eliminated by realized reality which also means that here and now would be destroyed. Then the content of what is realized would become the motivation itself that realizes what is realized without containing any hope for becoming. In other words, the solution becomes what already is as stability; they are equated to each other and everything turns to a closed reality. Therefore, Bloch argues “*the*

---

<sup>56</sup> Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope Vol. 1*, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 188.

*Essence -most highly qualified matter, has not yet appeared, therefore missing represents its not yet manifested Absolute in every, previously successful appearance.*<sup>57</sup> In sum, utopia is found within being, in the condition of perpetually designating a future, which is not specified in any way and which is always here and now.

That hope is an existent reality means that there are still things remaining incomplete. For Bloch, “the world is in a constant temporal process of change; it is essentially unfinished.”<sup>58</sup> This “essentially unfinished world” is permanently nourished through “the struggle of the subject to find a finite substance that is adequate to it.”<sup>59</sup> One should be careful that hope is two-faced in the sense that it exists by the very existence of a permanent future ideal, which makes it perpetually infinite, but it desires continually to realize itself, which makes it a possible finite. Thus hope identifies itself with “trans-empirical truths about the human condition and the concrete possibilities for their empirical realisation.”<sup>60</sup> For Bloch, everything is a not-yet, as everything is open for the possibilities of different future images and cannot complete itself by any means. Being is always within the condition of developing whose certainty can never be decided. As one might precisely observe that hope, including not-yet condition, resembles nothing but the paradoxes of finitude-infinity in particular.

“No horror, image or feeling fully includes or concludes here,” Bloch says and maintains “one can see that it is not only the great discoveries, the sails of great ships still below the horizon to the average eye, that the genius of the not-

---

57 Ibid., 194. Emphasis original.

58 Jolyon Agar, *Post-secularism, Realism and Utopia: Transcendence and Immanence from Hegel to Bloch*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 201.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

yet-conscious foresees, that populate his utopian space.”<sup>61</sup> What Bloch highlights is strictly more than the image traditional utopias have created. First of all, as it has just been discussed, he does not analyze “here” as an encompassing entity in which everything is fully completed; his understanding of now is incomplete, that is why he argues that anything cannot be fully included or concluded here. Following, Bloch excludes “great discoveries,” “the sails of great ships” as the mere things that fulfill utopian space, but rather reiterates the possibilities of not yet consciousness. “More deeply, rather, it is the *values of amazement* that are carried by the state of presentiment, and ultimately reflected.”<sup>62</sup> His specific stress regarding “values of amazement” is worth to be considered, because he directly correlates incompleteness of now with amazement which means that an incomplete now is always open to amazement that might generate cracks within so-called closed totality. Bloch's fundamental concern for hope is to conceptualize a world understanding that invariably features possibilities of amazement which could change the route of the stream of history and open new ways for new probabilities.

Bloch's perspective ultimately provides that utopia is latent within the reality which waits for to be actualized as a hope but remains as a possibility which thus reproduces itself. However, for Bloch, utopia is not invoked solely in consciousness, but also is a part of concreteness. Utopia is fermented in concrete reality and addresses to a future imagination. Hence, utopia is utterly “compatible with object-based tendency.”<sup>63</sup> Bloch explicitly states that insofar as reality is not an ultimate reality, insofar as it is open to new possibilities “no absolute objection to utopia can be raised by merely factual reality.”<sup>64</sup> In fact, Bloch's theorization of

---

61 Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery. (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 193.

62 Ibid.

63 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 197-198.

64 Ibid., 197.

utopia resembles a God whose “existence remains to be completed at some future date towards which the universe is progressing.”<sup>65</sup> Bloch is already identified with philosophy of Christianity and he already acknowledges it. <sup>66</sup> Jolyon Agar manifests, as he argues Bloch's utopianism, “Christianity is the epitome of the anticipatory utopian ideal.”<sup>67</sup> What Bloch carries out concerning utopia is borrowing Christianity's standpoint and reformulating it in a materialist respect. In other words, for Bloch, utopia's existence remains to be completed at some future date which potently indicates that Bloch's utopia is closely linked to concrete reality. All this emphasis of Bloch regarding concrete reality is an attempt that strives for integrating objectivity into subjectivity and thus it presents a utopian framework in which consciousness is not the kernel but objectivity and subjectivity mutually reproduce each other.

Faith puts forward another significant characteristic of utopias which in some respects displays a major similarity with the concept of hope. “I believe that one day the world will become a better place to live” is like a motto when all utopians for the first time start to imagine an ideal world. Beyond any doubt, faith is a fundamental component of utopian thinking which triggers the utopian impulse at the consciousness level. Faith represents an aspiration of an ideal world where all pains are eliminated, happiness reaches the highest level and all troubles and difficulties are overcome forever and ever.

However, faith poses a very tragic question with regard to sacrificing people's lives in order to obtain an ideal world. Indeed, this is one of the most challenging problematic of all revolutionary theories: To what extent might existents' lives be sacrificed for a better future world? Arthur Koestler problematizes and inquires this question in his novel trilogy *The Gladiators*,

---

65 Agar, 207.

66 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 192-193.

67 Agar, 216.

*Darkness at Noon* and *Arrival and Departure*. For Koestler, utopia is a pure expression of faith which is sustained through mythical beliefs.<sup>68</sup> This expression of faith reaches such a level that it attains the capacity to sacrifice everything so as to acquire its ideal world and thus utopia, which is an imagination of the perfect, is endeavored to be formed through bloody paths. Koestler in *Darkness at Noon*, states: “at that time one believed that the gates of Utopia is stood open, and that mankind stood on its threshold.”<sup>69</sup> That the gates of utopia is open keeps the faith of mankind for a better world fresh. The process for obtaining utopia however does not comprise friendly formulations; it has a certain price. “We have thrown overboard all conventions, our sole guiding principle is that of consequent logic; we are sailing without ethical ballast.”<sup>70</sup> The search for a utopia, the desire to procure the ultimate truth generates a process in which everything can be legitimized to reach to the ideal state. Ethics of utopia is constituted at the end point; faith justifies itself ethically by the assumption that “all crimes I have committed, all wrongs I have done will lead to a much better world.” Faith for a utopia therefore implies to an ethical issue much more than the previous characteristics of utopias.

So far it was discussed, faith can be likened to hope in several respects, but in fact they have certain differences. In order to comprehend the distinction between faith and hope, it seems plausible to consult one of the most influential philosophers in the history who has an outstanding insight concerning faith: Kierkegaard. His approach propounds a theory of faith which helps understand what faith may correspond to in a theory of utopia.

The object of faith is not a doctrine, for then the relation would be intellectual and the thing not to botch it but to reach the intellectual relation's maximum. The object of faith is not

---

68 Kumar, 43.

69 Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, 1968, Web, 40  
[https://libcom.org/files/\[Arthur\\_Koestler\]\\_Darkness\\_at\\_Noon.pdf](https://libcom.org/files/[Arthur_Koestler]_Darkness_at_Noon.pdf).

70 Ibid. 78.



a teacher with doctrine, for when a teacher has a doctrine, the doctrine is *eo ipso* more important than the teacher and the relation intellectual, where the thing is not to botch it but reach the intellectual relation's maximum. The object of faith is the actuality of the teacher, the teacher's actually being there.<sup>71</sup>

This statement can be interpreted in two different ways. First, what one can plainly notice in this description of faith is a duality of teacher and doctrine, which are differentiated and put into separate places by Kierkegaard. In the first formulation of faith, Kierkegaard emphasizes that faith is not a doctrine which indicates the fact that faith cannot be textualized and cannot be permeated and melt within a text. Following, he adds the figure of teacher by noting that faith is not a teacher with doctrine which demonstrates that a doctrine always surpasses the significance of a teacher by overshadowing its meaning. The first two statements with regard to what faith is not clearly show that a doctrine, that is a text, cannot be a component of the notion of faith. Therefore, in the third formulation of faith, Kierkegaard manifests faith's real meaning which is the actuality of teacher. As Kierkegaard defines faith, he repudiates knowledge, and thereby questioning, as an element of faith; namely, faith is constructed within dogmatism through the exclusion of any kind of mundane activity. He disconnects faith from all materiality and precludes a potential inquiry with regard to it. The negation of doctrine, that is knowledge, presents a picture in which faith is grounded outside the inquiry which makes it dogmatic. That faith is the actuality of the teacher equates faith directly to dogmatism which gives faith, being different from hope, all the attributions of the One; because the One cannot define an outside by its very nature. That the One cannot define an outside means that there is no alternative. However, the critical thought, which is the opposite of dogmatism, is based on the possibility of alternatives. Dogmatism like that of the One denies any kind of outside and blocks

---

71 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs*, ed. Alastair Hannay, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 273.

all the alternative thoughts. In this context, the One and dogmatism correspond to the same meaning. The One dogmatically closes itself to the outer world and creates a world where no rupture might transpire in order to break the totality of dogmatism.

Second interpretation reverses the first interpretation. As it is seen in the description of faith, the exclusion of epistemology and exalting of ontology as a dynamic of faith are striking results. So one can also think of dogmatism not in ontological, but in epistemological sense. Despite its questionability, knowledge has always certain boundaries. Knowledge is only about what is. What is not, is not an interest of knowledge, because to know something, that something must be actual, be knowable. In this regard, instead of ontological understanding of faith, what implies the One is epistemology. In other words, conceptualizing faith on the doctrine may imply the understanding of the One, therefore of dogmatism, not in the sense of being questioned, but in the sense of having no beyond, of having certain limitations of what is. It is dogmatic because knowledge is not capable of presenting something other than itself, it is inherently closed. Hence, the two interpretations of Kierkegaard's definition of faith present two different formulations: the One of epistemology and the One of ontology. This is an epistemological-ontological decision with regard to the comprehension of faith and the One indeed. It should be noted that this decision has also a vital importance in Badiou's ontology and its position in utopian thought.

Then how should one interpret Kierkegaard's insight with respect to faith in a study that inquires the connection between utopia and faith? Utopians, particularly traditional ones, on a common ground posit that the upheaval they created would be the last one. The faith developed towards the system which will cure all illnesses attains such a level that faith is intertwined with dogmatism and utopia is imprisoned within the boundaries of the One. And this faith without doubt is an epistemological faith, as there is no being to which one can directly believe. Hence, faith can be defined as an obsession of an end and limits in

epistemological context. For this reason, faith for a utopia can directly be associated with finitude; more precisely they mutually coexist. Faith excludes the possibility of the void in the system it created, at least ignores it and does not regard the probability of the existence of the void as possible. The belief with regard to the possibility of reaching to perfection, arriving the land of utopia finds itself in the web of dogmatism in the end. That all the ethical concerns are out of interest in the way of marching to the ideal world, as Koestler notes, comes to the surface by means of faith.

Hope and faith, despite their semantic similarities, point out opposite poles. It is possible to see the traces of infinity in the term hope, whereas faith connotes finitude because of its dogmatic stance. In this way, hope and faith might be read as extensions or consequences of the discussion of finitude and infinity. It would not be wrong to assert that infinity and hope are intertwined, so are finitude and faith. On the other hand, faith, because of its attempt to eliminate all evils, recalls perfectionism which gives it a more traditional characteristic.<sup>72</sup> However, one should not forget that faith has a variable character and this variability depends on the divergence between epistemological and ontological interpretations. In the chapters analyzing Badiou's ontology, these interpretations' meaning and importance will become louder and clearer.

So far in the thesis, paradoxical aspects of utopia are discussed and attempted to be clarified. It might clearly be noticed that perfectionism, finitude and infinity, hope and faith are intertwined and it is quite difficult to grasp truly one of them without referring to the others. The last characteristic of utopia, newness, is going to furnish with a new dimension where all the previous characteristics of utopia might be reconsidered and illuminated in a disparate sense.

---

72 The connection and contrast between hope and faith has a vital importance for this thesis whilst analyzing Badiou's term "fidelity," because fidelity has a context that may involve both faith and hope in itself.

## 2.6 Utopia as Newness

The deliberated features of utopia hitherto fostered us to advance the fundamental understanding of utopian thought and utopias themselves. The last characteristic being suggested is to help depict an overarching framework of utopian thinking that will maintain the paradoxical context and get through the discussion pertaining to utopia. In this part, utopia is to be scrutinized within the perspective which analyzes utopia as newness. Utopia is envisaged as a new space, a new temporal reality in which new meanings arise involving, however, certain deadlocks that might be difficult to overcome.

To inaugurate the argument, it is convenient to start with a very crude and basic description of utopians: “the utopian rejects his world by seeking to transform it.”<sup>73</sup> Even though the statement does not contain a deep context in itself, it is promising for further discussions. What David W. Plath illuminates is simply the denial of the existing world that engenders a desire for the transformation of it. The denial clearly indicates that the old, that is the existing world, does not satisfy the things, be it needs or desires, that the utopian demands. The seeking of new, that is the transformation of the existing world, arises at this point as a tendency of utopians. Utopian thinking invariably shows an inclination to prefer the new just because he cannot find what he demands in the world on which he dwells. The rejection of the old and starting to seek the ways to obtain the new, so to speak, is the first step, both intellectually and practically, that a utopian must take. In fact, rejection of the old is not something peculiar to utopians; all revolutionary theories set their agendas on this denial and the new world is constituted in the ideal world followed by practical struggles to obtain it at the material level. Hence, one may deduce that all utopians have a revolutionary blood which encourages them for the destruction of the old.

But utopianism is not simply a rejection of the old and constitution of the new. In order to grasp the bond between utopianism and the notion of new, it is

---

<sup>73</sup> David W. Plath, *Aware of Utopia*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), xiii.

necessary to scrutinize on the concept of new. Davina Cooper deals with the concept of new at the conceptual level by attaching it to a study of utopia. She enunciates: “Taken together, these elements provide materials for constructing a utopian approach that seeks to take concepts beyond their already established existence, to the creation and recognition of new conceptual lines.”<sup>74</sup> Cooper's analysis of concepts in a utopian study underscores the ability of a utopia to transcend the established existence of concepts and to create instead new conceptual lines. The point being emphasized accentuates the problem of meaning in old and new spheres. In addition to the preceding statement, considering the following will make things clearer: “One feature that stands out, however, about the way (conceptual) lines are forged, from the perspective of a utopian framework, is the importance of the ineffable, of what cannot or simply is not said, and so is expressed, experienced, and known in other ways.”<sup>75</sup> The author's emphasis on the ineffable is worth considering, because utopia, in some conceptualizations, emerges as the ineffable. Indeed, the ineffable, the unknowable or the inexperienced can be associated with the literal meaning of utopia: nowhere. It is unknowable, because it is nowhere. It cannot be experienced, because there is nothing present to experience. But still, utopia as newness is more than nowhere or nothingness. Cooper argues that “visitor misrecognition is an essential element... heuristically enabling the author to inform the reader about the new world they have spun” in William Morris's *News From Nowhere*.<sup>76</sup> That visitor has difficulty to recognize this new world is utterly rooted in that he is like an alien to what he witnesses. The encounter of the visitor and the new world produces a clash between old meanings and new meanings. The utopia, as the representative of the new, is meaningless for the visitor, because the visitor's

---

74 Cooper, 34.

75 Ibid., 40.

76 Ibid., 42.

previous environment is not able to explain this new world. Newness of utopia represents a radical and precise rupture within the old and spreading of new meanings that the old cannot know in any way. Therefore, utopias construct its new knowledge which is not recognizable or knowable by the old world. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the visitor will eternally be like an alien to the new knowledge. The old knowledge he has acquired throughout his life is made traumatized by the new meanings and his “like alien” position is transformed into a “like ordinary” position. In other words, “nonrecognition is temporary and resolvable.”<sup>77</sup>

Michael Marder and Patricia Viera present a disparate approach towards the notion of utopia as newness by introducing existential utopia. The event of utopia, for existential utopianism, is “a break in the coherent semantic network, a productive sense of worldlessness” they contend and maintain “that could give rise to a new framework of meaning – meaningless within the old coordinates of signification.”<sup>78</sup> As seen in Cooper's perspective, utopia is defined at the level of a break in the semantic network, that is, utopia is something incoherent emerging in the coherent. That is why it is labeled as “worldlessness” in a productive sense. Marder and Viera directly stress the rise of new meanings, as meaningless, within the old significations whilst endeavoring to explain what an existential utopia is. To understand what the event of utopia is more clearly, it is proper to give place a long statement shared by Marder and Viera:

In the depths of a crisis, be it purely political or economic, a community arrives at the ex-topic 'ground zero', when its entire world is put on the verge of collapse... Ex-topic dislocation is a temporary suspension of this world, with all its rules and semantic ontological-formations, that propels the subject into a gap *between worlds*, where utopia may finally be thought: a rupture that is spatial but also temporal, separating the bygone world from the one yet to come. This

---

77 Ibid.

78 Vieira and Marder, 36.

in-between region, where old meanings are no longer valid, while new ones have not yet been found, is not accessible from the standpoint of ontological experience, lacks phenomenal clarity, and withholds the possibility of naming (hence, of determining and mastering beings) from the ex-topic subject. To submit oneself to the terrifying namelessness, to unlearn the old set of meanings and names, is already to be on the path to a utopic reconfiguration of the world.<sup>79</sup>

This quotation deserves a relatively long analysis, for there are a few productive points that will enrich the discussion of utopia as newness. For Marder and Viera, the temporary suspension of this world, where utopia can be considered as an option, opens a terrain which is between worlds of which the utopian subject finds himself in the midst. This in-between space where utopian re-exists as a utopian subject is portrayed as a region in which old meanings do not have any authority, but at the same time new is not founded yet. Furthermore, the in-between space is not accessible, namely unrecognizable, since it does not have a phenomenal clarity. Phenomenal clarity is out of question, because the space utopian subject occupies is in-between; old meanings which provide phenomenal clarity are not valid and new meanings await to be constructed. Utopian image exists at this undecidability axis that endows utopians with a platform where they may become a utopian subject. Namelessness is terrifying, because it is unclear, it contains non-structure in itself. The submission of oneself to this namelessness, as a consequence, means being on the way to a utopic construction of the world. Namelessness feature of in-between space is based on Heidegger's conceptualization of "nearness of Being": "But if man is to find his way once again into the nearness of Being he must first learn to exist in the nameless." Nearness of being is what Marder and Viera call "Heidegger's designation of utopia" which promises a new name by destroying the old semantic network.<sup>80</sup>

---

79 Ibid., 40.

80 Ibid.

The dilemma that one probably encounters in this approach is the reality of the fear of new. It is not surprising that encountering with the new is frightening, as it exists beyond one's habits, inclinations and routines. As it has already been stressed, new emerges as unidentifiable which makes it a stranger to all ordinary rules, patterns, institutions and networks. Marder and Viera propound, by referring to Heidegger, that Dasein “anesthetizes itself to the thought of its finitude,” just because he is aware of the reality of death, which “forecloses the possibility of utopia.”<sup>81</sup> This is also described by Fredric Jameson as “existential fear of Utopia.”<sup>82</sup> The basis of the existential fear for a utopia is “the fear of a complete loss of self,” because utopia as newness stands utterly against the constructed self.<sup>83</sup> Utopia as newness is contradictory with self, because self is constituted through the permanent exclusion of the new, or at least the new is invariably made old in order to transform it into a habit in this process. “The aversion of utopia” therefore stems from this fear of the loss of self.<sup>84</sup> Emmanuel Levinas also draws attention to this fear and equates the condition of transcending this fear with achievement of utopia: “The call to holiness preceding the concern for existing, for being-there and being-in-the-world [is] *utopian*, a dis-interestedness more profound than [a concern with] 'one's things' and vested interest.”<sup>85</sup> In other words, the courage to sacrifice one's being for the other, for Levinas, implies utopianism; renouncing “vested interest” for the sake of attaining the other is what Levinas labels as utopianism. The fear of utopia, therefore, comes to surface at this point, because “vested interest,” namely the old, prevails the other, namely the new. The deadlock of utopia can only be resolved through the defeat of this existential fear.

---

81 Ibid., 47.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., 48.

85 Ibid.



The possibility of new, its potential existence directly reminds openness and excludes closure. In fact, since traditional utopias are correlated with totality, finitude, closure or the One, utopia as newness utterly stands against traditional utopias which makes it closer to contemporary utopias. By the same token, utopia as newness involves hope in itself and excludes faith as dogmatism. The permanent possibility of utopia as newness, on the other hand, does not allow any space for perfectionism, because utopia as newness automatically defines a space which implies a beyond and an outside.

## **2.7 Utopia and the Uncounted**

What did these characteristics of utopia indicate on a common ground? By all means they accentuate different perspectives of utopian thought, though they do not refer to disparate characteristics. Initially, it was emphasized that desire of change is the simple motivation which fosters people to imagine an alternative reality. Forceful change is hence an indispensable part of utopian thought. But the problem is how to approach to the term “change” and how to conceptualize it within a utopian imagination. To enrich the discussion and to plumb the depths of utopian thinking, four characteristics were listed: perfection, finitude and infinity, hope and faith, and lastly newness. These features of utopias, in one way or another, touch to the idea of drastic change despite their differences to analyze the issue. But it is possible to argue about one more significant common attribute of utopias. Aforementioned characteristics clearly proved that all utopias are places or imaginations or desires where all uncounted values are counted. Utopias imagine an alternative world within which the reality of the uncounted is made real. Indeed, utopia as perfection, no matter it is impossibility, radical alteration, unity or inaction, fancies the uncounted values. Since the values of perfection are uncounted within the existing world, they are tried to be made real, either at material or ideal level, and tried to be counted. Utopia as finitude and infinity stress the same condition of the uncounted. The concern of a limited, completed

utopia is nothing but a world where uncoun­ted is made coun­ted through finitude. It is a finite world just because the uncoun­ted does not want to be disrupted and distorted by already coun­ted elements of the existing world. Infinite movement, on the other hand, subsuming infinite possibilities, implies the probability of the uncoun­ted being coun­ted. Infinity is already the main component of the uncoun­ted because it inherently excludes the closure of a finite world and paves the way for thinking the uncoun­ted in the midst of the coun­ted. Likewise, hope and faith, which transcend here and now, presents a terrain where the uncoun­ted can take place; both hope and faith have the desire to annihilate the influence of the coun­ted, the intelligible, and strive for constructing the uncoun­ted. Utopia as newness is directly interested in the uncoun­ted, because the notion of the new addresses out of the boundaries of the old, and therefore the coun­ted.

The concern of utopias for the uncoun­ted is going to be one of the main discussions of the thesis. Since it is one of the chief concepts of Badiou's political ontology, and since obviously it is a unifying component of utopian thinking, it is both necessary and substantial to scrutinize on the concept. But before moving to Badiou's political ontology and analyzing its existent or non-existent relationship with utopian thinking, I am going to propose one more ingredient of utopian thought which will make one closer to Badiou's ontology: utopia as truth; and utopia as truth is to be examined through one of the key thinkers in the history, for Badiou in particular: Plato.

## CHAPTER 3

### UTOPIA AS TRUTH

The previous chapter has tried to present the context in which the concept of utopia might be analyzed and left one more point that should be considered: utopia as truth.<sup>1</sup> The reason of choosing truth as a dynamic of utopias for this thesis is twofold: First, truth appears in a specific text, which involves utopian traces -and truth is directly linked to these traces,- whose author is labeled as one of the most influential figures in the history: Plato. And second, utopia as truth plays a key role for this thesis, as this analysis will try to argue the relationship between utopia and Badiou. The philosophical connection Badiou feels towards Plato is stronger than the other philosophers in the history. In fact, Badiou attaches to Plato such an importance that he reminds the one of the old proverbs “tell me what you think of Plato and I will tell you who you are.”<sup>2</sup> This specific importance attributed by Badiou to Plato will provide a bridge to jump from discussions about utopia in general to Badiou's, existing or non-existing, utopian theory.

This chapter will mainly focus on Plato's *Republic*, and the interpretations done by significant scholars in order to clarify the connection between truth and utopia. However, it should not be forgotten that the main purpose of this thesis is neither explaining Plato's philosophical understanding or political theory, nor atomizing Plato's important concepts. Rather, the main purpose here is nothing but trying to indicate how Plato's utopic fashion can be understood within the context

---

1 In this chapter, usage of the concept of truth will not be limited to one form, as the literature variously uses the concept interchangeably as “truth”, “the truth”, or “truths”. Whilst all these concepts separately imply different meanings, an analysis of the difference of these terms requires utterly a new paper. However, it should be specified that Badiou acknowledges the concept of truth in a multiple sense. In other words, he argues that there are infinite truths.

2 A. J. Bartlett, *Badiou and Plato an Education by Truths*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 10.

of truth and how this relevance opens a path so as to think Badiou and utopia within the same framework. Through the end of the chapter, I will specifically elaborate on the question why Badiou is a Platonist, in what context he interprets Plato, and whether they can be assessed in the same utopian picture by predicating on their conceptualizations of truth. We will start with briefly explaining who Plato is, and what his place and importance in utopian thought.

### 3.1 Who is Plato?

Plato is one of the most influential, much-debated and penetrating figures in the history of the Western philosophy. Without doubt, his highly provocative and profound ideas in various fields have shaped, positively or negatively, the philosophical thought of his successors in the Western tradition. That a person is a Platonist or not might yield one some crucial hints pertaining to the political, artistic or scientific world view of that person owing to Plato's clear-cut interpretations with regard to the nature of being. It would not be exaggerated to contend that Plato has such a significance that people having a philosophical insight can be divided into two as Platonists and anti-Platonists which proves that his thought involves precise and rigid points that can divide philosophical attitude into two.

What is gripping for this thesis, beyond Plato's prominence and influence in the history of philosophy, is Plato's close relationship with utopian thought even though the name utopia was first used by Thomas More. He is not only associated with utopian thought, but also for some, he is the first utopian thinker. Indubitably, Plato's *Republic* contains a highly utopian character in the sense of picturing an ideal city. "One thing everybody knows about the *Republic* is that it is the first great work of political utopianism ever written -although it was not for another 2000 years that the word 'utopia' was invented."<sup>34</sup> For this reason, Plato has a

---

3 Malcolm Schofield, *Plato Political Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 194.

special place for those who study utopian thought or history of utopias which also makes him special for this thesis.

It is possible to address several reasons that impelled Plato to write such a utopian work. The most prominent reason probably was Plato's close relationship with Socrates who was critical and totally opposed to Athenian democracy.<sup>5</sup> This relationship played a key role in the formation of his political opposition and his search for alternatives that were reflected in the writings of Plato. The opposition was enriched through philosophical ideas learned from Hermogenes, who “taught Plato that true reality cannot change” and Cratylus, who showed “that the material world is always changing.”<sup>67</sup> The distinction between “true reality” and “the material world” assisted him to form the main dynamics of his philosophical insight and provided the platform of thought on which Plato found the chance of producing his political utopia.

A thoroughly explanation of the *Republic* within the context of utopia is not the interest of this thesis.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, it is necessary to indicate in which sense the *Republic* features a utopian attribute. Plato's utopia contains some previously examined features of utopian thought and literature. For instance, Popper sees an

---

4 Whilst the *Republic* is labeled as a utopian envision by some significant scholars, for example by Karl Popper, there are some significant readers of the *Republic* who do not identify it with a utopian project. The most famous interpretation grasping *Republic* as an anti-utopian book was done by Leo Strauss. However, this thesis considers Plato's *Republic* as the first attempt to produce an ideal, utopian system and place. To read these two different interpretations, see Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* and Leo Strauss' *History of Political Philosophy*.

5 Beyond being opposed to Athenian democracy, that Socrates was condemned to death can be one of the main reasons that Plato imagines an ideal place in which philosopher kings rule the society. Plato's *Republic* might be read as a fierce response against the war given by the authority against philosophy.

6 John Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 62.

7 For further information about Hermogenes and Cratylus and their influences on Plato, see Plato's dialogue called *Cratylus*.

8 The analysis of *Republic* as a utopia can be the subject of another thesis. My purpose is briefly showing the links between Plato and aforementioned utopian characteristics by referring to authors studying on Plato and propounding a new utopian attribute, which is truth.

authoritarian and closed society in the *Republic*. “The Platonic 'Socrates' of the *Republic* is the embodiment of an unmitigated authoritarianism.”<sup>9</sup> For Popper, Plato interprets Socrates as a “faith in the closed society.”<sup>10</sup> Popper's interpretation of Plato indicates that the *Republic* involves the idea of finitude in the city he portrays. It must be finite, because it is an ideal; the utopian picture is interested in what should be and draws the boundaries of this “what should be” by destroying the rules of “what is”. It automatically reproduces the finitude over finitude.<sup>11</sup> It is finite, as there is no need for novelty; there is no need “in the ideal city (...) (to) innovate.”<sup>12</sup> Hence, Plato's ideal city inherently must affirm the idea of the oldness because of its idealness. It is a place in which what is new is not required. It includes also the faith to implement this ideal city as a reality, but its very finitude and negation of the newness exclude hope. Plato is not a philosopher of hope, but of faith in the utopian context. On the other hand, Platonic utopia is a certain imagination of perfection. “(Plato) envisages the ideal of a static perfection. This is a dead ideal, not a living one.”<sup>13</sup> In this dead ideal, inherently, there is no trace of change. The duty of the Auxiliaries is nothing but “to protect the state against the danger of change.”<sup>14</sup> There is no place for the outside in the ideal city; if there is, then it is a threat and should not be allowed to threaten the city's internal harmony.

---

9 Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume I The Spell of Plato*, (London: Butler&Tanner Ltd., 1947), 115.

10 Ibid., 172.

11 Of course, “what is” seems like much more finite than “what should be” in principle. However, thinking “what should be” as an ideal place, determining the limitations, rules, the order in general of “what should be” makes this imagination identical to “what is”. In other words, “what should be” becomes an alternative, imaginary “what is”. Hence, drawing the picture of an ideal directly refers to finitude in a utopian sense.

12 Elisabeth Hansot, *Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought*, (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1974), 30.

13 Ferguson, 68.

14 Hansot, 28.

A certain conclusion is obtained in the light of these attributes: Plato's utopia is the backbone of the traditional utopian thought and the *Republic* is the very example of this utopian custom. Yet a more striking element in this utopian envision is what this research is interested in: truth. Platonic utopia as truth is not a “one more attribute” that can be added to the previous utopian characteristics, but is an underlying reason of finitude, faith, perfection and oldness. In fact, “truth is evidently what (Plato) is interested in.”<sup>1516</sup> The entire story of Plato's utopia can be thought within the context of truth rather than other considered utopian attributes and my purpose in this chapter is to prove that Plato's utopia is the truth's manifestation.

The question that to what extent Platonic truth and traditional utopian thought can be grasped within the same picture should be asked. In other words, is there a correlative relationship between Platonic truth and the traditional utopian features in point? In fact, Plato's *Republic* is a response given to this question and therefore, we will strive for conducting the possible link between Platonic truth and traditional utopian attributes. To do so, Plato's theorization of Forms and the role of philosopher kings will be respectively analyzed. These examinations will bring us to the Badiou's interpretation of Plato's *Republic* which will show the affinity between Plato and Badiou with regard to truth. However, it will be indicated in the last section that their understanding of truth shows a certain difference which is vital for differentiating their positions in utopian thought.

---

15 Schofield, 239.

16 Friedrich Nietzsche criticizes the attempt of attaining truth in the context of “philosophical architects” by specifically referring to Plato: “they aimed at certainty and truth.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*, (New York: The Project Gutenberg, 2012), 10.) Nietzsche identifies Plato with being a dreamer and utopian. (Ibid., 303) “For Nietzsche Plato's entire philosophical project constitutes a radical refusal of reality, masquerading as an assertion of ultimate truth: utopianism in the worst sense of the word.” (Schofield, 197.) In other words, utopia as truth might be described as the worst utopianism in the eyes of Nietzsche.

### 3.2 Platonic Truth, the Good and Philosopher Kings

A short introduction pertaining to Forms/Ideas will furnish the sufficient knowledge so as to constitute the link between truth and the concept of Forms. Barris clearly explains what an Idea refers to: Ideas “are eternal, unchanging self-same beings, not accessible to the bodily senses but only to the pure intelligence. They are what truly is.”<sup>17</sup> Put simply, Ideas represent beyond the appearance which makes them impossible to be perceived through bodily senses. Being beyond the appearance and the senses, for Plato, corresponds to that which Ideas are what truly is. In other words, appearance represents a secondary reality and thus a secondary being, whereas Ideas are the original beings which means that they are primary beings that predates the appearance. Plato argues that perceiving through senses leads nothing but falsity, whereas thought is specifically “correlative to being and truth.”<sup>18</sup> And the famous cave metaphor of Plato puts forward that the appearance is nothing but the shadows of Ideas meaning that the mundane world is the reflection of Ideas.<sup>19,20</sup>

The interpretation that appearance is secondary and Forms are primary leads to the following: there are originals and imitations. Regardless of whether originals and imitations intersect or share the same being at some points, the significant thing here is the idea of originality itself. Plato proposes this distinction

---

17 Jeremy Barris, *The Crane's Walk Plato, Pluralism and the Inconstancy of Truth*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 6.

18 Ibid.

19 Allan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 193-199.

20 Plato's cave metaphor is one of the most influential metaphors in the history of philosophy which clearly makes a distinction between truth and opinion/appearance. Plato portrays a cave in which people are fixed to see what is in front of them on the wall. They cannot see their backs because of the bond they have had since their childhood. Owing to the light reflecting on the wall from their backs, what these people see is nothing more than the shadows. And these shadows are only the shadows of truth which is supposed that these shadows are truth itself by the dwellers of the cave. What a philosopher wants to do is to set himself free from the bonds they have and to experience truth which exist outside the cave where the sun, the light, is situated. (Bloom, 193-220.)



simply because of Protagoras' measure doctrine, which argues that "a human being is a measure of all things."<sup>21</sup> Obviously, Plato problematizes the subjective interpretation doctrine of Protagoras and suggests a reality which is not based on subjective experiences.<sup>22</sup> In *Theaetetus*, Socrates properly asks this question to Theaetetus:

Shall we say of such occasions that the wind by itself is cold or not cold? Or shall we be persuaded by Protagoras and say that the wind is cold for the one who feels cold, and not for the one who does not?<sup>23</sup>

That this question has a vital importance stems from its attempt to conflict the ideas of subjectivity and objectivity. Plato's Forms do not show differences and therefore is not subjected to this or that person, since Forms signify objectivity; they exist by themselves. The two side of the question Socrates asks to Theaetetus proves that there is "a fundamental distinction between certain things, especially the changeless forms, which (Plato) argues are perfect beings, and certain other things, the changing objects of sense-perception."<sup>24</sup> The former one clearly represents truth, because for Plato, truth is not an epistemic relation, "not a relation

---

21 Patricia Clarke, "Appearance and Belief in Theaetetus 151d-187a", in *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, ed. Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 125.

22 Whether there is an intelligible place in which Forms exist is the arcanum of Plato's philosophy. At least for Badiou, there is not such an intelligible place: "I am a sophisticated Platonist, not a vulgar one. I do not uphold that truths pre-exist in a separate 'intelligible place' before becoming mundane and that they are born simply by descending from the heavens above." (Alain Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Louise Burchill (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 26.) What I attempt by stating "a reality which is not based on subjective experiences" is to eliminate the thought that truth is something changeable from person to person in Plato's philosophy. The exclusion of subjective experience in this sense does not mean automatically that subjects cannot intercommunicate with Forms.

23 Clarke, p.125

24 Vasilis Politis, "The Argument for the Reality of Change and Changelessness in Plato's *Sophist* (248e7-249d5)", in *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, ed. Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 149.

of a subject with an object. It is only a manifestation of the object.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, truth does not ground itself upon subjective opinions, but acquires its very meaning from the manifestation of the object.<sup>26</sup>

One should note that the Platonic notion of truth, which is based on the existence of the Good, and represented by the Sun outside the cave, implies the existence of the One. “The Good transcends the other forms and is their ground and being.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, the Good is a being that exists in all beings; it is the source of being. It is “the source of all reality, all knowledge.”<sup>28</sup> The Good is the true cause of all things; it is unique. Truth is, in the end, based on the One, namely the Good. Plato's portrayal of the Good as a unique being included in all what one sees or experiences proves that Plato is a philosopher of the One which is quite important to make a distinction between Plato's and Badiou's conceptualization of truth.

Needless to say, the theory of Forms is not something that can be grasped in a full understanding with a few descriptions. However, a full theory of Forms is out of the context, therefore, an emphasis on Forms-truth connection and the Good's property of being the One fits the purpose of this chapter. To that end following arguments will be limited to the statement that Plato believes in the existence of truth beyond the appearance and this truth, i.e Forms, is what truly is, and the Good is the source of all knowledge which draws the conclusion that truth is in the end based on the One.

---

25 Oded Balaban, *Plato and Protagoras: Truth and Relativism in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, (Lanham Md.: Lexington Books, 1999), 53.

26 The rejection or affirmation of epistemic relation between subjects and objects probably represents the most critical decision in the process of forming a philosophical standpoint. This decision automatically produces different approaches with regard to the being or non-being of truth and the position of subjects. Hence, Plato's position has a vital importance in the history of philosophy just because he was determined to prove the existence of truth beyond subjective experiences.

27 Hansot, 26.

28 Ferguson, 66.

Understanding what Forms, and truth in this regard, mean in Plato's philosophy is fundamental so as to grasp utopia-truth connection. However, one more concept proposed by Plato is required in order to clarify this engagement: philosopher kings. The *Republic* draws the picture of a utopia, in which, Plato argues, philosopher kings rule the society. One should first of all comprehend what a philosopher is, which will pave the way for understanding the role of philosopher kings in the city. Different definitions of philosopher yield distinct properties of philosophers. One of these definitions states that a philosopher is “the lover of the whole of truth.”<sup>29</sup> Since Plato differentiates Forms from appearance, being the lover of truth refers simply to beyond bodily senses. That is why, according to Plato, “a philosopher is one who approaches and apprehends the forms themselves and never confuses them with their sensible participants.”<sup>30</sup> Allan Bloom, on the other hand, highlights a different aspect of philosophers by comparing philosophers with Gulliver in Lilliput. “He is too big and too different to be trusted, too much beyond the temptations of the small ambitious men to be their tool.”<sup>31</sup> Plato's philosopher, since he achieves setting himself free from the chains of the cave and obtains the truth, becomes unrecognizable. A philosopher is like a stranger, both for himself as he suffers the difficulties of knowing the truth and feeling the necessity of returning to the cave, and also for ordinary men since they do not understand what a philosopher means as he tells the story of what he saw outside the cave. The lack of comprehension of a universe outside the cave is the defining feature of them. In addition, once a philosopher knows the truth of the world of Ideas, his perception of objects would be different than ordinary men

---

29 D. C. Schindler, *Plato's Critique of Impure Reason on Goodness and Truth in the Republic*, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 23.

30 Gerasimos Xenophon Santas, *Understanding Plato's Republic*, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 126.

31 Bloom, 399.

upon his return to the cave.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the objects philosophers and non-philosophers experience are the same; however, the difference is that “the philosopher alone understands the single form of beauty.”<sup>33</sup> Hence, one may infer that a philosopher would experience the same world in a different manner and this manner is utterly associated with nothing but the truth.

Plato argues that the different insight philosophers have makes them true lovers owing to the desire of loving the whole: “to love truth is to love the whole of a thing rather than a mere aspect.”<sup>34</sup> It is surely beyond doubt that loving the whole of a thing implies much more than the surface meaning. Indeed, the political role attached to philosophers exposes itself at this very point. Since philosophers are lovers of truth and since they love the whole instead of one aspect of a thing, philosopher represents a figure who is capable of knowing what is right and what is wrong. Philosophy is the mere instrument to be able to know what is good, as he is the person who has attained the truth of the whole which makes him a just person to distribute justice properly.<sup>35</sup> “Philosophy (...) turns out to be the end, the human good.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, philosophy is the only tool to rule a city in the best way just because it has the capacity to know the truth of the whole.

At this point, the concept of philosopher kings is suggested as the most appropriate people to govern the city. Socrates directly states that in the absence of

---

32 Plato depicts the return of philosopher to the cave whose fate is to be killed by the dwellers of the cave: “And if he once more had to compete with those perpetual prisoners in forming judgments about those shadows while his vision was still dim, before his eyes had recovered, and if the time needed for getting accustomed were not at all short, wouldn't he be the source of laughter, and wouldn't it be said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted, and that it's not even worth trying to go up? And if they were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead up, wouldn't they kill him?” (Bloom, 195-196.)

33 Darren J. Sheppard, *Plato's Republic*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 91.

34 Schindler, 96.

35 Bloom, 391-393.

36 *Ibid.*, 402.

philosopher kings, the city is doomed to experience nothing but malignancy:

Unless the philosophers rule as kings or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place, while the many natures now making their way to either apart from the other are by necessity excluded, there is no rest from ills for the cities, my dear Glaucon, nor I think for human kind.<sup>37</sup>

In this context, philosopher kings appear as the rulers having the talent to prevent all illnesses from the city. One should be aware of the fact that the talent is carried into effect only by attaining the truth. The ultimate characteristics of philosopher kings should be read within this sense. For Plato, philosopher kings have two fundamental traits: one is “a strong tendency towards philosophical knowledge” and the other is “a stable desire to benefit the city.”<sup>38</sup> The former one was explained as a trait of a philosopher. Yet the latter one is not a trait all philosophers share, but all philosopher kings must possess. It should be noted that the latter one springs from the former one but not as indispensable. To put it another way, having the desire to benefit the city is not an inevitable result of having the tendency towards philosophical knowledge, but still is a result of it. Therefore, the emphasis should be given not to having desire to benefit the city but to having an inclination to attain philosophical knowledge, because to benefit the city derives from the truth of knowledge itself. As philosopher kings “judge things according to their substance rather than according to opinion,” there is nobody knowing better for the benefit of the city.<sup>39</sup> In other words, knowing the benefit utterly comes from knowing the thing itself.

---

37 Ibid., 153.

38 Antony Hatzistavrou, “Happiness and the Nature of Philosopher-kings”, in *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, ed. Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006), 95.

39 C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2006), 92.

This is the moment that utopia-truth tie is unfolded. Plato's utopia should not be solely read as an ideal place in which philosopher kings rule the society so that the ultimate justice is attained. Instead it is the very existence of the truth and through which the truth becomes the ultimate authority. In other words, utopia is the manifestation and the authority of the truth. To think even further, Plato's utopia is the truth itself. As Socrates' discussion with Thrasymachus, who contends that what is compelling is not truth but benefit, shows the authority lies solely on the truth. The source of Plato's utopia takes its root from the reality and reachability of the truth by philosophers. Portraying a city where philosophers are the ultimate authority proves that Plato's utopia rigidly represents the sovereignty of the truth above the sensible. The reason that philosopher-kings rule the dwellers of the city is simply the necessity of the rule of truth. For this reason, Schindler elucidates that the *Republic* is more than myriads of arguments and discussions about them, but is “a *dramatic argument* devised to bring to expression as decisively as possible a claim about nature of reality.”<sup>40</sup> In this way, Plato draws a framework of a utopian thinking where truth's existence is stressed and philosopher kings are merely the instruments to vindicate truth's command. What is striking is not the theme or the story told in the *Republic*, but the militant defense of the idea of the truth by Socrates for an imagined place throughout the text.

Another striking conclusion concerning Platonic utopia and truth is the existence of the Good, namely the One. In fact, all traditional utopian features related to Plato's utopia stated above are based on the fact that Plato is a philosopher of the One.<sup>41</sup> Put it differently, that Plato grasps the Good, the One as

---

40 Schindler, 34.

41 One might object at this point that Plato is not a philosopher of the One, and it might be indicated through a selection of Plato's arguments on the one and the many. For example, Plato arrives to the conclusion, in the end of the dialogue *Parmenides*, that “if the one is and if it is not, both it and the others, in relation to themselves as well as in relation to each other, both are and are not, and appear and do not appear everything in every way,” which is not compatible in

the source of all beings draws the lines of authoritarianism, closure, perfectionism, faith and oldness. This is a very important conclusion with respect to the characteristics of utopia and will be discussed in the following pages in detail. In the light of the discussions made above, I am putting forward the assertion that the philosophy of the One is the core of traditional utopian thought and Plato is the most prominent philosophical figure who reflects the One as the source of his utopia.<sup>42</sup>

But put aside the notion of the One for a while, what the most significant thing Badiou borrows from Plato in order to integrate into his own ontology is the suggestion of truth against opinions, beliefs or briefly *doxa*.<sup>43</sup> In the next section, Badiou's probable engagement with utopianism is to be analyzed and discussed by specifically focusing on Badiou's book titled *Plato's Republic*.

### 3.3 Badiou, Plato and Truth

This section will explore not the denotation of truth in Badiou's philosophy, which will be thoroughly addressed in Chapter 5, but his palpable involvement in Plato's philosophy within the context of truth. Regarding Plato's *The Republic* as a

---

any sense with Parmenidean one. (Plato, and Samuel Scolnicov, *Plato's Parmenides*, (California: University of California Press, 2003), 166.) The motivation for claiming that Plato is a philosopher of the One is based on his arguments on the Good, which is conceptualized in the *Republic*. Of course, there are many ideas, but they are based on the One, the Good. Walter Terence Stace clearly shows this hierarchical relationship by stating that Plato's "own Absolute, the world of Ideas, is a many in one. It is many because it contains many Ideas. It is one because these Ideas constitute a single organized system of Ideas under the final unity of the Idea of the Good." (W. T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel: A Systematic Exposition*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 79.) In this context, whilst I am contending that Plato is a philosopher of the One, my theoretical source is Plato's notion of the Good.

42 The coherence between the One and traditional utopian thought will be examined in detail in the following chapter in which Badiou's decision, the one is not, will be discussed.

43 Badiou does not only borrow Platonic truth from Plato, but also places mathematics, which is defended by Plato as the science of reality, to the core of his ontology. In fact, truth and mathematics both for Plato and Badiou are intertwined: "For Badiou, as for Plato, mathematics is 'foundational'. It is *the* singular discourse which 'in one and the same gesture, breaks with the sensible and posits the intelligible. Critically, it exists already as *the* discourse which is not subject to *doxa* or opinion, which precisely denies, by its formal existence, the right of *doxa* to elevate its form into the 'truth of that era'." (Bartlett, *Badiou and Plato*, 20.)

utopian envision, it has been presented that the utopia is the claim of the authority of the truth conceptualized through a philosophy of the One, the Good. Yet his interpretation of the philosophy of the One will be addressed in the next section.

Plato's philosophy presents a fork in the road. It would not be wrong to assert that philosophy fundamentally cleaves in twain: philosophies defending truth and philosophies rejecting truth. Slavoj Žižek explicitly remarks this decision:

This, then, is our basic philosophico-political choice (decision) today: either repeat in a materialist vein Plato's assertion of the meta-physical dimension of 'eternal Ideas,' or continue to dwell in the postmodern universe of 'democratic-materialist' historicist relativism, caught in the vicious cycle of the eternal struggle with 'premodern' fundamentalisms.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, viewed from this perspective, this fundamental philosophico-political decision engenders two disparate paths, whose remedies concerning social and political reality are completely different. Badiou's decision attests that he is indubitably a strong and militant advocate of the former and this choice provides a philosophical and political field in which he strictly produces arguments against the contemporary fashion of the rejection of truth.<sup>45</sup> According to Badiou, being a Platonist is a decision, not an assumption. Badiou states that “to decide is to think, to become 'subject'” and this decision automatically generates certain theoretical and methodological consequences.<sup>46</sup> The decision in favor that there is truth provides the opportunity for the disestablishment of opinions, for search of the essence of things and thereby producing a theory inquiring beyond what is given,

---

44 Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, (London: Verso, 2012), 42.

45 This philosophico-political decision concerning the existence of truth should not be thought without Badiou's ontological decision that the one is not, which will be analyzed in the third chapter, otherwise Badiou would be nothing more than a simple follower of Plato.

46 Bartlett, *Badiou and Plato*, 19.



what is presented.<sup>47</sup> For Badiou, Plato was the “first warrior in the eternal battle” of truth against opinion which makes him one of the most influential figures in history.<sup>48</sup> In a nutshell, Badiou's insistence on philosophy which today entails the reawakening of “Platonic separation between Truth and opinion” simply proves that being a Platonist or not is one of the most central problematics of contemporary world.<sup>49</sup><sup>50</sup>

A. J. Bartlett explores Badiou's rapport with Plato and the concept of truth in his book *Badiou and Plato*. Bartlett's intention is to re-present Plato with a re-reading of the dialogues and to reach the conclusion that Platonic education is an education by truths which is done through the state.<sup>51</sup> Badiou himself uses the

---

47 Ibid., 20-21.

48 Leihua Weng, “Revolution and Event: Mao in Alain Badiou's Plato's Republic”, *Comparative Literature Studies* 52, no.1, (2015): 48.

49 Daneil Sacilotto, “Towards a Materialist Rationalism: Plato, Hegel, Badiou”, *The International Journal of Badiou Studies* 2, no.1, (2013): 65.

50 Badiou brings forward three philosophical movements having a dominance in contemporary philosophy: the hermeneutic orientation, the analytic orientation and the postmodern orientation. For Badiou, there are two common features of these three orientations. The first one is their argument that the end of metaphysics has been manifested. The ideal of truth has no more an importance for a philosophical investigation. The second one is the position of language which has been defined as the most significant locus of thought. In brief, meaning oriented philosophy has obtained a victory against truth oriented philosophy. In this sense, each of these philosophical movements share the same motivation against Platonist notion of truth. According to Badiou, this two common attributes of three philosophical orientations is a serious problem for philosophy. Badiou inaugurates his ontological investigation by specifically rejecting this meaning oriented philosophy and declares the necessity of truth; truth must be reconstructed: “At base, it is a question of philosophically reconstructing, with a slowness which will insulate us from the speed of the world, the category of truth.” (Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and Return of Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens, (London: Continuum, 2004), 42-52.) Hence, for Badiou, “Plato has to be restored, and first of all by the deconstruction of “Platonism” -that common figure, montage of opinion, or configuration that circulates from Heidegger to Deleuze, from Nietzsche to Bergson, but also from Marxists to positivists, and which is still used by the counterrevolutionary New Philosophers (Plato as the first of the totalitarian “master thinkers”), as well as by neo-Kantian moralists. “Platonism” is the great fallacious construction of modernity and postmodernity alike. It serves as a type of general negative prop: it only exists to legitimate the “new” under the heading of an anti-Platonism.” (Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 100-101.)

51 Bartlett, *Badiou and Plato*, 1-6.

same assertion: “the only education is an education *by* truths.”<sup>52</sup> What Badiou sees in Plato's philosophy is the ultimate position of truth which is categorically separated from what is not truth. For Badiou, the main question of the contemporary philosophy is this: “Is there something besides opinion?”<sup>53</sup> In order to answer this question correctly, Badiou argues, what should be done is nothing but following the path opened by Plato which asserts that there is truth. Separating philosophy into two paths of which one is Platonist and the other is anti-Platonist stems from Badiou's categorization of disparate philosophies which have the same motive. Putting “the category of truth on trial” is shared by all anti-Platonist philosophies, even by the philosophies claiming to be Platonists.<sup>54</sup>

The problematic of whether being a Platonist or not has such a prominence for Badiou that he decides to write Plato's *Republic* one more time, a hypertranslation, in which Socrates discusses the same problems not in Ancient Greek but at the present time so as to furnish Badiou with the opportunity to refer to the ideas of various people who have lived after Plato. Badiou's book, called *Plato's Republic*, is the text in which one might find such traces of utopian thinking and its relationship with Platonic utopia, which is the manifestation of truth. In fact, what one can easily discern in this text is the reinterpretation of Platonic ideal state with a definite praise of the authority of truth. It would not be erroneous to state that Badiou's argument that the only education is an education by truths is processed in more detail in this book.

Whilst Badiou explains the reason why he wrote such a book, he warns the readers by remarking that we need Plato today urgently just because he is the philosopher who gives the motive that we need to attain truth. Badiou attempts to

---

52 Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. Alberto Toscano (California: Stanford University Press, 2005) 14.

53 Ibid., 15.

54 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 46.

contribute to the construction process of truths that might be implemented merely by transcending what is sensible, with the reinterpretation of the *Republic*.<sup>55</sup> Badiou's Republic is an affirmation of the conclusion that Plato's utopia is the manifestation of truth, but in a different way.

What is the most striking thing in Badiou's *Republic* is Badiou's integration of the Idea of communism into Plato's *Republic*. This does not mean that Plato's *Republic* does not involve any communist practices. However, one should note that there is a definite difference between Plato's and Badiou's portrayal of *Republic*. There is, beyond any question, a definite emphasis on common share in Plato's ideal city:

So, then, when one man takes on another for one need and another for another need, and, since many things are needed, many men gather in one settlement as partners and helpers, to this common settlement we give the name city, don't we?<sup>56</sup>

Without doubt, Plato envisages an ideal place in which individuals work for common need, as working for the collective need is already better for themselves. Moreover, in Plato's mind, what is produced should be consumed collectively.<sup>57</sup> Each individual does the job that suits to him most, since it is the most appropriate way to obtain the most effective production. In other words, collective production and consumption is the sole way so as to acquire the maximum benefit for all individuals. In this regard, Plato's utopia has a definite communist character. It can be called, in a sense, primitive communism in which commonality prevails personal benefits.

Yet Plato's communism is by no means based on equality. Plato's ideal city contains a hierarchy of citizens. To become a philosopher king is not an easy and

---

55 Alain Badiou, *Platon'un Devleti Bir Önsöz, On Altı Bölüm ve Bir Sonsözden Oluşan Diyalog*, trans. Savaş Kılıç and Nihan Özyıldırım (İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 2015), 9.

56 Bloom, 46.

57 Ibid.

labor based process. In order to be a philosopher king, only education is not enough, in addition one must “born with the best nature.”<sup>58</sup> If equality is in question in Plato's ideal city, it is valid only between the rulers. So it is possible to argue that a communist elite rules the city which eliminates any kind of notion of equality. “Plato restricted the communist lifestyle to the ruling elite.”<sup>59</sup> So irrespective of whether it is “kingship” or “aristocracy”, there is a certain emphasis on hierarchy and thereby inequality in Plato's work.<sup>60</sup> To put it another way, Plato's concept of truth involves inequality in itself.

On the other hand, Badiou does not formulate truth and communism by excluding equality. Truth must involve in itself the notion of equality. He follows Plato whilst describing philosophers: “They're people whose only passion is for one kind of show alone, the one afforded them by truths coming into the world.”<sup>61</sup> Following Plato, again, Badiou makes Socrates speak: “In every country, philosophers must be the ones to exercise leadership positions.”<sup>62</sup> However, one should note that truth's existence is possible only through everyone's participation: “Everyone, whether he likes it or not, must come out of the cave! Everyone must take part in the anabasis to the sunny mountain top!”<sup>63</sup> His truth, unlike Plato's philosopher kings thesis, consists of everyone's participation. As Badiou's Glaucon states this is the basis of their egalitarian communism.<sup>64</sup> In other words, Badiou's Republic is based on the notion of equality, because for Badiou, everyone can and

---

58 Ibid., 109.

59 Erik van Ree, *Boundaries of Utopia – Imagining Communism from Plato to Stalin*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7.

60 Bloom, 125.

61 Badiou, *Platon'un Devleti*, 208.

62 Ibid., 203.

63 Ibid., 262.

64 Ibid., 261.

should be a philosopher in the long term and being a philosopher is defined as the condition of the tendency to attain truth.<sup>65</sup> That is to say, equality is grounded on the existence of truth; communism is possible solely with the existence of its truth. In this context, communist truth gets its absolute meaning as people possess the knowledge of truth.<sup>66</sup>

Badiou's emphasis on equality is notable, because his conceptualization of equality is not based on epistemic modality. Rather, he approaches to equality in an ontological sense, which is quite remarkable. Understanding equality with an ontological insight and exclusion of epistemological calculations signify an equality comprehension, which does not involve any kind of programmatic action: "Such equality is by no means a social programme."<sup>67</sup> What is apparent, emphatically, is that if equality -or justice, freedom and so on- is developed through an ontological insight, then it is possible to save oneself from any vision of the ideal. Badiou argues that equality "is not what we desire or plan; it is that which we declare to be, here and now, in the heat of the moment, and not something that should be."<sup>68</sup> One can clearly notice that there is an accent on the movement; equality rises within the infinity of the movement, not within the finitude of prescriptive knowledge. For Badiou, equality is not a prescription that might be followed in the pre-revolutionary period as an ideal to be reached. It is something that can be lived or experienced in the process of revolution. "Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement in this great revolutionary movement, let them learn to distinguish between correct and incorrect ways of doing things."<sup>69</sup> Equality can only be, like universality, "a way

---

65 Ibid., 263.

66 Ibid., 243.

67 Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005), 98.

68 Ibid., 98-99.

69 Ibid., 98. This statement was taken from Sixteen Points of Cultural Revolution which was

of being rather than knowing.”<sup>70</sup> In other words, truth is implicit to the movement; it cannot be “confined to a particular world,” thus it cannot be defined.<sup>71</sup> Hence, the task of the philosopher is about “things, not (...) words”.<sup>72,73</sup>

On the other hand, Badiou defines communism “as a pure Idea of equality.”<sup>74</sup> He specifically stresses the Idea of communism which is depicted as the true. Badiou's *Republic* shows the character of egalitarian communism and grounds it onto the concept of Idea. What is momentous here is the direct connection Badiou establishes between communism and the Idea. Badiou cannot think of communism itself without the existence of the Idea and argues that the politics of communism is possible in an entire sense only by obtaining the knowledge of the Idea. Badiou's communism becomes the manifestation of truth one more time as it was tried to be explained in Plato's philosophy. Badiou reformulates Plato's *Republic* with the notion of the Idea of communism and expresses a kind of utopia by reviving Platonic concept of truth and by putting it into the heart of his theory. This is most clearly seen in the following statement:

Ultimately, life as a whole will be dedicated to the Idea in this way, and all human beings will be able to enjoy life, to a very ripe old age, as something that has allowed them to be the people they've become, which they have good reason to be proud of.<sup>75</sup>

---

declared in 8 August 1966.

70 Daniel Bensaid, “Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event”, in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and The Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward, (London: Continuum, 2004), 96.

71 Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 26.

72 Alain Badiou and Fabien Tarby, *Philosophy and the Event*, trans. Louise Burchill (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 113.

73 The ontological relationship of truth and equality will be analyzed comprehensively in Chapter 4 whilst discussing Badiou's conceptualization of truth entirely. The reason that specifically examining equality in this chapter is to indicate Badiou's involvement with ontology and the exclusion of epistemology whilst he formulates his understanding of truth.

74 Alain Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2008), 100.

75 Badiou, *Platon'un Devleti*, 234.

A quite utopian statement. There is the Idea to which life will be dedicated to the core and this dedication will provide the chance of enjoying life. Again, there is no epistemological concern in this statement, but an ontological one. The Idea will endow one with the opportunity to be himself, to exist without any limitations applied on him. According to the statement, the Idea does not designate any ideal place in which a perfect life awaits to be experienced. The Idea is not interested in any epistemological articulation; the Idea's ontological ground is positioned against epistemological explanations. What is utopian in this description is the Idea itself; it is its very being. The Idea is portrayed as an umbrella, under which Badiou's utopia grows up. However this umbrella is not a determined or depicted ideal; the aggregation of the Idea and the dedication engenders Badiou's utopia. His communist utopia, in the end, can only be the very being of the Idea.

For Badiou, “communism is what Kant called an 'Idea', with a regulatory function, rather than a programme. It is absurd to characterize communist principles in the sense I have defined them here as utopian as is so often done.”<sup>76</sup> The communist Idea therefore cannot be an ideal that can ultimately be reached. The communist Idea cannot imply any kind of portrayed place, nor does it set the rules of a utopian society. Badiou states that an Idea “is the subjectivation of an interplay between the singularity of a truth procedure and a representation of History.”<sup>77</sup> In this context, the Idea is not an imagination of the best place, but the decision that a subject can take concerning the singularity of a truth procedure. What I have attempted to show is not designating the ideal place through Plato's philosophy, nor determining the rules and patterns that a utopia must have, but the decision that truth exists and the existing truth is the very motive of the utopian thought of Badiou. He declares that his Idea of communism is by no means a

---

76 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 99.

77 Alain Badiou, “The Idea of Communism”, in *The Idea of Communism*, ed. Slavoj Žižek and Costas Douzinas, (London: Verso, 2010), 3.

utopian project nor is a Fourierian utopian ideal.<sup>78</sup> Oliver Feltham clearly puts forward that communism is not “a form of utopia”, but rather it “would be identified as this very process of division, this continual destruction and remaking of state structure.”<sup>79</sup> It is the name of not an ultimate purpose or a social ideal, but a politics aiming at the universal.<sup>80</sup> The Idea of communism can only be an active element within the movement; it cannot statically impose the rules of a perfect world. “Communism can only be a movement, it cannot be a State.”<sup>81</sup> In other words the communist Idea displays nothing more than the Idea itself and the interplay between the Idea and subject, who dedicates his life to the Idea.

Even though Badiou's hypertranslation of the *Republic* share the same truth character with the original work, Badiou does not draw a utopian picture that shares the same lines with Platonic ideal city. Even if Badiou invokes a utopian impulse in his reinterpretation, it is not a utopia that shares the same attributes with Platonic utopia. Badiou cannot be a traditional utopian in the sense of Platonic truth; he cannot be a philosopher of perfection, finitude, faith and oldness, for he does not share the same stance with Plato who conceptualizes the Good as the One. His Platonism is Platonism of the multiple.<sup>82</sup>

---

78 Alain Badiou, “İdeası Komünizm Olan Şey”, in *Komünizm Fikri Berlin Konferansı 2010*, ed. Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), 12.

79 Oliver Feltham, *Alain Badiou Live Theory*, (London: Continuum, 2008), 117.

80 Ibid.

81 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 20.

82 Without suspicion, the discussion about truth's place in Badiou's theory is not restricted to this chapter. In the following chapters, the notion of truth and its consideration in his political ontology will specifically be elaborated. In this way, the following chapters, related to the conceptualization of truth, will present numerous points to make a comparison between aforementioned utopian features in the Chapter I and truth. But presently, it is adequate to know to what extent the concept of truth is important for Badiou and to what extent it can be associated with utopia.



### 3.4 Platonism of the Multiple

Badiou identifies his Platonism as “Platonism of the multiple”, which is a functional interpretation of Plato so as to constitute his ontological approach.<sup>83</sup> What is impressive is that Badiou's interpretation of Plato is not compatible with the interpretation done above. Let alone the idea that Plato is the philosopher of the One, Badiou argues that the reason of banishing poets from the city<sup>84</sup> at the end of the *Republic* is banishing “the threshold of the Absolute,” namely the idea of the One.<sup>85</sup> A poem must be, for Badiou, authoritarian, since its concern is “what is, in the sensory form of what imposes itself”.<sup>86</sup> However, Plato introduces us mathematics by situating it to the opposite side of poetry. According to Badiou, mathematics is democratic, as it “offers to everyone a shared demonstration.”<sup>87</sup> Truth can be attained by everyone through mathematics and Plato is the very figure that proclaims the idea of mathematics. “So, it is necessary to affirm that,

---

83 Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. Norman Madarasz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 104.

84 Plato banishes poetry at the end of the *Republic*, in Book X, by arguing that art produces imitations and “imitation is surely far from the truth.” (Bloom, p.281) The imitative aspect of art reveals the fact that artistic products are open to interpretation which should not be influential in a place over which truth has the authority. “In fact, Plato was so irritated by this aspect of art that he *banishes* the poets from his conceptual utopia.” (J. Maggio, “The 'Birth of Truth': Alain Badiou and Plato's Banishment of the Poets”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36, no.5, (2010), 609.) Whilst Badiou argues that a poem must be authoritarian, he simply tries to show the authority of what is. In other words, a poem is authoritarian, as it is a reflection of what is and cannot include truth in itself. As a matter of fact, Badiou speaks of two types of poetry that oppose to each other: “I would gladly oppose poetry, which is the poeticization of *what* comes to pass, and the poem, which is itself the place *where* it comes to pass, or the pass of thought.” (Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 29.) What Badiou dissents is the authority of what is, and Badiou endeavors to surpass what is, and any idealization of what is as what should be. That is why he specifically emphasizes *where* instead of *what*. Badiou's utopia, in this regard, cannot be related to things have already existed, but can be concerned with the place in which being is in the condition of becoming.

85 Alain Badiou, “Plato, Our Dear Plato!”, trans. Alberto Toscano *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 2, no.3, (2006): 40.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

contrary to what is generally said, it is mathematics which is democratic and poetry which is aristocratic, or royal.”<sup>88</sup> (40) In other words, the manifestation of mathematics proves the exclusion of the authority of the Absolute and replaces it with democracy. In this context, Badiou argues that Plato should be understood not in the sense of the Absolute, or the One, but in the sense of multiplicity.

Badiou's interpretation of Plato reaches to the conclusion that there are truths that can in no circumstances be related to the One. “There is not the Truth, there are only disparate and untotalizable truths that cannot be totalized.”<sup>89</sup> Badiou's understanding of Platonism in the sense of multiple, despite he argues that this is what Plato tries to tell us, is a very important departure from Plato. Ed Pluth explicitly puts forward Badiou's retreat from Plato concerning One and multiple:

This addition - "of the multiple" - is actually a significant departure from Plato because of the status that multiplicity had for the Greek. There are actually two ways in which multiplicity is present and functional in Plato. What was genuinely real for Plato was not to be found in the many material things that we perceive with our senses (already itself a multiplicity, one should note), but in what could be called intellectual objects, or, ultimately, in concepts themselves, independent of human minds. Multiplicity is ontologically degraded in Plato's work - the many things we perceive are trying to be like other things, things (forms) that are really real, and in some way more real than what we perceive and occasionally bump into. Plato does admit that there are multiple forms, and thus different types of beings, just as there is a multiplicity of appearances; but even these depend in some sense on a fundamental form for their being (what Plato called "the Good").<sup>90</sup>

---

88 Ibid.

89 Alain Badiou, *Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitive Ontology*, trans. Norman Madarasz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 62.

90 Ed Pluth, *Badiou A Philosophy of the New*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 32.

Pluth's interpretation arguing that Platonism of the multiple is a departure from Plato should be carefully taken into consideration, as it highlights the difference between Plato and Badiou within the context of utopian imaginations. Formulating the ontology not with Platonic One, but with Platonic multiple displays why Badiou cannot be a utopian of perfection, finitude or oldness. In other words, Badiou must refrain himself from an understanding of Plato as a philosopher of the One. If Badiou is tended to stand against these traditional utopian notions, he must understand Plato in the sense of multiple. Put it differently, Badiou wants to keep himself away from any implications of the One, which show an effective inclination to traditional utopian characteristics, in order not to be a philosopher of perfection, finitude or oldness. On the contrary, Badiou stays close to contemporary utopianism, whose characteristics are mainly infinity, hope and newness. In brief, Badiou's decision concerning Platonism of the multiple is a decisive factor in the context of the shape of his utopianism.<sup>91</sup>

Platonism of the multiple is a highly key decision, because it is constituted through the formulation that the One is not. Truths are independent from the One which proves that there cannot be a closed world authorized by the Truth. The exclusion of Platonism of the One therefore implies that truth is strictly associated with newness rather than oldness; truth is out of the boundaries and limitations of the One. To put it different, in Badiou's thinking, dissimilarity cannot be reduced to the Same. This decision introduces the idea that Badiou's ontology is critical against traditional utopian values which will be analyzed in the Chapter 4 in more detail.

---

91 It should be one more time noted that Plato leaves room to be interpreted in distinct ways. Without doubt, "Plato does not argue that all is really one, for example, as his predecessor Parmenides did." (Ibid.) In other words, Plato can be interpreted in the context of the multiple as Badiou does. By the same token "it is possible to show that Plato essentially has the One prevail over the All." (Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 85.) That is why what Badiou does is a decision with regard to Plato.

In sum, to go back to the title of this chapter, utopia manifests itself as truth in both thinkers, therefore it is plausible to argue that utopia might be thought in truth context as it has been indicated in Plato's and Badiou's cases. However, both utopias signify totally different peculiarities which attests the fact that Plato is a traditional utopian on the one hand, and Badiou reflects a contemporary utopian thought on the other. Despite Badiou's declaration about being a Platonist, the major reason of the dispersal grows out of his interpretation of Plato which is the Platonism of the multiple. It would not be misleading to assert that Badiou's comprehension of Plato not with the notion of the One, but with multiple constitutes the essence of the utopian opposition between these two thinkers.

The goal of the following chapters will be scrutinizing specifically on Badiou's ontology so as to strengthen the idea that he is a contemporary utopian and a strong opponent of traditional utopian values.

## CHAPTER 4

### BADIOU'S ONTOLOGY: THE VOID AND INFINITY

Previous chapters provided introduction to discern to what extent utopia is an ambiguous and contradictory term, and to exhibit how these features are intertwined with each other. It should be one more time noted that utopia is analyzed solely as a tool so as to deal with an utterly different subject in this thesis. The next step will be focusing on the main theme of the thesis, which is Alain Badiou's political ontology that involves two crucial concepts: the void and infinity. The second chapter presented four utopian characteristics: perfection, finitude/infinity, hope/faith and newness. Badiou's political insight in fact puts forward a gathering platform where these characteristics will find their places in the theory.

Badiou's ontology is a difficult one. Not only does he handle the questions that could not have been answered implicitly in the history of philosophy, but also he effectively wields mathematics as an instrument in his conceptualization of political ontology. The significance of mathematics might explicitly be seen in his equation that “mathematics is ontology.”<sup>1</sup> Indubitably, there is no way to construe Badiou's ontology in a comprehensive way without applying certain mathematical references, yet this is a political theory thesis and I do not endorse attempt overwhelmed with mathematical formulations. For this reason, I will try to explain Badiou's ontology without referring to mathematical explanations in order to not choke in its complexity, but draw the attention to the concepts' philosophical and political implications.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 4.

2 For detailed information about Badiou's specific involvement with mathematics, the first source is without doubt his magnum opus *Being and Event*. However, the number of books he authored on mathematics are various. *Mathematics of the Transcendental* in which set theory and

One may ask at this very point that why inquiring utopian impulses in Badiou's political ontology is worth for a comprehensive analysis. First of all, Badiou is a prominent figure in the contemporary radical politics and there is a considerable tendency towards Badiouian political theory particularly by the period that the Arab Spring has opened. The increasing number of political events throughout the world requires new political theories for explaining the dynamics of those events and Badiou's ontology is capable of filling this theoretical gap. Secondly, radical politics has been in search of new ways and new perspectives that perpetually reshape its context. There are certain shifts in terms of comprehending and formulating the tactics and strategies for possible radical changes which raise the importance of some concepts. In this way, discussing Badiou's ontology will indicate the magnitude and direction of these shifts concerning radical politics. Thirdly, explicating the potential utopian impulses in Badiou's theorization will delineate a picture of utopian thinking in contemporary radical politics in the works of Badiou. Whilst on the one hand, this will crystallize the differences between traditional and contemporary utopian thinking; on the other hand, the abandoned and substituted utopian concepts provide information with regard to the current circumstances on which radical politics is based.

In this context, I will discuss Badiou's ontology by specifically focusing on utopian evocations. To do this, it is first necessary to make an introduction to Badiou's key decision: The one is not.

---

category theory are analyzed to “lay out different conditions for philosophy”. (Alain Badiou, *Mathematics of the Transcendental*, trans. A.J Bartlett and Alex Ling (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 16.) See also *Number and Numbers* (Alain Badiou, *Number and Numbers*, trans. Robin Mackay (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)) and *The Concept of Model* (Alain Badiou, *The Concept of Model: An Introduction to the Materialist Epistemology of Mathematics*, (Melbourne: Re.press, 2007)) For those who are not good at mathematics and prefer easier texts concerning mathematics and Badiou's ontology, Peter Hallward's *A Subject to Truth* is a remarkable study. (Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003))

#### 4.1 The Decision: The One is not

What is Badiou's fundamental concern? In which context should his works be read? For certain, Badiou's ontology is a genius response to numerous philosophical questions. However, three important concepts are enough in order to explain his basic concern crudely. Rather than explaining these three terms, I only draw attention what they represent. The first term, event, is a simple response against those which perceive and try to present reality as the One. Event, which is simply a rupture in the system, indicates why the One is not and why totality and closure are impossible fantasies. The second term, subject, is a response against vulgar structuralism, which imprisons the notion of subject always within the structure. Badiou's theory of subject clearly shows that how a finite entity can produce newness within the structure without being imprisoned through the old values of the structure. And the third term, truth, is a general response against those who reject the existence of truth or reduce it to the level of relativity. Badiou's conceptualization of truth is also a response against those who conceive of truth in epistemological context. In fact, the formulation of all these three terms can be read as an attack of ontology against epistemology. We will scrutinize on these three concepts in Chapter 5. But in order to understand these three important concepts properly, and to establish definite links with utopianism, it is necessary to cover the ground of the concepts, which will begin with the decision that the one is not.

Anatomizing the concepts of the void and infinity entails some basic arguments propounded by Badiou. Hence, one should necessarily emphasize his first ontological decision: the one is not.<sup>3</sup> The word, "decision" is not a random but a certain preference. Badiou accentuates this critical decision of which the inevitable result is that the one is not: "We find ourselves on the brink of a decision, a decision to break with the arcana of the one and the multiple in which philosophy is born and buried, phoenix of its own sophistic consumption. This

---

3 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 26-40.

decision can take no other form than the following: the one *is not*.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Badiou determines the fundamental ground of his entire ontological approach by this decision. Adriel M. Trott stresses the same point by declaring that the one is not, is not a logical conclusion but a decision.<sup>5</sup> It leads to a certain deduction, which argues that Badiou's political ontology starts with a decision, not by the accumulation of logical calculations.

The decision that the one is not indispensably leads to the opposite: being is pure multiplicity. And since the one is not, multiplicity must be infinite, otherwise it would have a certain finite point which validates the existence of the one, which is not. Put it differently, multiplicity must exist without touching any point of the one; it must be multiplicity without the one. For this reason, every multiplicity must be the multiplicity of multiplicity which generates infinite multiplicities.<sup>6</sup> “What comes to ontological thought is the multiple without any other predicate other than its multiplicity.”<sup>7</sup> So what one has is these two conclusions: the one is not and infinite multiplicity is.

What does the decision that the one is not and only multiplicity is imply as a starting point within the context of this thesis? Badiou, by attributing multiplicity rather than the one to being, refuses an understanding of being, which involves totality in itself. The first inference one can obtain is the rejection of totality of being, which might be seen as a response to the philosophers of the one,<sup>8</sup> and the defense of openness through the specific emphasis with regard to multiplicity's

---

4 Ibid., 25-26.

5 Adriel M. Trott, "The Truth of Politics in Alain Badiou: 'There Is Only One World'", *Parrhesia* 12, (2011): 83.

6 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 26-40.

7 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 81.

8 Properly speaking, the decision that the one is not can also be read as a response against the Platonic One. It has been already discussed that Badiou understands Plato within the context of multiple, not the One. So it is plausible to argue that the statement that the One is not supports Badiou's Platonism of the multiple.



attachment to being. In other words, initially totality and openness might be put as two distinct properties of the one and multiplicity. One should keep these two implications in mind in order for possible links in the following pages between Badiou's ontology and utopian thinking.

Nevertheless, Badiou does not exclude totally the notion of the one whilst contending that the one is not. He asserts that the one is only as an operation; that is to say, the one is not, but the count-as-one is.<sup>9</sup> But why does Badiou decide that only the count-as-one is whilst being is pure multiplicity? At this point, he introduces his concept presentation/situation and the function of the count-as-one which is structuration. For Badiou, a situation is “any presented multiplicity,” and every situation has its own count-as-one as an operator which means that in order for being understood, known or grasped, multiplicity must be counted as one.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the duty of a situation is to present a consistency by counting multiplicity as one. To put it different, the count-as-one structures any presented multiplicity and, so to speak, oneifies it; “the one is a law of the multiple.”<sup>11</sup> The one is necessary, as an operation, so as to comprehend infinite multiplicity. Basically, infinite multiplicity cannot be grasped as it is, but can be known only if it is oneified by the count-as-one. And if the-count-as-one is the structure of being, then one can conclude that being is known only within a structure, a law.<sup>12</sup>

---

9 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 26-27.

10 Ibid., 26.

11 Ibid., 27.

12 In order to understand properly the relationship between multiplicity and the count-as-one, think about reason. Reason, must transform the infinite in order to understand it. Crockett states: “So reason has to step in and force the situation by demanding the presentation of an infinite apprehension in a single finite image. This is similar to what Badiou calls the count-as-one.” (Clayton Crockett, *Deleuze Beyond Badiou: Ontology, Multiplicity and Event*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 114.) To think in a Kantian way: “What happens is that our imagination strives to progress toward infinity, while our reason demands absolute totality as a real idea, and so the imagination, our power of estimating the magnitude of things in the world of sense, is inadequate to that idea.” (Immanuel Kant and Werner S. Pluhar, *Critique of Judgment*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 106.) In addition, in *Logics of*

Considering the explanations up to now, it is also essential to distinguish consistency and inconsistency in Badiou's terminology. Badiou defines substantial being not as solely multiplicity but as inconsistent multiplicity.<sup>13</sup> In fact, inconsistency stands against oneification and unification process; being, which is not the one, must be inconsistent in itself, since it is not undergone any oneification process, that is, it is pure multiplicity. Something (even this may not be an appropriate term) is “neither unified nor particular” before being exposed to a count-as-one operation, it is simply inconsistent multiplicity.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, inconsistent multiplicity, for Badiou, is the predicate of the undefinable, unthinkable or unknowable.<sup>15</sup> Inconsistent multiplicity, in order to be presented, to be understood, becomes consistent and structured through a oneification process. Badiou argues: “All thought supposes a situation of the thinkable, which is to say a structure, a count-as-one, in which the presented multiple is consistent and numerable. Consequently, the inconsistent multiple is solely -before the one-effect in which it is structured- an ungrasable horizon of being.”<sup>16</sup> So presentation does not include inconsistency as a predication of being, because inconsistency cannot be presented. The very structure of presentation consists of the count-as-one which means that inconsistent multiplicity is not related to the law, the structure of being,

---

*Worlds*, Badiou uses the term logic so as to explain the same problematic. He states: “just as being qua being is thought by mathematics (a position that is argued for throughout *Being and Event*), so appearing, or being-there-in-a-world, is thought by logic. Or, more precisely, 'logic' and 'consistency of appearing' are one and the same thing.” (Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds Being and Event 2*, (London: Continuum, 2013), 37-38.)

13 Badiou sometimes uses the term pure multiplicity or pure presentation instead of inconsistent multiplicity, but they share the same meaning. (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 33-36-38-56.)

14 Hallward, Peter, "Introduction: 'Consequences of Abstraction'" in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward, (London: Continuum, 2004), 5.

15 *Ibid.*, 6.

16 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 37.

but is “prior to the count.”<sup>17</sup> In this sense, a very critical decision is made by Badiou; inconsistency must exist as a predicate of being, but we know nothing with respect to its existence, because it is inconsistent only through not being exposed to a oneification operation. In other words, Badiou admits the objective existence of beings which is different from the conditions of being known or being understood. Badiou proposes, namely, that there are things-in-themselves.

Yet one may wonder why inconsistency matters if it is unknowable and unthinkable. Badiou suggests mathematics so as to think inconsistent multiplicity as itself, that is, which is not oneified. Mathematics is the only way to comprehend inconsistent multiplicity without relating it to any operation, because mathematics does not define things, but rather utilizes axioms. Mathematics, in this way, “is faithful to the non-being of one.”<sup>18</sup><sup>19</sup> For him, Cantor's set theory is the only theory that is capable of thinking such unthinkables. To go back to the beginning, Badiou's entire discourse depends on a decision, which is an axiomatic one: “that of the non-being of the one.”<sup>20</sup> Set theory is the only method in order to think inconsistent multiplicity, which does not include any structuration. In other words, set theory is the only instrument to think substantial being, being in itself. That is why Badiou posits a very simple equation: mathematics is ontology. Therefore, ontology is “the theory of inconsistent multiplicities.”<sup>21</sup> For him, the purpose of ontology should be designating inconsistent multiplicity, because it is “the science

---

17 Ibid., 55.

18 Ibid., 33.

19 Badiou offers mathematics to think inconsistent multiplicity, because without mathematics, we can think of inconsistent multiplicity within the boundaries of the one because of we are exposed to the count-as-one operation. When we suppose that we are thinking inconsistent multiplicity, what we think is nothing but merely its name. We can define it, but we cannot know what it essentially is. The only way, for Badiou, to think about inconsistent multiplicity is therefore mathematics just because it uses axioms.

20 Ibid., 34.

21 Ibid., 30.

of the multiple qua multiple,” which implies that ontology must indicate the being in itself.<sup>22</sup>

Badiou summarizes, in his magnum opus *Being and Event*, first of all that the one is not, which automatically leads to the conclusion that multiplicity is and “every multiple is a multiple of multiples.”<sup>23</sup> And secondly, the one is only as an operation, which is the count-as-one that is a structuration process of the multiple in order to “be recognized as multiple.”<sup>24</sup> Grasping Badiou's philosophical decision is fairly vital for understanding his stance and for this thesis' potential deductions concerning utopian impulses in his perspective. Hitherto, it might be stated that the exclusion of the one as a predicate of being corresponds to the elimination of totality and it offers, instead, openness. The decision taken by Badiou is essential particularly for the discussions of finitude and infinity. Yet in order to detail the argument, it is imperative to enlarge the discussion which will bring us to the void, which is the fundamental concept of Badiou's ontology, and its specific relation with infinity.

#### **4.2 The Void**

It has been discussed so far that the one is not which leads to that being is inconsistent multiplicity, count-as-one exists as an operation which is structuration or law of being. In addition, it was elucidated that presentation/situation is any presented multiplicity which is exposed to the operation of the count-as-one that is necessary for being, as inconsistent multiplicity, to be understood, thought or recognized. And lastly, it has been noted that mathematics is the only way to think such multiplicity, which is not counted as one, since it uses axioms rather than definitions, and ontology is mathematics, as it must designate inconsistent

---

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 31.

24 Ibid.

multiplicity as being qua being. So what is the connection between the axiomatic decision of Badiou and the void?

The void emerges, in the theory of Badiou, as a direct consequence of the aforementioned decision. The void simply represents “inconsistent multiplicity according to a situation.”<sup>25</sup> To put it in a different way, the void is what remains out of the count-as-one operation that places it out of the structuration process. It was declared that inconsistency cannot be presented in a situation, for in order to be presented, it must be counted as one and made become consistent which means that “there is no graspable inconsistency” inside the situation.<sup>26</sup> A situation consists of solely “oneness or consistent multiples.”<sup>27</sup> Hence, the unrepresentability of inconsistency remains as a phantom in the situation; it cannot be seen or it cannot be grasped. When one observes existence through the side of a situation, he would notice that “prior to the count there is nothing because everything is counted.”<sup>28</sup> In a situation, where everything is counted as one and thus everything is presented, the unrepresentable is simply nothing.<sup>29</sup> For this reason, it would not be wrong to contend that unrepresentation is nothing according to a situation. And this unrepresentation is nothing other than inconsistent multiplicity, because as it has been argued that inconsistent multiplicity is the unrepresentable, which is not

---

25 Hallward, “Introduction”, 8.

26 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 55.

27 Ibid., 56.

28 Ibid., 57.

29 Hegel's interpretation of pure being shows a great affinity with the void according to a situation: “*Being, pure being*- without further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself and also not unequal with respect to another; it has no difference within it, nor any outwardly. If any determination or content were posited in it as distinct, or if it were posited by this determination or content as distinct from an other, it would thereby fail to hold fast to its purity. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness. - There is *nothing* to be intuited in it, if one can speak of intuiting; or, it is only this pure empty intuiting itself. Just as little is anything to be thought in it, or, it is equally only this empty thinking. Being, the indeterminate immediate is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than nothing.” (George W. F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, ed. Michael Baur, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 59.)

exposed to any count-as-one operation.

The void finds its meaning at the very heart of this unrepresentability of inconsistency. According to Badiou, “every structured presentation unpresents 'its' void.”<sup>30</sup> In this context, the void displays the failure of the count-as-one operation, because it stays out of the oneification process and is not made consistent. In other words, “the void is the name of being -of inconsistency- according to a situation.”<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that even though the void is the name of being, it cannot be discerned within the situation which thereby means that one cannot have an opinion concerning the void, because it simply is not within the situation.

That the void is not within a situation does not equate it to nothingness. “We should recognise that the void is not simply 'nothing' ... Badiou's alternative approach proposes that we take the void as a positive element in a consistent presentation.”<sup>32</sup> Even though the void is not thinkable within a situation, it is not nothingness, but only so it is for the situation. The word choice of Badiou, the void rather than nothingness, simply derives from the void's existence as inconsistency. Hence, the void does not share the Democritusian meaning which is “the absolute nothingness that exists between beings.”<sup>33</sup> Instead, despite its unthinkability, it is an active being. The void's tendency to be nothingness, but at the same time that it is not simply nothingness, is best described by Derrida as he defines *khôra*: “It is something which is not a thing but which insists, in its so enigmatic uniqueness, lets itself be called or causes itself to be named without answering, without itself to

---

30 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 59.

31 Ibid.

32 Tzuchien Tho, “The Consistency of Inconsistency: Alain Badiou and the Limits of Mathematical Ontology”, *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 12, no.2, (2008): 78.

33 Ian Graham and Ronald Shaw, “Sites, Truths and The Logics of Worlds: Alain Badiou and Human Geography”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no.3, (2010): 434.

be seen, conceived, determined.”<sup>34</sup> That is to say, it appears like nothingness owing to its non-visibility and non-comprehendability, but it is which insists, which actively is.

Furthermore, Badiou attaches a vital importance to the void just because of the decision that the one is not. Since every multiple is composed of multiples, Badiou problematizes the first presented multiplicity. He elucidates: “the ‘first’ presented multiplicity without concept has to be a multiple of nothing, because if it was a multiple of something, that something would then be in the position of the one.”<sup>35</sup> The necessity that the first presented multiplicity is a multiple of nothing assures that “primary theme of ontology is therefore the void.”<sup>36</sup> As there is no one that might form the multiple, because the one is not, the void must be included in all beings. That is to say, the void is the first multiple, it is “the very being from which any multiple presentation, when presented, is woven and numbered.”<sup>37</sup>

So there is a very close relationship between multiplicity and the void. Badiou does not ground being upon the one, since the one is not, but upon the void. Being is composed of multiplicities which are also composed of multiplicities in an endless way. This endless circulation of being a multiple cannot ground itself to the one, otherwise it would have an end, but to the void.<sup>38</sup> That is why, “at the heart of every situation, as the foundation of its being, there is a ‘situated’ void.”<sup>39</sup> It is situated as an ungraspable point of being within a situation

---

34 Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press 1995) quoted in J. D. Dewsbury, "Unthinking Subjects: Alain Badiou and the Event of Thought in Thinking Politics." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32, no. 4, (2007): 450.

35 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 61.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 62.

38 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 106.

39 Sergei Prozorov, *Theory of the Political Subject: Void Universalism II*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 3.

and it is included therefore in all presented beings as invisibility.

In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou phenomenologically scrutinizes on the concept and equates appearing to existing within a situation.<sup>40</sup> For him, if an element whose all aspects are apparent within a situation, then its existence has a maximum intensity. This means that the element does not leave almost any inconsistency behind itself, because what it is, in fact, is what appears. That is to say, its appearance reflects almost its very being, which indicates that it has a maximum level of intensity as an existent. However, there are elements that are dimly apparent which displays the fact that those elements' existence has a minimal existence. Those elements having a minimal intensity of existence do not appear as they are, because they remain almost invisible. In other words, the situation does not present and make them visible since they are not counted as one. This minimal existence characterized by Badiou designates the edge of the void, because the void stays at the very heart of this invisibility in the situation. "Every situation has at least one 'inexistent' element," because if it does not, then the situation closes itself which would be a proof of existence of the one although the one is not.<sup>41</sup> There should be always sub-multiples that "cannot be counted in the situation as terms, which therefore do not exist."<sup>42</sup>

For this very reason, all situations must face the phantom of the inconsistency, namely the void. The void is what threatens all situations, because it is what escapes from the counting operation, it is what remains inconsistent within consistency. It is a phantom, since it neither appears in a situation, nor have any element in itself and is simply nothing for the situation. Oliver Feltham defines this phantom by stating: "there is something lying beneath, or something at work

---

40 Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 38-39.

41 Hallward, "Introduction", 10.

42 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 101.



in the situation, something that remains to be discovered.”<sup>43</sup> The void, as nothingness in the situation, is what waits for emerging, through a discovery that might ruin the one, which is a count operation.

So what does privileging the void rather than the one correspond to in Badiou's ontology? The purpose of Badiou, Nirenberg and Nirenberg argue, is overthrowing “the monarchy of the monad and end(ing) the preeminence of the One in the long history of theology and ontology.”<sup>44</sup> Peter Hallward argues that Badiou's rejection of an ontology of the one necessarily implies a “posttheological ontological attribute,” as the ontology of the one points out nothing but theology.<sup>45</sup> In fact, it simply represents God's death at the very heart of the presentation.<sup>46</sup> The death of God in the presentation proves that there is no more the supremacy of the one in a situation. The decision that the void is the first multiple universally included in every being and the rejection of the one have a fundamental significance for this thesis. First of all, the unrepresentable existence of the void as inconsistent multiplicity clearly shows that every attempt for totalizations will encounter, in one way or another, with the risk of the inconsistency within consistency. For Badiou, “it is not possible to think of the social totality as 'One',” as it is already impossible to reach a totality as such.<sup>47</sup> In other words, the venture of the oneification process will inherently confront its own risk, namely the void. Adriel M. Trott argues that the oneification process realizing in a situation “aims to totalize, while the nothing that underlies the multiple shows that the count is

---

43 Feltham, 108.

44 Ricardo L. Nirenberg and David Nirenberg, "Badiou's Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology", *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4, (2011): 587.

45 Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, 81.

46 Crockett, 112.

47 Panagiotis Sotiris, "Beyond Simple Fidelity to the Event: The Limits of Alain Badiou's Ontology", *Historical Materialism* 19, no. 2, (2011): 37.

always incomplete.”<sup>48</sup> According to Badiou's ontology, totalization attempts would always remain incomplete, that is, it cannot close itself and therefore obliged to fail: “The void in every situation testifies to the failure of the operation to totalize,” which proves that “totality is logically impossible.”<sup>49</sup> That totality is logically impossible utterly stems from the decision that the one is not. Hence, Badiou's ontological decision is an indicative of the failure of totality. In fact, Badiou's ontological decision is a result of several developments in mathematics of which Kurt Gödel is an influential figure. “Kurt Gödel's famous proof that shows no system can be both coherent and complete, for there is always an element in the system for which the terms of the system cannot rationally account.”<sup>50</sup> Regarded Gödel's proof, completeness is an impossibility which automatically validates incompleteness's supremacy. In sum, the assertion of the hidden existence of the void in a situation eliminates the notions of totality and completeness.

Reconsidering the utopian features stated in the second chapter, what does Badiou's decision that the one is not and that being is pure multiplicity demonstrate? What might be the function of the void that carves out the fundamental ground of the ontology? One might discern that Badiou's decision entirely ostracizes perfectionism just because the one is not and the void as a threat for the structure that is composed of the count-as-one operation. Utopia as perfection was defined as a closed entity for which there is no threat to ruin its harmony and stability. The very existence of the void, the nothingness in a situation, discloses the impossibility of the harmony and stability and thereby perfectionism. There is no place for Leibniz's God in Badiou's ontology; there is

---

48 Trott, 84.

49 Ibid.

50 D. T. O'hara, "Badiou's Truth and the Office of the Critic: Naming the Militant Multiples of the Void", *Boundary 2* 35, no.1, (2008): 170.

no “universe as the best of possible universes.”<sup>51</sup> In fact, Badiou's ontology displaces impossibility of perfectionism and relocates impossibility as the very existence of nothingness in a situation. In other words, impossibility is located within a situation, in which the void is ungraspable and therefore there is no opportunity for it to exist as an element. The void is a threat waiting for to be actualized, to become an element so as to break the consistency of the situation as inconsistency. The perfection of a situation is not possible, because it must involve in itself the void which is universal and resides in every being. In this context, perfectionism is a notion against which Badiou develops a strong stance. Consequently, the path followed by Badiou does not imply the traditional utopian perspective, which identifies the term utopia with perfectionism.

On the other hand, the statement that the one is not and the void's universal existence in every being denotes hope's permanency. The unrepresentability of the void in a situation and its possibility to be presented, as it is a threat for the already existing presentation, keeps hope alive as a utopian impulse. Hope, which does not actualize itself here and now but in the future, is what is successful about keeping itself outside of what is. In other words, hope exists beyond what already is which resembles the void's position in a situation. The non-existence of the void in a situation, and hope's non-actual state in the present, share the same characteristic. Both of them do not originate themselves in here and now, because both do not exist within here and now. The void must always point out a future, because within the circumstances of here and now, it is simply nothing. Both represent a different solution that what already is offers. Hence, the void and hope are not interested in what is, but what can be. Their certain implication is not actuality but perpetual possibility. The void represents, by its potential presentability, that anything cannot be completed, because there is always something that might disrupt what is allegedly completed. Badiou is a contemporary utopian in the sense that he automatically keeps fresh the idea of hope through the notion of the void. It should

---

51 Badiou, *Briefings on Existence*, 119.

be noted that Badiou cannot be located in traditional utopian understanding, but rather contemporary utopian thinking shares the same insight with Badiou in terms of considering hope as an element of the theory.

Lastly, the void utterly opposes the idea of finitude. However, I would rather prefer discussing Badiou's critique of finitude in the section on infinity which will provide a discussion platform, in which his ontological decision will be understood in a clearer way.

Needless to say, Badiou's ontology is not limited to his declaration that the one is not and being is inconsistent multiplicity. In order to integrate politics more into the discussion, in the next section I will introduce Badiou's conceptualization of the state of the situation which can briefly be defined as a security operation. The explanations and discussions concerning the concept of the state of the situation bring forward the questions about utopian thinking and Badiou's ontology one more time.

### **4.3 The State of the Situation**

Equipped at the moment with an explanatory analysis of the void, it is necessary to explicate the meaning and significance of the state of the situation. Badiou's decision manifests a very clear conclusion: the void is a threat for the situation just because it is not known by the situation owing to its nothingness according to the situation. If the theory was limited with the void's unpredictable encounter with the situation, chaos would be the fundamental structure of the situation. He proposes, at this point, that structure of the situation must be structured one more time in order to preclude the danger of the void. For Badiou, “it is necessary to prohibit that catastrophe of presentation which would be its encounter with its own void, the presentational occurrence of inconsistency as such, or the ruin of the One.”<sup>52</sup> Badiou draws attention to a very simple fact: the threat of the void must be secured; otherwise it always threatens the consistency of

---

<sup>52</sup> Badiou, *Being and Event*, 97.

the situation. Inconsistency must be forbidden in order to ensure the stability of consistency. For this reason, Badiou argues that metastructure, the structure of structure, is a necessity which secures the structure “against any fixation of the void.”<sup>53</sup> In other words, since the void produces a potential danger for the situation, a second structuration attempts to eliminate the void's potentiality by naming it as the void. All situations must be structured therefore twice which is called by Badiou “representation.” Badiou calls this twice structuring as 'representation' and labels this, the structure of structure, the state of the situation. In fact, the meaning of the state is nothing other than the validation that the one is, which is not: “The structure of structure is responsible for establishing, in danger of the void, that it is universally attested that, in the situation, the one is.”<sup>54</sup> The state of the situation must declare the supremacy of the one over the void, otherwise stability is permanently under the risk of the void.

But what does the structure of structure ontologically mean? It has been discussed so far that a situation includes consistent multiplicities which are oneified by count-as-one operation. The function of the metastructure, the state, is grouping these multiplicities. Put it differently, the state reveals new possibilities, which do not exist within the situation. That is to say, the state makes visible the inexistent according to the situation. In this context, the state of the situation is a mechanism that deals with the inexistent by making it an existent. In Badiou's terms, the state is a riposte to the void. The riposte to the void is, according to itself, complete because its function is to make visible what is inexistent in the situation. Grouping multiplicities prevents new possibilities, which are inexistent in the situation, namely the void, and creates opportunities to take precautions against these inexistent's potentiality. State is “what claims to have the monopoly of possibilities. It's not simply what governs the real. It's what pronounces that

---

53 Ibid., 98.

54 Ibid., 99.

which is possible and impossible.”<sup>55</sup> The state is what labels the void's potentiality as impossible. In this way, the state is a guarantee for stability, because it is the metastructure that may silence the void.<sup>56</sup> It would not be incorrect to assert that the attempt of the state is closure and security which validates the reign of that which the one is.<sup>57</sup>

To make things clearer, it is appropriate to embody the issue in a political sense. The political counterpart of the state of a situation is the political state.<sup>58</sup> In this context, Badiou's word choice regarding the state is not a coincidence. The state is “what discerns, names, classifies, and orders the parts of a situation.”<sup>59</sup> The state reorganizes the parts, the multiplicities in a situation in all possible ways by grouping them. Hallward politically exemplifies the state's function in a society: “The state is of course what organizes the parts of its situation as legal residents, taxpayers, soldiers, social security recipients, criminals, licensed drivers, and so

---

55 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 11.

56 Graham and Shaw, 435.

57 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 102.

58 Without doubt, Badiou uses the term the state in order to make an analogy with the political state. However, one should not think of the conceptualization of the state in merely political sense. Oliver Feltham warns the readers in this context: “The state, for Badiou, is an ontological concept and is not equivalent to the political state. It designates a second structuring principle, after the initial count-for-one, that gathers together all possible regroupings of multiples presented in the situation.” (Feltham, 117.) In addition, that the void is universally included in every being and that it is in every situation automatically generates the necessity of the state. That is why Feltham emphasizes that one should not confuse with the notion of the state which eternally exists because of the void universal inclusion. He maintains: “Recognizing the ubiquity of this structuring principle is thus not the same as embracing the permanence of injustice.” (Ibid.) In other words, Badiou does not say that the political state cannot be abolished, but the state, in ontological sense, must exist as a second structure. Nevertheless, Badiou is aware that the political state's abolishment is a very difficult one which is proved by the history: “one must not lose sight of the fact that the State as such- which is to say the re-securing of the one over the multiple of parts (or parties)- cannot be so easily attacked or destroyed. Scarcely five years after the October Revolution, Lenin, ready to die, despaired over the obscene permanence of the State. Mao himself, more phlegmatic and more adventurous, declared -after twenty-five years in power and ten years of the Cultural Revolution ferocious tumult- that not much had changed after all.” (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 114.)

59 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 96.

on.”<sup>60</sup> The function of a state is nothing but constituting a stable order and in order to do that it must name and classify, it must group what is existent in a situation. The political state, in Badiou's eyes, is a “primordial response to anarchy.”<sup>61</sup>

One should not be confused with respect to the void and the state relationship. The state of a situation cannot declare what the void is. For the void cannot be presented in a situation, what a state implements is naming it. For Badiou, “the void is what can only be said or grasped as pure name.”<sup>62</sup> The naming of the void by no means represents the void in itself as an inconsistent multiplicity, but it represents it as a name according to a situation.

On the other hand, one may ask the question that if the state is a primordial response to anarchy, and if it is a riposte to the danger of the void, then the state is capable of ensuring the totality and closure. Let alone the history of the political revolutions creating a rupture in the existing order, ontologically speaking, the state cannot obstruct the void's inclusion in every being. To put it different, although the void is empty, it is universally included in any parts of the state of a situation. Hallward argues that the void is an ontological vagrant.<sup>63</sup> It is deservedly a vagrant because the void cannot show a difference, because it involves no element in itself which makes it unique. In this context, the second count, namely the state, “cannot prevent the void from being universally included since the subsets still maintain a relation to the nothingness that rests at the ground of the multiples of the multiples.”<sup>64</sup> Politically speaking, states are not capable of closing themselves even though they claim that they can. “No state rule genuinely

---

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid., 101.

63 Ibid., 102.

64 Trott, 85.

concerns the particular infinite situation.”<sup>65</sup> Radical ruptures remain always as a possibility whose roots are based on the void and ruin the domination of the one. In sum, the security operation of the second count might point out the void as a name, but cannot define it because it designates nothingness. Hence, the void still threatens the security operation, which is the state.

Badiou makes an epistemological definition at this point. The state *cannot know* the void, for it is nothing. The state has an encyclopedia in which no definition of the void might be found. The void is therefore beyond the encyclopedia of the state. The knowledge of the state is restricted with what it groups, labels, classifies or names but the void as nothingness stays outside of it. According to Badiou, knowledge is the power of discerning multiples in a situation that provides the possibility of classifying them.<sup>66</sup> For this reason, knowledge of the state cannot know the content of the void and thus cannot develop any strategy against its potential happening. The void is not an epistemological problem but an ontological one. Badiou examines the void by calling it the unnameable and states: “The unnameable is the point where the situation in its most intimate being is submitted to thought; in the pure presence that no knowledge can circumscribe.”<sup>67</sup> Conversely, the state gets its power from dominating and controlling knowledge. That is why he argues that all programmatic actions automatically belong to the state.<sup>68</sup><sup>69</sup> In this context, the state and the void completely take a stand against each other. The emergence of the void is the revolt of being against knowledge, the encyclopedia of the state.

---

65 Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2008), 168.

66 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 346.

67 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 66.

68 Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 100.

69 In the following chapters, the notion of event, which cannot be produced by any programmatic actions, will be discussed.



The question, for this thesis, is whether it is possible to construe Badiou's conceptualization of the state on a utopian ground. The state, which is a security operation declaring that the one is, is against that which Badiou strictly develops a robust stance. Considered the state on the one hand, the void on the other, the states of the situations might be comprehended as attempts to constitute traditional utopian understanding. In fact, the values presented by traditional utopias are intrinsic attributes of the conception of the state. Put it differently, Badiou's conceptualization of the state inherently involves in itself the idea of finitude, closure, totality and perfection. Even if, for Badiou, it is impossible to constitute a totality, which excludes the possibility of a point that may exceed its coherence and harmony, the state's ontological existence is based on this claim. However, "the Whole is never all there."<sup>70</sup> The state, in this context, is an entity that endeavors to prove the existence of the Whole as the one. Its main purpose and function is eliminating any possibility that can crumble the one it produces.

In this regard, the state is a pure concept that contains such efforts to perfectify. However, Badiou manifests that those efforts are nothing more than futile exertions. Since he argues that the state's existence is totally based on the void's threat, it would not be incorrect to assert that the state, as a concept, is a pure traditional utopia. Remember the certain characteristics of perfectionism that traditional utopias share. They must inherently not allow any abnormality to ruin the "normality" of the perfection, because a perfect utopia has already attained the best world. It does not contain any disorder in itself and cannot indulge any desire that may come from the outside. The thing that might portray an ideal is not the void, because it has nothing in itself, but the state, which has the capacity to structure the situation in order to preclude the void's emergence. Viewed from this aspect, let alone the judgment that Badiou is a utopian thinker in a traditional sense, he rigorously criticizes the state which places him outside the fashion. Therefore, utopia in a traditional sense should not be sought within the void's

---

70 Prozorov, xxii.

explosion in the situation, which we will call later event, but within the existential meaning of the state. Badiou inverts the meaning attached to traditional utopias which might be observed particularly in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century revolutionary movements. The utopian is what exerts efforts against the void, not the movement that the void can potentially produce.<sup>71</sup>

To clarify what I mean, Badiou's concept of atonic worlds might be examined which will provide a more concrete example. He states that a world is atonic “when its transcendental is devoid of points.”<sup>72</sup> And if there is no point, then there are only bodies and languages which means that the void is not in question. In this kind of an atonic world, for Badiou, nothing happens, as “everything is organized and everything is guaranteed.”<sup>73</sup> In an atonic world, the life is “managed like a business that would rationally distribute the meagre enjoyments that it's capable of.”<sup>74</sup> In other words, an atonic world is a closed world, since there is no point to rupture it. And he finally states that atonic world is what democratic materialism dreams of.<sup>7576</sup> Democratic materialism, in this sense, represents nothing but security: “The humanist protection of all living bodies: this is the norm

---

71 The socialist states of 20<sup>th</sup> century should be analyzed in a dual sense: at movement level and state level. They have become utopian as they started to suppress the void within their own systems. That is why Badiou argues that a political activist is not “a warrior beneath the walls of the State.” (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 115.)

72 Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 420.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Democratic materialism is a sort of materialism, which reduces human beings to solely bodily functions. That is why Badiou identifies democratic materialism with the assertion that there is only bodies and languages. Badiou opposes democratic materialism by putting forward materialist dialectics. The difference is that materialist dialectics declares that there is only bodies and languages except that there are truths. (M. P. Karlsen, “Materialism, Dialectics, and Theology in Alain Badiou”, *Critical Research on Religion* 2, no.1, (2014): 39) In the following chapters, when the concept of truth is examined, the difference between democratic materialism and materialist dialectics will be clearer.

of contemporary materialism.”<sup>77</sup> Utopianism lies in the heart of democratic materialism, because it simply reduces human-beings to animals; there is no necessity to be a human, because there is nothing to resist. For Badiou, a human being is who can show a great effort to present an incomprehensible resistance.<sup>78</sup> And it is the void that underlies in the deep of this incomprehensible resistance. Utopianism in its traditional manner is what determines to break the incomprehensible resistance and the state is the mere instrument of this process. Badiou positions himself utterly against the utopianism of atonic worlds, of democratic materialism and therefore of the state.

If the state is considered as a utopian concept in the context of the discussions above, that Badiou defines the form of struggle not within the state but outside of it attests his certain opposition against the state's utopianism. He clearly elucidates that the political activist should remain outside the state power: “you must be outside the State, because inside the State you are precisely in negative figure of opposition.”<sup>79</sup> Badiou is aware of the fact that the state invariably wants to encompass and subsume. I do not see any difference, conceptually, here between the state's attempt to embrace everything without leaving any point, which is outside, that can threaten its order, and traditional utopias' desire to reach perfection in which there is no threat to destroy its order. The state always invites in order to define, in order to destroy the unknown. Both the state and perfectionist utopias are permanently in search of expanding their encyclopedias so as to eliminate the danger that may come from the void. In fact, as Badiou asserts “we must affirm our existence, our principles, our actions, always from outside,” he indirectly argues that the political activist should not fall into the trap of

---

77 Ibid. 2.

78 Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), 11.

79 Alain Badiou, “Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology”, *The International Journal of Badiou Studies* 2, no.1, (2013): 10.

utopianism.

This opposition might most clearly be seen in a play, *L'Incident d'Antioche*, written by Badiou. In the play, Badiou tells the story of the transition period from the revolution to the foundation of the state. One of the parties, David, the leader of the revolution, wants to found the state, otherwise all pains, deaths and efforts to realize the revolution will be futile. The other side, Paula, wants from David that the state should be abandoned. Paula says: "We did not involve ourselves in the philosophers' speculations about the ideal state. We said that the world could stand the trajectory of a policy that could be reversed, a policy designed to put an end to politics. To domination, in other words."<sup>80</sup> In Paula's thought, the abandonment of the state positions at the opposite side of the ideal proposed by philosophers. And she states: "You would leave behind the state that loves its pomp, and its murderous stupidity."<sup>81</sup> Even though David argues that things going to be and should be different from the pre-revolution period, Paula is single-eyed and says that what David and his followers will do nothing more than painting the surface of the sun grey.<sup>82</sup> After a long discussion about the establishment of a new state after the revolution David gives up and Paula says: "Forget about the obsession with conquest and totality. Follow the thread of multiplicity."<sup>83</sup> This last sentence underscores the antagonism between the one and multiplicity in the context of the state one more time. Badiou extols multiplicity against the one, the totality and declares that the revolutionary enterprise should not fall into the vicious circle of the destruction and re-formation of the state. The ideal should evade itself from the chains of the state, the closure and the totality. It should be noted that Badiou reverses utopianism by locating it into the state at conceptual level.

---

80 Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. David Macey and Steven Corcoran (London: Verso, 2010), 24.

81 Ibid., 25.

82 Ibid., 26.

83 Ibid., 28.

It is important to note that the conceptualization of the state directly implies finitude, and it is necessary to analyze this implication in detail. Hence, I will leave the last section of this chapter to infinity which is a core term of Badiou's ontology. In the next section, whilst I will try to expound the position of infinity in the theory, I will consider his opposition to traditional utopianism one more time in the sense of finitude-infinity discussion.

#### **4.4 Infinity**

The discussion of this chapter, in my view, directly poses the necessity of the clarification of a very fundamental concept in Badiou's ontology: infinity. The second chapter, in which finitude and infinity were analyzed in detail, presented a clear picture of the relationship of infinity with utopian thinking. In this part, whilst I will try to explain what infinity corresponds to in Badiou's works, my main purpose will be both to demonstrate the indispensability of the term infinity in his theory and to indicate to what extent Badiou opposes traditional utopian thought in this sense.

First of all, it is necessary to remember the decision, once again, taken by Badiou to constitute his ontological approach. It was stated that, for Badiou, the one is not and only multiplicity is. Since the one is not, multiplicity is directly a multiplicity of a multiplicity which means that multiplicity is infinite. In other words, being as pure -inconsistent- multiplicity is infinite. What one immediately confronts here is the opposition of the one and infinity, and Badiou, clearly seen, takes a stand by infinity rather than the one. In addition, it was purported that the void is what cracks the order of the count-as-one which one more time proves that the count-as-one is doomed to be ruptured just because the void is universally included in every being. Hence, one may deduce that the very existence of infinity is the result of the decision that the one is not. Badiou clearly puts forward that

“infinity of being is necessarily an ontological decision.”<sup>84</sup> The decision negates the correlation between finitude and being. Badiou maintains that if the decision about infinity of being is not taken, then “it will remain for ever possible for being to be essentially finite.”<sup>85</sup>

Yet the decision is not just a decision that infinity is the essence of being. What is an infinite multiplicity? For Badiou, this is a very important question that has not been answered properly yet.<sup>86</sup> So, it might be remarked that he attempts to answer this question so as to strengthen his ontological decision. He emphasizes “a second existent”, namely “a multiple which is supposed such that the 'still more' is reiterated inside it” in order to justify his decision.<sup>87</sup> The accent on “a second existent” is crucial, as Badiou overcomes the problem of the one by positing a second existent which automatically implies the condition of 'still more.' The predication that there is a second existent presumes that there is invariably another that will come. What already is, a multiple, followed by an other which is inside the multiple that produces a multiple is “on the edge of 'still-yet-an-other’.”<sup>88</sup> Therefore, Badiou argues that infinity has a double existential status: “What is required is both the being-already-there of an initial multiple and the being of the Other.”<sup>89</sup> In other words, Badiou's argument, which argues that the other's existence inside the multiple, presents the very picture of infinity. Badiou's infinity admits the existence of the other inside the multiple which creates an infinite series of the other that will come one after another.

---

84 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 154.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., 151.

87 Ibid., 153.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., 154.

In this context, basically, Badiou denies the essential existence of finitude and asserts that being is infinite multiple: “‘We’ are infinite, like every multiple-situation, and the finite is a lacunal abstraction.”<sup>90</sup> Peter Dews stresses the same stance formed by Badiou: “He repeatedly directs his fire against that ‘pathos of finitude.’”<sup>91</sup> In fact, Badiou's argument, that being is infinite multiple, separates finitude from infinity which are fused into each other as we have discussed in the Chapter 2. “The key point is undoubtedly to disconnect the infinite from its age-old collusion with the One.”<sup>92</sup> He contends that integrating infinity into the core of an ontological thesis, which is detached from the notion of the one, manifests the death of God.<sup>93</sup> We have discussed the paradox that finitude implies, in one way or another, infinity in itself. Finitude, as if inherently, was implying unlimitation whilst underlying totalization. Badiou annihilates this paradox by separating infinity from the so called being of the one and eliminates the place of finitude in his ontology:

As far as philosophy is concerned, the task is to finish with the motif of finitude and its hermeunetic accompaniments. The key point is undoubtedly to disconnect the infinite from its age-old collusion with the One, and restore it to the banality of being-multiple.<sup>94</sup>

The death of God should be, at the same time, the source of the thinking that a human should not take himself in finitude because of being mortal, but know

---

90 Alain Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, ed. Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano, (London: Continuum, 2004), 36.

91 Peter Dews, "States of Grace: The Excess of the Demand in Badiou's Ethics of Truths", in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward, (London: Continuum, 2004), 113.

92 Ibid.

93 Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, 36.

94 Dews, 113.

himself who is “entirely traversed and encircled by the omnipresence of infinity.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, infinity should be militantly defended against finitude; death should not be accepted as a fact of existence. Politics, which will be analyzed in a more elaborated way in the following chapters, is what manifests infinity. “Every politics of emancipation rejects finitude, rejects 'being towards death.’”<sup>96</sup> The capacity of politics is to be discussed in the next chapter where I will focus on the notion of event and truth.

Infinity should not be figured as a form. Badiou criticizes this type of conceptualization of infinity, because it simultaneously points out finitude, the one. “The infinite is not captured *in* form, it transits *through* form.”<sup>97</sup> The non-placement of infinity into a form, the exclusion of infinity as a limited entity is critical. Badiou specifically avoids from defining infinity by ascribing it into a form, but portrays it in a transition. The infinite cannot be captured, it cannot be idealized. “There is no separate or ideal infinite.”<sup>98</sup> Infinity is not an abstraction, nor programmatic, nor a reachable entity. That is why Badiou uses the term transition and does not want to fall into the trap of infinity-finitude paradox. Infinity cannot be a plan or an ideal that might be attained as a result of disparate processes; it is implicit to the processes. Badiou does not oppose formalizations, but emphasizes the potentiality of infinite forms. He understands Gödel in this sense and claims that Gödel understands himself in the same way. Gödel gives us a “lesson of infinity”; there are always more, even if one argues that he obtains the truth.<sup>99</sup> The attainment of a truth automatically proves that there are essentially other truths that might be obtained which leads to the formalization of new truths.

---

95 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 156.

96 Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, 154.

97 Alain Badiou, *The Century*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 155.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., 163-164.



The emphasis on this unending process, namely infinity, is significant, because it clearly indicates that nothing can be idealized, as there is always more.<sup>100</sup> In this way, infinity should be considered not as an idealization, but as the very essence of being. Badiou's understanding of infinity does not draw a parallel with idealizations which keeps him away from conservation. "Idealism necessarily dominates, being the obligatory language of conservation."<sup>101</sup> Feltham explicitly accentuates the connection between the notion of infinity and Badiou's opposition to idealizations: "Badiou's commitment to an infinity of situations and to the indiscernability of change prevents him from constructing a transcendental morality or socially grounded model of ideal political action."<sup>102</sup> In the light of Feltham's interpretation, it would not be wrong to put infinity and idealization to the opposite poles.

Even if the political aspect of the story will be scrutinized in the following two chapters, I am eager to emphasize infinity in politics in brief. The notion of infinity proclaims a very basic political stance: politics without the sublime. Bruno Bosteels uses this term, in an article that he writes on Badiou, and argues that in order to speak concerning politics, it is necessary to problematize the motif of the end. I am directly quoting his interpretation regarding the end:

I really believe that the motif of the end is politically intractable. It is of course true that things come to an end, but then a sufficiently elaborated ontology of multiplicity is needed in order to be able to admit that what comes to an end is always only one figure among others of the politics of emancipation, and that the latter has always existed in such multiplicity.<sup>103</sup>

---

100 One, who knows Badiou's conceptualization of event and truth, might object that truth the idealization itself. In the next chapter I will try to indicate whether Badiou's truth can be considered as the ideal or not. For now, rejecting the ideal as a form is appropriate.

101 Alain Badiou, *Theory of the Subject*, trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Continuum, 2009), 184.

102 Feltham, 115.

103 Bruno Bosteels, "Can Change Be Thought?: A Dialogue with Alain Badiou", in *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions*, ed. Gabriel Riera, (Albany: State University of New York Press,

Bosteels punctuates a very important condition of politics in Badiou's ontology. Politics of emancipation necessarily is at the heart of multiplicity which means that emancipatory politics does not include an end point in itself. Bosteels' emphasis on multiplicity-emancipatory politics is quite critical in this context. That being is infinite multiplicity provides an ontology that offers us an emancipatory politics model, which does not involve the notion of an end. This dual relationship displays a very simple fact: The permanent being of emancipatory politics, just because of the decision that being is infinite multiplicity, excludes the chance of any kind of closure and totality which thereby forbids idealization programmes. Hence, Badiou's infinity validates his opposition against the state displayed by Paula.

So what does the precedence of infinity over finitude in Badiou's ontology mean for traditional and contemporary utopias? The notion of infinity attempts to unfold what is foreclosed. Badiou declares a war against consistency, order, or in general finitude, by advocating infinity in his ontology. He praises "radical inconsistency, the infinite dissemination of what the order of representation forecloses."<sup>104</sup> The compliment of infinity is not a way of construction of a new order but a way of emphasizing that an order has always an end point. Thinking infinity opens a way for criticizing attempts of closure or totalization. In this context, Badiou's conceptualization of infinity reminds Blochian hope. Remember Bloch's argument, which asserts that the world is essentially unfinished. Badiouian infinity lays the condition of being unfinished bare. Badiou's ontology constitutes itself on this condition of being not completed and inherently instills the idea of hope. Put it differently, defending infinity against finitude signalizes the existence of infinite others that inherently contain the hope of being different from the limits and boundaries of the finitude. Infinity denotes the impossibility of the best,

---

2005), 241.

104 Alberto Toscano, "Communism as Separation", in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward, (London: Continuum, 2004), 144.

because there is always a hope to establish the best over the best. One might object that infinity can be the best itself. However, as Badiou puts forward, there is no ideal or separate infinity, but it is implicit to the being itself. Therefore, hope does not designate a fixed place of infinity, which resembles infinity-finitude paradox, but is present within being. In other words, being, which is infinite multiplicity, is the name of the hope. In this respect, Badiou once more proves that his ontology has a position that utterly dissents with traditional utopian thought.

An ontology defending infinity rather than finitude is inherently an ontology of the new. Think about the void and infinity in the same context. Since the situation is not closed, it is always open, because of the void, new always is a possible existent within the encyclopedia of the state. In Badiou's terms, knowledge of the state is exceeded by the void, because knowledge of the state is insufficient to define the void, it is nothing for the situation. Exceeding the knowledge of the state by the void automatically proposes new. And since multiplicity is infinite, because of the decision that the one is not, the existence of new is an infinite probability. In Badiou's ontology, new always has the capacity to ruin the order of the old, namely the knowledge of the state. New is what breaks the finitude and Badiou founds his ontology on the emergence of new. New is what ruptures repetition.<sup>105</sup> On the one hand, the old, that is the knowledge of the state is endeavored to be protected and strives for enlarging its encyclopedia. However, Badiou strictly underlines that there is something in the situation, which is not counted-as-one, and therefore which is the void, that emerges as new within the old structure of the situation. It might be asserted that Badiou is a militant figure of newness and continuously accentuates the possibility of new in his ontological approach. In this regard, Badiou exhibits a contemporary utopian character, which eliminates old and praises always new. An ontology prioritizing infinity instead of finitude, and the void rather than the one imply a contemporary

---

105 Badiou is tended to understand the finite as repetition: "I find the idea that the essence of the finite is not the boundary or the limit -which are only vague spatial intuitions- but rather repetition, very profound." (Badiou, *The Century*, 157.)

utopian attribute, which argues that the old is condemned to be, omnipresently, cut by the new's appearance.

Fusing the notion of infinity into politics points out a fundamental change in emancipatory politics and gives hints about its specific connection with utopian thought. According to Badiou's ontology, emancipatory politics should no more be interested in utopian projects, which delineates utopian places having certain rules and conditions. Rather than imaginations of ideal places and the ways of obtaining them, Badiou stresses the importance of understanding infinity in the essence of being. Emancipatory politics cannot fade out, and no place can be designed that excludes emancipation due to the supposition of the best. "The situation is open, never closed, and the possible affects its immanent subjective infinity."<sup>106</sup> For Badiou, emancipatory politics is permanently a possibility. Since traditional utopias, by its very nature, do not tolerate any kind of emancipation -because it is the perfect one, the closed and the total one- Badiou negates traditional utopian characteristics by presenting the infinite possibility of emancipatory politics. For now, one should acknowledge the fact that Badiou inverts radical political understanding, which has dominated 20<sup>th</sup> century radical movements in particular, through the claim of infinity and the destruction of the finitude as the ideal. It would not be misguided to contend that Badiou obliterates the radical idealism of the revolutions of 20<sup>th</sup> century and proposes a new approach with regard to the nature of radical changes. In the light of the conclusions springing from the decision that the one is not, Badiou's utopianism, which is a contemporary one, reshapes radical politics with new concepts.

In the next chapter, the political questions and their affinities with utopian thought will be investigated in a more detailed way. Badiou's core concept, event, and the third chapter's main concept, truth, will be explored in a body that will provide a space in which Badiou's potential contiguity with traditional utopian thought. The discussion will advance more with the clarification of event, subject

---

106 Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 143.

and truth in Badiou's ontology that will clarify the position of Badiou concerning traditional and contemporary utopian thought.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVENT, SUBJECT AND TRUTH

Badiou's decision that the one is not constitutes the fundamental ground of his conceptualization of the void and infinity and the previous chapter has attempted to provide a basic introduction to his ontology in a utopian context. In this chapter, the consequences of this critical decision will entirely be considered which endows one with a more detailed analysis of his ontology. In this regard, three main concepts will be elaborated: event, subject and truth. One should note that event-subject-truth triangle forms the fundamental structure of Badiou's ontological thought. Hence, a full understanding of these three significant concepts is necessary so as to constitute the links between Badiou's ontological insight and utopian thought.

This chapter's aim is to define event, subject and truth respectively by specifically emphasizing distinct features and characteristics of the concepts. Whilst doing this, I will cover some problematical aspects stressed by different authors in order to both criticize and reinforce the arguments proposed by Badiou. First, we will begin with the definition of event.

#### 5.1 The Definition of Event

What is event? Lexically, event evokes fact or phenomenon; there are certain differences between the concepts fact and event. Badiou does not equate event to fact or phenomenon; conversely, he positions event at the opposite pole. In order to explain the meaning of this contradistinction, first of all it is necessary to explicate the ontological ground of event. Hence, to begin, the distinction should be made with regard to what is natural and what is historical, as “an event

is always a historical entity.”<sup>1</sup> In simple terms, natural is what is stable and normal. Consistency dominates the entire situation if it is natural. The term natural signifies normal multiplicities, that is, which are presented in the situation and represented at the state level.<sup>2</sup> Badiou locates historical to the opposite side, that is to say, historical is what is not natural. “I will term *historical* what is thus determined as the opposite of the nature.”<sup>3</sup> Historical, therefore, implies what is anti-natural, instable and abnormal.<sup>4</sup> Historical contains multiplicities, which are not normal, but singular. Badiou identifies singular multiplicities as presented in a situation, but not represented in the state of the situation. Put it differently, this abnormal, anti-natural multiplicity exists in the situation, but is not counted by the state whilst the state groups the existents of the situation. Badiou calls the multiplicity having the condition of being presented but not presented singular multiplicity.<sup>5</sup> The singular multiplicity, according to Badiou, is instable, because the state of the situation has no hold on it, as it is not represented at the state level.<sup>6</sup>

Note that if a multiple is counted with its all terms, that is, if that multiple is entirely oneified in the situation, then the multiple is presented and represented. “In other words, the necessary and sufficient condition for a multiple to be both presented and represented is that all of its terms, in turn, be presented.”<sup>7</sup> This is a very difficult one to understand. A multiplicity, which consists of infinite multiplicities in itself, can have a part that is not counted by the state. And if that multiplicity with its all terms or parts is not counted by the state, then this means

---

1 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 108.

2 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 182.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 182-183.

6 Ibid., 183.

7 Ibid., 182.

also that it is not presented in the situation. In other words, that there is a part remained uncounted, despite its existence as a being, means that it is not presented according to the situation. Badiou exemplifies it with a family whose one of the members is not registered by the state. This family, ontologically speaking it is a multiplicity, exists in the situation but not represented, because all of its members are not registered by the state. And the member who is not registered by the state is “unpresented within the situation,” since a part or term “can only be presented in a situation by a multiple to which it belongs.”<sup>8</sup> In this context, such a family does not designate a natural multiple, but signifies a singular multiple.

The singular multiple has a vital importance, as Badiou's conceptualization of event starts at this point. He terms evental site “an entirely abnormal multiple,” which implies singularity.<sup>9</sup> There is nothing beneath an evental site, because it does not mean anything for the situation, “it is *on the edge of the void*.”<sup>10</sup> “It is not the event itself is nothing. It has the same (inconsistent) being-as-being as anything else. An event can be only a multiple, but it is one that counts as nothing in the situation in which it takes place.”<sup>11</sup> The paradoxical seeming of the evental site is described as “such that it belongs to the situation, whilst what belongs to it in turn does not.”<sup>12</sup> To go back to the beginning, evental site is historical, since an evental site is purely anti-natural. In sum, an evental site is within the situation, “but it belongs to it as something uncertain, something whose own contents remain indiscernible and mysterious, if not sinister and threatening.”<sup>13</sup>

---

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 183.

10 Ibid.

11 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 115.

12 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 183.

13 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 120.



Evental site emerges against nature, which “buries inconsistency and turns away from the void.”<sup>14</sup> Being against nature, namely being historical, does not spring up from the entire situation, but “occurs at a particular point in the situation”.<sup>15</sup> In other words, “there are only site-*points*, inside the situation, in which certain multiples (but not others) are on the edge of the void.”<sup>16</sup> That is why an evental site derives from a singular multiple; an evental site can never replace the entire situation when it emerges. “No event immediately concerns a situation in its entirety.”<sup>17</sup>

To make things clearer and easier to a degree, let us maintain with a very clear definition: an event simply is “purely hazardous” and “cannot be inferred from the situation.”<sup>18</sup> Remember that in a situation multiplicities are counted as one, which makes them consistent, thinkable and graspable. And remember that a situation unrepresents its void, since the void is not only simply nothing but also it is the inconsistency of the presentation. In this regard, that an event is purely hazardous means that there is a specific link between event and inconsistency, namely the void. “The event as a presented multiple has no anchor and as such no consistency.”<sup>19</sup> An event is purely hazardous, as it contains within itself inconsistency, which is a pure threat for the consistent situation. Put it differently, an event is a multiplicity that “exhibits the inconsistency underlying all situations.”<sup>20</sup> In this respect, an event disrupts the consistency, continuity and

---

14 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 186.

15 Feltham, 100.

16 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 184.

17 Ibid., 187.

18 Ibid., 203.

19 Feltham, 101.

20 Quentin Meillasoux, "History and Event in Alain Badiou", trans. Thomas Nail *Parrhesia* 12, no. 1, (2011): 2.

order. Event is a danger for the status quo; because it is what comes from the outside of the counting process. On the other hand, that an event cannot be inferred from the situation means that it is unpredictable. Event is “entirely unpredictable and indiscernible from the standpoint of the situation.”<sup>21</sup> Unpredictability of an event totally stems from the fact that the situation cannot recognize it. “What has occurred is restitution of the existence of the inexistent.”<sup>22</sup> An event is unpredictable, for its elements are not counted as one by the situation, it comes from out of the things oneified. It is on the edge of the void. Put it differently, the knowledge of a situation consists of what it counts; what is out of the count is unpredictable, because the situation does not have the knowledge to predict it. If one can predict the happening or coming of an event, then it is not an event. The normality or the nature of the situation cannot recognize the abnormal, the historical, the singular, namely the evental site.

Since the event emanates from the edge of the void, it presents is complete newness. “An event is the source of novelty for a situation.”<sup>23</sup> An event is what cracks the old and what exhibits new according to the situation.<sup>24</sup> What an event

---

21 Nina Power and Alberto Toscano, "Politics" in *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*, ed. A. J. Bartlett and Justin Clemens, (Durham: Acumen, 2010), 99.

22 Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2012), 56.

23 Hollis Phelps, *Alain Badiou between Theology and Anti-Theology*, (Durham: Acumen, 2013), 52.

24 At this point, Hegel is instructive once more. Hegel portrays Spirit's engagement with moving forward in 18<sup>th</sup> century as a new era in which a rupture occurs. See the following statement: “Besides, it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past, and in the labour of its own transformation. Spirit is indeed never at rest but always engaged in moving forward . But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of merely quantitative growth-there is a qualitative leap, and the child is born-so likewise the Spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms. The frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change. The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short

displays is that “there can be genuine novelty in being.”<sup>25</sup> It displays newness, because it is not made old by being counted and normalized. It is something new to the situation, because the repetition sustained by the structure is disrupted by the event. The event's novelty derives from “that it interrupts the normal regime of the description of knowledge, that always rests on the classification of the well-known, and imposes another kind of procedure.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, an event demands a change within the structure as a new being. An event, in this regard, is “the creation of a new possibility.”<sup>27</sup> It is not the modification of the old situation, otherwise it would be nothing more than the repetition of the old. In this way, an event is “foundational.”<sup>28</sup> It does not repeat or produce the same, but finds a new being by presenting itself.

At this point, it might be argued that the problem of *creatio ex nihilo* is at stake. What does newness actually correspond to? How might something new, which does not have any bond with the old, be revealed? Does it not imply something magical or supernatural? Badiou's formulation of event lies at the center of these questions. In the light of the foregoing explanations, two interpretations can be done. First interpretation: event is in the condition of *creatio ex nihilo* with no God.<sup>29</sup> In other words, Badiou proposes us a secular creation model in which event exists by itself which comes from the outside. If the visible, the real world is

---

by a sunburst which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world.” (George W. F. Hegel, and J. N. Findlay, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6-7.) Despite the philosophical differences between Hegel and Badiou, Badiou's event shares the same attribute of cracking the order and inverting the world.

25 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 114.

26 Meillassoux, 2.

27 Badiou, “Affirmative Dialectics”, 3.

28 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 183.

29 Roland Faber portrays Badiou's event as “a God-like creation *ex nihilo*”. (Roland Faber, “A Prologue on the Improper Placing of Thought”, in *Event and Decision: Ontology and Politics in Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead*, ed. Roland Faber, Henry Krips and Daniel Pettus, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 10.

what the situation presents, then event has no validity according to the situation. Hence, newness revealed by the event is something external to the situation, not internal. In other words, event is something ruptures the structure not within but outside of it. Second interpretation: event is contained within the situation, but is not visible; it simply does not exist within the situation, but it is there as a being, it is hidden. For Badiou, the latter is the valid case. Meillassoux argues that in Badiou's ontology, what is novel is not “creation of something new out of nothing, but rather the intense manifestation of something that was already there.”<sup>30</sup> He exemplifies that there were slaves in 1 BC who were situated as slaves within the knowledge of the situation, but appeared in a different way with Spartacus. What the event of Spartacus displayed was a sharp change in existence intensity of slaves who rendered them apparent within the situation.<sup>31</sup> What is new is not new in itself, but it is new for the situation just because the situation does not have a knowledge capacity to comprehend it. Event is what discloses this indiscernible being within the situation; that is why it is not *creatio ex nihilo*, but disclosure of what is already there.<sup>32</sup>

So in the first instance, it might be stated that an event is a threat for the situation, it is unpredictable and what it presents is diametrically newness. To clarify the concept, another feature of event is given by Hallward: “An event is the

---

30 Meillassoux, 8.

31 Ibid.

32 To understand Badiou's notion of new, see the following statement which is given by Werner Heisenberg who is one of the pioneers of quantum mechanics: “We know the forces in the atomic nucleus that are responsible for the emission of the  $\alpha$ -particle. But this knowledge contains the uncertainty which is brought about by the interaction between the nucleus and the rest of the world. If we wanted to know why the  $\alpha$ -particle was emitted at that particular time we would have to know the microscopic structure of the whole world including ourselves, and that is impossible.” (Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 63-64.) Event discloses newness, because knowledge cannot pervade infinity of existence which proves that there is always something remains hidden.

unpredictable result of chance and chance alone.”<sup>33</sup> The emphasis on chance is considerably remarkable. Since an event cannot be inferred from the situation, its structure does not contain any programmatic component. Hence, an event may emerge only as a product of chance. There is no way to produce an event consciously; inconsistency of a situation, namely the void, cannot be built on, because one cannot know anything with regard to the void within the situation. Even though, the interior dynamics of an event exists within a situation, it cannot be constituted, and it is out of what *one* knows. Viewed from this perspective, an event is like a grace.<sup>34</sup> “An event is a bomb.”<sup>35</sup> Naturalness of a situation reveals only facts; an event is like a bomb thrown against facts. An event, which is on the edge of the void, does not show any sign concerning its coming or happening. Its law is confusion, not certainty. An event “is existentially fragile, ephemeral.”<sup>36</sup> It has not any certain form, because it is simply empty for the situation. “An event can be only 'evanescent.'”<sup>37</sup>

As a consequence, an event discloses newness through pure chance. The chance-based newness involves the reality of another world. To put in a different way, events always demonstrate that there is beyond of what already is. Event is what unveils one of the infinite probabilities; as Jean-Luc Nancy states “each singularity is another access to the world.”<sup>38</sup> The following statement written by Badiou should be carefully examined:

The principle 'neither sub-sistence nor transcendence ultimately results in the necessity that every world be

---

33 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 114.

34 Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 63.

35 Crockett, 111.

36 Feltham, 101.

37 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 115.

38 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

ontologically infinite. Of course, there are 100 billion stars in the galaxy and 7.5 million inhabitants in Quebec, and these numbers, albeit noteworthy, are finite. This simply means that, to the extent that they are considered as ontologically deployed and transcendently differentiated worlds, the galaxy and Quebec cannot in any way be reduced to their stars or their inhabitants. That much is suggested by the simple consideration of its subatomic legislation after the big-bang (or after the formation of galaxies, one billion years later), for the former, and its tumultuous pre- and post-colonial history, for the latter.<sup>39</sup>

Here Badiou specifically emphasizes that things involve infinite dimensions producing automatically infinite probabilities, which cannot be calculated in any way. It would not be wrong to assert that an event emerges from these incalculable points. Quebec, as a city, does not merely consist of statistical information, but contains infinite combinations of what have been, what are, and what will be. To put it differently, “that which exists, whatever this might be, coexists because it exists.”<sup>40</sup> Coexistence of what exists is not calculable, which makes the way for an event's emergence. An event, therefore, is capable of displaying the beyond what is apparent.<sup>41</sup> An event inherently involves the alternative, which is invisible and ungraspable.

It is understood that an event leads to a change by definition owing to the fact that it has a disruptive and denaturalizing effect. However, one may deservedly ask

---

39 Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 309.

40 Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 29.

41 What is calculable is under the control of the state of the situation, because it is a security operation that re-counts what was already counted. “Within any world, radical change is never found in those relations that are most visible.” (Graham and Shaw, p.440) Badiou proposes therefore that one should not reproduce what is calculable: “It is better to do nothing than to work officially in the visibility of what the West declares to exist.” (Alain Badiou, *Polemics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Verso, 2006), 148.) Frank Ruda argues that “to do nothing does not simply mean to stop acting.” (Ruda, Frank, “Idealism Without Idealism”, *Angelaki* 19, no.1, (2014): 93.) The action should be beyond the calculable. There cannot be an emancipatory movement within a point that is calculable and visible. “To do no-thing in this precise sense can mean to do something that is not considered to be useful at all.” (Ibid.)

this question: Are all disruptive changes called event? This is a quite appropriate and reasonable question after the aforesaid properties of event. Badiou's answer to this question is an exact no. "Not everything moves in red" was a popular slogan that Badiou and his contemporaries used in France once upon a time.<sup>42</sup> In fact, this short phrase expresses the fundamental character of event in Badiou's theorization. He states: "not everything that changes is an event."<sup>43</sup> Without doubt, there can be unpredictable movements, which might be interpreted as the inconsistency or the void of the situation. In Badiou's perspective, however, the surprise, the unpredictable can be "simulacra of the event" in some conditions.<sup>44</sup> At this point, the fundamental character of event should not be forgotten: event always reveals newness. In this context, Badiou argues that the unpredictability may reproduce oldness within the situation as a surprise and this can by no means be labeled as an event. Event is not interested in death, but birth. "The event is not death, it is resurrection."<sup>45</sup> What presents knowledge, what reproduces the old, which is death, can by no means be an event.

Considered all of these characteristics, an event is undecidable, it is a cast of dice.<sup>46</sup> What does Badiou intend to say whilst he argues that an event is undecidable? Think about a person encountering with an event, which emerges as a pure chance in the situation. As one encounters with an event, he is captivated by its grace caused by its newness. Since he has no experience concerning what he encounters, it is beyond his knowledge. Event's inconsistency appears out of the boundaries of consistency which makes it meaningless for the witness. For all these reasons, he must bet whether it exists or not; it is nothing more than a cast of

---

42 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 129.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 66.

46 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 203.

dice. Badiou clearly propounds his theorization of undecidability of the event in the following quotation:

'Decide from the standpoint of the undecidable.' Mallarme writes: 'Every thought emits a cast of dice.' On the basis that 'a cast of dice never will abolish chance', one must not conclude in nihilism, in the uselessness of action, even less in the management-cult of reality and its swarm of fictive relationships. For if the event is erratic, and if, from the standpoint of situations, one cannot decide whether it exists or not, it is given to us to bet; that is, to legislate without law in respect to this existence.<sup>47</sup>

As the account goes, one has to bet whether the event exists or not, because it is erratic; its structure is not the same with the structuration of the count-as-one. "There are no criteria for deciding whether or not the event is."<sup>48</sup> In essence, being in itself is already undecidable, because the one is not and event is simply that which presents this undecidable being.

In order for the remedy of an event's undecidability, an intervention is necessary which is done by a subject.

## **5.2 Subject, Intervention and Fidelity**

If an event is unpredictable and cannot be explained through the knowledge of the situation, what can be the role of subject? Hitherto, it seems that an event just happens without requiring any subject to constitute it. Indeed, an event does not require a subject to take place. However, this does not mean that the consequences of the event is determined and decided by the event itself. "An event cannot dictate its own consequences."<sup>49</sup> The consequences of the French Revolution, a pure event for Badiou, are not the product of the event itself. "An

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>48</sup> Feltham, 101.

<sup>49</sup> Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 123.



event is not by itself the creation of a reality; it is the creation of a possibility.”<sup>50</sup> Event only reveals the in-existent to the world of the existents by making what is invisible, visible. The role of subjects, as Jacques Rancière puts it, inscribing “the count of the uncounted as a supplement.”<sup>51</sup> Think about love, which is one of the four conditions in which an event may occur.<sup>52</sup> The encounter of two persons, who fall in love with each other, is an event, but it does not guarantee anything. It just validates what is happening at that moment, but does not draw a picture of the future, of the love as such. That is why, for Badiou, subject must get on the stage and intervene. “I term *intervention* any procedure by which a multiple is recognized as an event.”<sup>53</sup> Badiou's subject is the subject of this intervention. “You have to decide, to get involved: maybe to commit yourselves irreversibly.”<sup>54</sup> Intervention decides whether an event is or not.

And the intervention of the subject begins with naming. An event awaiting for being named is like an “unknown Soldier”.<sup>55</sup> Subject's declaration, for example, that we will fight for the revolution is an evental statement, which is the subjective remnant of the event. Naming is an essential step to validate the existence of this undecidable being. Naming is like stating that “what I experience right now is really happening, and I am making it an element of this world by

---

50 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 9.

51 Jacques Rancière, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no.2/3, (2004): 305.

52 Badiou defines four conditions in which event may appear: love, art, science and politics. (Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 2.) For instance, whilst discussing love, Badiou states: “Something happens that is in the nature of a miracle, an existential intensity, an encounter leading to meltdown.” (Alain Badiou and Nicola Truong, *In Praise of Love*, (New York: New Press, 2012), 30.) The truth procedure, in these four conditions, begins with an event. Only politics is capable of summoning all. The political event inherently must be collective.

53 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 212.

54 Bruno Latour, ““Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame,” Or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate”, in *Science, Religion and the Human Experience*, ed. James D. Proctor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.

55 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 215.

naming it as X.” Naming is the first action concerning the knowability of the event in the apparent world.

The eventual statement made by the subject is not acceptable for the state, and it directly rejects the statement, as it is an anomaly for the status quo. In this regard, intervention must be illegal.<sup>56</sup> “One must proceed from the event as such, which is a-cosmic and illegal, refusing integration into any totality and signaling nothing.”<sup>57</sup> It is illegal, as the legality of the structure has not made it legal by counting as one; the subject's intervention unreasonably challenges the legal structure. Hence, the subject, who is fascinated by the event's grace, intervenes against the structure.

It should not be forgotten that an event occurs by itself not by the production of any subject. For this reason, event has a primary position, whereas subject has a secondary one. The emergence of a subject is possible only through the emergence of an event. To fall in love, an encounter, namely an event, is required first and foremost. To realize a revolution, something must be happened that summons people to define itself: “the subject is never constitutive, but constituted.”<sup>58</sup> But on the other hand, an event is nothing by itself. If a subject does not recognize it and does not intervene, then event cannot be an object of epistemology and hence it is tantamount to the void. “The event only works if this faith, this embrace is there.”<sup>59</sup> The chief difference of event from the void is that an event can be an object of knowledge by a subject. This is where subjective struggle begins.

But one might ask that if event reveals something new to the situation, something unpredictable by the existents of the situation, then how a subject can

---

<sup>56</sup> Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 125-126.

<sup>57</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 42.

<sup>58</sup> Meillassoux, 5.

<sup>59</sup> Dewsburry, 454.

decide that what is happening an event or not? A certain paradox of structure-agency relationship arises at this point. Event comes from the situation, but it is nothing according to the situation. Hence, as it has been argued that event's newness is something hidden that awaits to reveal itself within the situation. But how might a subject, who is a finite entity, take a decision with regard to a thing that is nothing for the structure, whilst he himself is within the structure? If the subject decides that what is happening is an event, he must detach himself from the structure. Badiou answers this question by positing an engagement with other events which provides an anchor point to recognize the new event. In other words, the decision concerning the new is taken by being faithful to previous events that happened before. "The possibility of the intervention must be assigned to the consequences of another event."<sup>60</sup> In other words, the event's newness can be grasped by a finite subject, if he is faithful to previous events. This is a fair answer, but automatically poses a new question: what is the first event? Put it differently, how can the first event be subjectivized without any anchor point? The subject is formulated as an entity that perpetually is between two events. In my view, there is a certain epistemological problem here rather than ontological, because the subject's finitude is placed between infinite Two, namely infinite two events.

Nevertheless, Badiou's propositions that the subject is always between two events and a subject should be faithful to previous events engender a new value: fidelity. For Badiou, the subject is who is faithful to an event. "To be faithful to an event is to move within the situation that this event has supplemented, by *thinking* (...) the situation 'according to' the event."<sup>61</sup> An event can be *meaningful* only through the subject's fidelity, which provides the continuity of what the event has revealed. Considered the example of love, the encounter of two people is meaningful merely through the fidelity they show to the event of love. Fidelity is

---

60 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 220.

61 Badiou, *Ethics*, 41.

the decisive resistance of newness against the repetition, the knowledge, the old through the subject's intervention. In this regard, fidelity is what “separates out, within the set of presented multiples, those which depend upon an event.”<sup>62</sup> In other words, being faithful to an event is a process of discerning what is new and what is old.

For this reason, only faithful subjects comprehend an event as an event. The language created by subjects is understood solely by them, because it is the language of the new. This language does not mean anything for the knowledge of the structure, nor for the any institutions of the old. Žižek argues that, by referring to Badiou, subject-language is a “shibboleth”, it involves the logic of “a difference which is visible only within, not from without.”<sup>63</sup> In order to clarify what subject-language means think about Arnold Schoenberg<sup>64</sup>, whose twelve-tone technique is considered as an event by Badiou. When Schoenberg invented twelve-tone technique, it was strange and bizarre, because it did not fit any rules and formulations, which have been produced by that time. Considered Badiou's conceptualization of fidelity, the language of the twelve-tone technique can be understood only by subjects, who are faithful to the event of twelve-tone technique; for the listeners of traditional classical music, it was meaningless.<sup>65</sup> That the subject-language might be grasped only by a subject supports the idea that

---

62 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 245.

63 Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, (London: Verso, 2000), 136.

64 Arnold Schoenberg is an Austrian composer who invented twelve-tone technique and blazed a trail in classical music. He indicated the new boundaries of classical music by breaking all the limitations. In order to obtain more information with regard to Schoenberg, Malcolm McDonald's *Schoenberg* can be read (MacDonald, Malcolm, *Schoenberg*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).)

65 One might object at this point that if a subject cannot produce an event, how can twelve-tone technique invented by Schoenberg be an event? In this example, Schoenberg cannot consciously produce an event, but his new technique exists as an event, because Schoenberg, as a human-being, is within the boundaries of the situation in which he cannot have the knowledge of the new, but solely the old. If one contends that Schoenberg produced an event by twelve-tone technique, then his claim argues that Schoenberg invented the void which is impossible.

event is undecidable. Hence, Badiou argues that it is always doubtful whether there is an event or not, “except for those who, by intervening, decided that it belonged to the situation.”<sup>66</sup>

One should note that the fidelity shown by subjects to the event does not imply a dogmatic faith which eliminates potential religious connotations. Conversely, for Badiou, fidelity is an “adventurous rigor.”<sup>67</sup> It must be adventurous, because the subject cannot know what will happen when he first encounters with the event. He is just fascinated by the grace of the event and takes a decision, which drives him to develop a fidelity to it. In this context, the subject can be likened to a knight. “The knight does not know what *adventure* will bring.”<sup>68</sup> There is not any prescription or program in the hands of the subject; they can only be the instruments of the structure and means nothing for the event. Event does not present any fixity concerning itself, thus what the subject encounters is a mere tentativeness. “The lack of fixity sums up the nature of the knight's itinerary.”<sup>69</sup> In consequence, subject's faith cannot be articulated with the event dogmatically, because there is no fix point for the articulation of oneself. In fact, subject cannot even fix its own finitude over the event and thus, “to be faithful to an evental implication always means to abandon oneself.”<sup>70</sup> Subject's abandonment of oneself directly demonstrates the abandonment of the finitude, the old and the structure, otherwise the subject cannot be a part of what event reveals. That is why Badiou's faith ontologically cannot be dogmatic, but is in the condition of flow. Hence, subject's fidelity creates an alternative within the situation. It champions infinity against finitude, new against old and adventurous

---

66 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 217.

67 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 129.

68 Pinet, Simone, “On the Subject Fiction: Islands and the Emergence of the Novel”, *Diacritics* 33, no. ¾, (2003): 179.

69 *Ibid.*, 180.

70 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 129.

faith against dogmatic faith. In other words, the subject generates a new situation in which the law of the pre-existing situation is totally inverted.

The subject's faith to the event and its capability to produce an alternative situation engenders the problem of finitude. To be sure, the subject is a strong militant of infinity against finitude. However, the infinity revealed by the event, which is the essence of being, must be forced to be finite, otherwise what the event discloses remains indeterminate. Despite the infinite presentation of the event is the essence of being, the subject must force and close the event in order to turn infinity to an object of knowledge. "Forcing is a relation *verifiable by knowledge*, since it bears on a term of the situation (...) and a statement of the subject-language."<sup>71</sup> Badiou gives an example again, from the condition of love. That the lover says "I will always love you" is a forcing, as it reduces the love to a closure by rejecting the limitations of time and space. The statement produces an alternative situation in which the lovers force each other to behave according to the event they encountered.<sup>72</sup> Forcing is a transformation process of non-knowledge to knowledge. The subject must transform the situation's law, namely the structure and must generate an alternative within the situation.

The subject's adventure might be described as a travel. To use a different description from literature, Louis Marin states:

*The ideology of the travel* implies a departure from a place and a return to the same place. The traveler enriches this place with a large booty of knowledge and experiences by means of which he states, in this coming, back to the 'sameness,' his own consistency, his identity.<sup>73</sup>

In the end, the subject must assimilate what he experiences because of its own finitude. In the end, the subject is a consistent entity and must transform

---

71 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 424.

72 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 65.

73 Marin, 14.

inconsistency into consistency; he cannot live in the *other*, but must return to the *same*. The subject must count “them as one,” because it “belongs to the general situation.”<sup>74</sup> The subject must force what he experiences to make event an object of knowledge.

Yet the capability of the subject to force the infinity does not mean that it can force and transform everything in the situation. Badiou rejects the idea that what the event reveals might completely be named and made knowledge. For him, “there is *always*, in any situation, a real point that *resists* this potency,” which is called “the unnameable.”<sup>75</sup> Badiou argues that the subject cannot force the unnameable which specifies the limits of the subject. “The unnameable is the point where the situation in its most intimate being is submitted to thought; in the pure presence that no knowledge can circumscribe.”<sup>76</sup> In other words, despite the subject's attempt to force, to complete, to close what an event discloses, there is always a certain point in the situation which is the void of the situation. Badiou's formulation of forcing, in this sense, proves one more time the permanency of hope. Hope cannot close itself. At this point, Badiou makes an ethical definition. “Evil is the will to name *at any price*.”<sup>77</sup> Put it differently, totalization, closure, briefly the dismissal of hope is the root of evil. The subject must acknowledge that there is a certain limitation of what event reveals. The subject “must recognize the unnameable as a *limitation* of its path.”<sup>78</sup>

In the wake of the arguments concerning the subject's limitation, Badiou's subject is positioned at the opposite side of the evil, and it should be noted that evil is characterized as the desire to totalize, to close. Gideon Baker clearly sets forth:

---

74 Antonio Calcagno, “Alain Badiou: The Event of Becoming a Political Subject”, *Philosophy Social Criticism* 34, no.9, (2008): 1056.

75 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 66.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., 67.

The subject of the event is not wise in the manner of the Greek; he does not seek the fixed order of the world in order to deploy himself appropriately in the totality. The subject of the event, contra the Greek subject, does not find the key to salvation as already given in the cosmos. He recognises that the whole, the totality, can never be the starting point of salvation.<sup>79</sup>

In the light of this explanation, Badiou's theorization of forcing, despite its attempt to make event an object of knowledge, should have a limit. The totality is in no way a thing affirmed by Badiou, because a salvation project having a total solution for all pains must ignore, one way or another, the unnameable. The unnameable is not a thing that can be effaced, because it is subjectively nothing, but paradoxically always there. In sum, the theorization of subject explicitly demonstrates the recirculation of the void, the unnameable, which permanently contains the certain elements of hope in itself.

What have been discussed so far involves a certain ethical problem. It seems that Badiou's conceptualization of the subject is not concerned with any ethical responsibility. Adrian Johnston problematizes this ethical indifference: "What prevents Badiou's doctrine of eventual subjectification from becoming a hymn inspiring excesses of brutal, dehumanizing terror?"<sup>80</sup> Badiou himself concedes the ethical deficit of his ontology:

I was then obliged to admit that the event opens a subjective space in which not only the progressive and truthful subjective figure of fidelity but also other figures every bit as innovative, albeit negative -such as the reactive figure, or the figure I call the 'obscure subject'- take their place.<sup>81</sup>

---

79 Gideon Baker, "The Revolution *Is* Dissent: Reconciling Agamben and Badiou on Paul", *Political Theory* 41, no.2, (2013): 318.

80 Adrian Johnston, "The Right Left: Alain Badiou and the Disruption of Political Identities", *Yale French Studies*, no.116/117, (2009): 58.

81 Badiou, *Ethics*, lvii.



First of all, Badiou does not ignore violence, so this is not a criteria in this sense.<sup>82</sup> Badiou answers this question by formulating the evil. The first indicator of the evil is what we have discussed, that is, the desire to totalize what the event discloses.<sup>83</sup> The second one is the belief that what the event reveals is not the void but the situation's plenitude. And the last one is the betrayal to fidelity to the event.<sup>8485</sup> In this respect, it might be argued that the ethical problem is solved by Badiou in the light of these three dimensions of the evil. The most striking point in this ethical formulation is that Badiou excludes any kind of totalization efforts. In particular, the emphasis on the equation of the evil with the production of the situation's plenitude instead of the void is remarkable. In my view, these three features of the evil commonly share the same implication: the desire of making finitude the real, the essence.

One of the most problematical question pertaining to Badiou's ontology is the condition of human beings in a world in which no event takes place. It has been explained that if there is no event, there is no subject. So what is the role of a human-being desiring to change the world? Are all the attempts to change the world in a non-evental world futile? Raymond Lotta accuses Badiou's event for producing passive human beings awaiting for the emergence of an event.<sup>86</sup> As Crockett asks: “Do we militantly wait for another event, and hope that it happens before we die or become extinct?”<sup>87</sup> In fact, Badiou himself asks the same

---

82 “It must be distinguished from the violence that the human animal employs to persevere in its being, to pursue its interests – a violence that is *beneath* Good and Evil.” (Ibid., 66.)

83 We will analyze the concept of truth in the next section as “what the event discloses.”

84 Badiou, *Ethics*, 71.

85 To get further information concerning these three conditions, see “The Problem of Evil” in *Ethics*.

86 Raymond Lotta, Nayi Duniya and K.J.A, *Alain Badiou Eleştirisi: Burjuva Dünyasına Hapsolmuş Bir Komünizm*, (İstanbul: Patika, 2014), 152-182.

87 Crockett, 169.

question: “But if everything depends on an event, must we wait?”<sup>88</sup> The answer of this question was already given: a subject is always between Two. Badiou states that there are several events “still require us to be faithful to them.”<sup>89</sup> Hence, waiting for an event is totally pointless. In addition, waiting, which includes a time dimension in itself, is meaningless, because there is no sign showing the coming of an event. Event is what “catch us unaware, with its grace, regardless of our vigilance.”<sup>90</sup> For Badiou, what one should do is to be “prepared as possible” for the event.<sup>91</sup> What does to be prepared for an event mean? He elucidates that “to be prepared for an event means being subjectively disposed to recognizing new possibilities.”<sup>92</sup> Badiou's emphasis is very important here; what he draws attention is the impossibility of absolute control over possibilities: “being prepared for an event consists in being in a state of mind where one is aware that the order of the world of the prevailing powers don't have absolute control of the possibilities.”<sup>93</sup> The consciousness that Badiou tries to instill is the idea that the attempt of absolute control is in vain and against the essence of existence. This is the point of origin of emancipatory movements in Badiou's ontology.

Another objection that might be directed against Badiou's conceptualization of event and subject is the absence of ideology. Ideology, as a political element, has nearly no place in his ontology, neither as a concept nor as a topic of discussion. “Badiou's explicit decision (is) not to treat the subject by way of a theory of ideology” Toscano says and he seems right.<sup>94</sup> Panagiotis Sotiris

---

88 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 111.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 12.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid., 13.

94 Alberto Toscano, “The Bourgeois and the Islamist, or, the Other Subjects of Politics”, *Cosmos*

underlines the same absence by drawing attention the problem Badiou has concerning “the possibility of reactionary-political subjects.”<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Badiou himself gives clues about his main ontological ideas in a paper written in 1976. He states, in *Of Ideology*, that “there exists, in the dominant ideology, an *irrepresentable* practice (the revolutionary class revolt).”<sup>96</sup> The irrepresentability of the revolutionary class revolt finds its ontological name as the void and dominant ideology may correspond to the state of the situation in *Being and Event*, which was written in 1988. This may imply what follows: ideology of the revolutionary class can shape itself when it has the condition of being presented. In other words, ideology of the revolutionary class can be determined and formulated only within the revolutionary process, which implies the emergence of the void. The reason of the absence of ideology in Badiou's ontology is simple: it is not a thing that can be formulated before the event; otherwise it is nothing but an object of knowledge. In this context, Badiou's refusal of “Marxism, the workers' movement, mass democracy, Leninism, the proletarian party, the Socialist state” as practical political instruments makes totally sense.<sup>97</sup>

A general framework of event and subject is presented and discussed. We will focus on the political dimension of event and subject in the next chapter in a more detailed way, but before moving to the next chapter, it is necessary to explain the last chain of the ontological triangle of Badiou: truth. So the last section of the paper will analyze the concept of truth in his works.

---

*and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 2, no.1-2, (2006): 16.

95 Sotiris, 47.

96 Alain Badiou, “Of Ideology”, 2011, <https://tr.scribd.com/doc/47747975/Of-Ideology>.

97 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 113.

### 5.3 Truth

The analysis of event and subject constitutes a genius formula concerning structure-agency relationship allowing one to consider agency's subjectivity without any constraints of the structure. In other words, Badiou presents a theoretical framework in which an individual may find a way of becoming a subject by saving himself from the determination of the dynamics of the structure in order to participate to the construction process of newness. Without doubt, Badiou's ontological ground of the theory maps a way out from structural limitations and portrays a picture of free agency. However, the most important part of his ontology is neither event nor subject, but his attempt to integrate the notion of truth into this ontological insight.<sup>98</sup>

Why is Badiou insistent with regard to the existence of truth? The most striking problem of the new understanding of truth in contemporary tradition is that reducing truth to the level of Badiouean knowledge serves for the benefits of the dominant and political system. It works for the current systematic values, because it imposes its own universality by the pretext of relativity of truth. The universal market fragments people into distinct identities and produces an ideology of relativization. In other words, relativization of truth is dictated through the

---

98 Advocating truth as a very decisive element in his ontology, Badiou distinguish himself from his postmodern contemporaries. Contemporary theoretical and philosophical attempts, which has been listed also by Badiou as heurmenetic, analytic and postmodern, dominantly neglect and in fact exclude the notion of truth. The decrease of the influence of truth in philosophy which simultaneously reflects its implications in politics and sociology, has reached such a level that truth is equated to knowledge in Badiouian sense. In other words, truth has lost its universal character and has been reduced to cultural contexts. Jeffrey W. Robbins explicitly puts forward that “the question of truth has been reduced to that of judgment, eventuating in cultural and historical relativism.” (Jeffrey W. Robbins, “Alain Badiou and the Secular Reactivation of Theology”, *The Heythrop Journal* 55, no.4, (2011), 615.) As Robbins clearly elucidates, truth is assessed in its relativity and gradually recedes into the distance. The most influential philosophical tradition relativizing truth, namely rejecting it, in 21<sup>st</sup> century is postmodernism. According to Stanley J. Grenz, postmodernism “affirms that whatever we accept as truth and even the way we envision truth are dependent on the community in which we participate”, and maintains that absolute truth is an impossibility. (Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8.) In a century, where the point of view in question has the dominance, any attempt to re-discuss the condition of truth is precious and Badiou is one of the most important representative of this oppositional trend against postmodernity.

universality of market, thereby it blocks all the ways to fight and resist against its own universality. For Badiou, “the only way to combat this false universality of the world market (...) is not through deconstruction, but through another universal project.”<sup>99</sup> What we encounter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a false universality, for “its condition of existence is not the elimination of communitarian differences but, on the contrary, their multiplication and their systematic exploitation.”<sup>100</sup> In response to this false universality, the new universal project should be nothing but putting truth back to its place, particularly to the place designated by Plato.<sup>101</sup>

What is more interesting is that Badiou endeavors to conceptualize his theory of truth by specifically emphasizing concepts like infinity or newness, which do not seem compatible with the general character of truth. His universal project, therefore, contains a different formulation of truth, capable of signifying new values that might be attributed to the concept of truth. Hence, Badiou designates a new path, which is not located to this or that philosophical tradition, but is unique.

A clear explanation of Badiou's truth is a difficult one, as it emerges at the junction of event and subject. Its emergence is dependent on event's existence, but on the other hand, it must be constructed through subjects otherwise it remains as a thing, but simply nothing for the situation. Badiou's understanding of Plato discussed in Chapter 3 has attempted to provide some hints regarding the concept of truth. However a further analysis is necessary.

---

99 Robbins, 615.

100 Étienne Balibar, “The History of Truth: Alain Badiou in French Philosophy”, in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. Peter Hallward, (London: Continuum: 2004), 37.

101 Badiou's desire to revive the concept of truth is best decried by Bensaid: “Against worldplay against the apologia for 'weak thought', against capitulation of universal reason before the kaleidoscope of differences, against all the pretences of a triumphant sophism, Badiou wants to hold fast to truth.” (Bensaid, 102.)

First of all, a truth must be something new to the situation. Its most explicit attribute is its representation of newness in the situation, which represents what is old. Badiou makes a distinction between knowledge and truth; “there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths”<sup>102</sup>, In his view, then, knowledge refers to bodies and languages, namely the area staying out of truths.

Truths exist as exceptions to what there is. We admit therefore that 'what there is' - what composes the structure of worlds - is well and truly a mixture of bodies and languages. But there is not only what there is. And 'truths' is the (philosophical) name of what thus comes to interpolate itself into the continuity of the 'there is'.<sup>103</sup>

Whilst knowledge in this context is “what transmits, what repeats”, truth is what stays out of the transmission and repetition, and it is beyond the presentation of bodies and languages. Since truth arises from what is not according to the situation, Badiou argues that “distinguishing truth from knowledge is essential.”<sup>104</sup><sup>105</sup> A truth cannot be known, nor be addressed, because it springs from where rules of knowledge is not valid. Hence, it “cannot be communicated. Communication is only suited to opinions.”<sup>106</sup> “A truth is always that which makes a hole in a knowledge.”<sup>107</sup> The essential distinction between knowledge and truth points out a very significant conclusion: truth is not a question of knowledge, but

---

102 Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*, 4.

103 Alain Badiou, “Bodies, Languages and Truths”, (2006), <https://www.lacan.com/badbodies.htm>.

104 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 61.

105 For comprehending the distinction between truth and knowledge, Martin Heidegger's revitalized Ancient Greek concept *aletheia* might be deliberated. In fact, Badiou also draws the attention to this similarity. “Aletheia is always properly a beginning. Techne is always a continuation, an application, a repetition.” (Alain Badiou, “On the Truth Process”, (2002), <https://www.egs.edu/faculty/alain-badiou/articles/on-the-truth-process>.) Aletheia can be regarded as Badiou's truth, whereas techne simply refers to knowledge.

106 Dews, 111.

107 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 345.

of being.<sup>108</sup>

So Badiou argues that truths are not knowable things, but are generic multiplicities. He defines generic as a multiple what cannot be defined through encyclopedia of a situation; in other words, it is “a multiple such that to belong to it, to be one of its elements, cannot be the result of having an identity, of possessing any particular property.”<sup>109</sup> A generic multiple is indiscernible within the situation, not in negative sense, but positively designating that “what does not allow itself to be discerned is in reality the general truth of a situation, the truth of its being.”<sup>110</sup> In other words, not being discerned within the situation, Badiou says, is the very point of a truth. His preference for the concept of “generic” instead of “indiscernible” stems from generic's positive content. A truth is indiscernible, but it is still a part of the situation. To put it differently, being indiscernible does not simply mean that it is nothing. Badiou surpasses beyond what is phenomenological and conceptualizes truth as the indiscernible which is a being within the situation, and yet inexistent according to the situation.

But why does Badiou interpret such newness or generic as truth? Why is the thing creating a hole in knowledge labeled as truth? The following long but significant quotation clearly explicates the reason of this tie:

---

108 Badiou's emphasis of newness is quite critical. Badiou describes Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche as the philosophers of what is: “For Hegel, philosophy is at its end because philosophy can finally understand what an absolute knowledge is. For Marx, philosophy as an interpretation of the world can be replaced by a concrete transformation of this same world. For Nietzsche, the negative abstraction of old philosophy has to be destroyed to liberate a true vital affirmation, a big "Yes!" to all that exists.” (Alain Badiou, “Philosophy as Creative Repetition”, (2007), <https://www.lacan.com/badrepeat.html>.) Badiou's desire is to exceed the limits of what is; he does not see any transformative possibility in what already exists. Rather, he formulates newness beyond what is. For him, philosophy should no longer be associated with knowledge, namely with what is. Instead, philosophy should be an action: “philosophy is no longer knowledge, or knowledge of knowledge. It is an action. One could say that what identifies philosophy is not the rules of a discourse, but the singularity of an act. It is this act that the enemies of Socrates called: "the corruption of young people." “ (Ibid.) That is why, Badiou's truth cannot be located within knowledge, since it has a disruptive character. In the end, it must be situated against knowledge.

109 Alain Badiou, “Eight Theses on the Universal”, (2004), <https://www.lacan.com/badeight.htm>.

110 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 345.

To understand this we have to return to the question of being qua being. If the situation is a multiplicity of multiplicities, the situation is made of the void, finally, of the emptiness. Because multiplicities of multiplicities of multiplicities cannot stop before something which isn't nothing. So we have always a point where being and nothingness are the same. The fundamental point in the situation is the point where being and nothingness are the same. If you like, it's the vanishing point of the situation. That's a possible name, it's the empty set of the situation, it's the void of the situation, but these are verbal discussions. But you have always something which is the vanishing point of the situation and in an event we have something like a presentation, a happening of the vanishing point. An event is not about what is full in the situation but what is the void of the situation. It's exactly like in the Marxist tradition the working class is in fact the void-class of the situation. We are nothing, we have to be all but we are nothing – The International. Being and Event is, by the way, a commentary on The International. And this is the fundamental point about the relationship between the event and pure multiplicity: when we experience the process of fidelity to an event we have the progressive construction of something which is the truth of the situation because it is in its ontological truth the void of the situation. So we have sort of a revelation of the truth of the situation along with the process of fidelity to an event because the relationship between event and the situation touches the void and is something close to the fundamental ontological determination of the situation.<sup>111</sup>

The quotation is a synoptic of what has been discussed and explained up to now. What can be noticed in this statement is that truth discloses the being which has not been counted as one. In other words, a truth always uncovers being in itself, which is inconsistent multiplicity, which is at the edge of the void. A truth is the very presence that might touch to the heart of the void within the situation. Whilst Badiou argues that we have a point that being and nothingness are the same within the situation, what he stresses is event's capacity to reveal this equation. In

---

111 Alain Badiou and Simon Critchley, "Ours is not a Terrible Situation", *Philosophy Today* 51, no.3 (Fall 2007): 362-363.



Badiou's perspective, the point unraveling that being and nothingness are the same is the very ground of truth. A truth constantly betokens the point remaining out of the structure, it points out the void. A truth's novelty must denote a new context, because its capacity to process inconsistency within the situation is not meaningful, for the rules and order of the situation must exclude truths in order to realize itself as the one.

Properly speaking, one might observe a paradox in the condition of truth.

Badiou elucidates:

A truth contains the following paradox: it is at once something new, hence something rare and exceptional, yet, touching the very being of that of which it is a truth, it is also the most stable, the closest, ontologically speaking, to the initial state of things.<sup>112</sup>

Badiou underscores the paradox of truth which is that truth as something new is what discloses the initial state of things. In other words, a truth, which is not indeed within the situation, unravels the being as much as it is. This paradox presents the following conclusion: what we experience is a fiction, unless there is a truth. So truth, by its exceptional character, has the caliber of rupturing the fictitious world. In fact, the fiction of the world totally stems from that the count-as-one is. In other words, such attempts to close the world, and this is what the count-as-one specifically carries out, are the attempts of creating a fictitious reality. That is why Badiou emphasizes a truth process cannot be completed, otherwise it becomes a mere fiction. Truth's ability to escape from fiction derives from its infinity; it is what uncovers what a being is in itself.

One might object that the definition of truth does not show any difference with the definition of event. This is where one can find the link between these two: an event, as a rupture within the knowledge of a situation, reveals a truth. "For the

---

112 Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, 36.

process of a truth to begin, something must happen.”<sup>113</sup> For Badiou, the something is nothing but event. Event is the sparkle of a truth procedure. Hence, a truth must be “post-evental”.<sup>114</sup>

The fact is that truth is the becoming process of an event. “Truth is concentrated in the present. Truth's time is the consequential present, the present of evental consequences.”<sup>115</sup> The emphasis on the connection between truth and present is remarkable, as it demonstrates truth's condition of becoming of infinity. A truth cannot have a history, because “they exist only in the present.”<sup>116</sup> Event creates a rupture in which truth's infinite becoming process begins. An event opens a new world of infinity in which a truth arises: “the path of a truth cannot coincide in infinity with any concept.”<sup>117</sup> A truth is an infinite process that might be by no means completed. Badiou exemplifies infinity of a truth with Galileo, which is a definite instance of a scientific truth. According to him, Galileo's event inaugurated a truth process which cannot be identified with any completed formulation. After Galileo “there does not exist a closed and unified subset of knowledge that we could call 'physics'. What does exist is an infinite and open set of laws and experiments.”<sup>118</sup> Or a political example, the French Revolution, clearly displays the fact that after the Revolution, there exist numerous revolutionary politics, “but there is no single formula which totalizes these revolutionary politics.”<sup>119</sup> If there is a totalization, it is not a “real totalization, but (...) a fiction,” which is made by

---

113 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 62.

114 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 373.

115 Hallward, “Introduction“, 11.

116 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 159.

117 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 64.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., 65.

forcing.<sup>120</sup> “A completed truth is a hypothesis, it's a fiction.” A truth is an indicator of infinity within the encyclopedia, namely the knowledge of a situation, which is finite. A truth always unfolds “the infinity of (event's) potential consequences. In this sense, truth's infinity can be associated with finitude in no circumstances in the context of totality and closure. Infinity is intrinsic to Badiou's truth and gets its meaning through the exclusion of finitude. Hence a truth remains always incomplete.

The infinity of the concept of truth, on the other hand, automatically signifies that there is not a single truth, but there are truths: “Badiou believes that there is no truth in general; there are only particular truths in particular situations.”<sup>121</sup> His Platonism, as discussed in Chapter 3, comprehends truth in a multiple sense rather than attaching it to the One. The four conditions Badiou proposes, love, science, art and politics, are capable of producing infinite truths. They “generate -infinitely- truths concerning situations.”<sup>122</sup> For the possibility of an event is not limited to a time or space, the construction of a truth cannot be singular as well. In other words, the infinity of the possibility of an event's occurrence simultaneously engenders the conclusion that truth may transpire, as a consequence of an event, in infinite times and spaces. Truths can always reoccur, but since “they are infinite, they are not reborn under the form of a simple and sterile repetition.”<sup>123</sup> Rupturing repetition does not take place by a single entity, but rather infinite truths may arise in infinite times and places.

One should recall that a truth does not *mean* anything without a subject's participation to the process of construction of a truth. He notes that philosophy should not stay “only within the vividness of the event, but within its becoming,

---

120 Badiou, “On the Truth Process”.

121 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 154.

122 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 359.

123 Meillasoux, 4.

that is within the treatment of its consequences.”<sup>124</sup> This infinite becoming is only possible through the participation of a finite subject. In the end, for Badiou, “truth is entirely subjective”.<sup>125</sup> In my view, this is a very risky, but at the same time a strong argument. Far from defining truth as an objective reality, Badiou entirely associates truth with subjectivity. Event itself cannot guarantee the construction of a truth; rather it only discloses what is indiscernible. What constructs this indiscernible as truth is a subjective action. In other words, a truth cannot be a simple given. For a truth to begin, a subject must decide to the undecidability of an event. A truth can be a truth only with a subject deciding the undecidable, which shows event's and subject's detachment from the structure. After the decision, the construction process of truth begins. The encounter of two lovers does not mean anything by itself; what is significant is the lovers' decision with regard to the undecidability of the encounter, by declaring I love you, and initiating the construction of the truth process, by saying I will always love you which promises the invalidity of time and space within the infinity of the truth.<sup>126</sup> That is why truths are always subjective constructions rather than a simple given.

The subject's decision starts to examine the truth procedure formed after the realization of the event. Hence, a truth is the accumulation of subject's actions; that is why it is always in the condition of becoming. Think about Galileo example once more. The event of Galileo produces a space in which the truth of the event emerges. However, the path Galileo has opened is processed through its subjects

---

124 Alain Badiou, “Philosophy as Biography”, (2007),  
[https://www.lacan.com/symptom9\\_articles/badiou19.html](https://www.lacan.com/symptom9_articles/badiou19.html).

125 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 15.

126 The reason of giving examples mostly from love is that an amorous encounter may happen in a segment of every individual's lives. In other words, an amorous encounter is more, so to speak, ordinary than other three conditions, science, art and politics. Scientific and artistic truths non-frequently occur, the political truth also is not a thing that emerges everyday. Hence, I think that, and I am sure that Badiou also thinks so, amorous examples concerning event-subject-truth triangle make the issue in question easier to be understood, as readers can directly establish a bond with themselves.

who have invented and continue to invent laws of physics.<sup>127</sup> That is why for Badiou a truth is always re-subjectivizable and re-experimentable.<sup>128</sup> It is always open to be constructed.

The constructivist understanding of truth should not be confused with the mainstream constructivist school, which grasps knowledge identical with truth, “privileges language over being, meaning over truth, communication over conviction.”<sup>129</sup> Without doubt, Badiou opposes such a constructivism. In fact, constructivist trend falls into the trap of structure's all-inclusive dimension. In a constructivist universe everything is defined, recognizable and discernible properly. There is no chance for an inconsistency to erupt, as everything is already consistent. The constructivist rule can be summarized as follows: “act and speak such that everything be clearly decidable.”<sup>130</sup> For this reason, constructivist approach is a very close friend of status quo. It is not wrong to argue that Badiou inverts constructivism and gives a new shape to it by identifying event as a non-structural entity whose undecidability is decided through a subject which creates a truth process.

Another dimension of Badiou's formulation of truth is a common feature shared by many philosophers of truth in history. The first thing springing to mind is universality when truth is at stake and it is surely beyond doubt that Badiou's truths have a universalistic character. However his understanding of universality and its tie with truth does not share the same stance with the general perception of universality. First of all, Badiou does not construe universality as something objective. Contrary to general understanding of universality, he does not see any legality in universality. For him, “nothing exists as universal if it takes the form of

---

127 Badiou, *Infinite Truth*, 64.

128 Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 159.

129 Ibid.

130 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 331.

the object or objective legality.”<sup>131</sup> Badiou states that universal must be essentially “anobjective.”<sup>132</sup> If a truth is made law, and transformed into the structure of the situation, then it has no more the status of truth.

Badiou refraining from a philosophy of the One does not suggest a project obtained through a prescription. The universal is something experienced and in fact constructed through subjects which makes it a part of an infinite process. Since truths are infinite, there are infinite ways of universality. A truth must always be universal, either scientific, or political or artistic, because it addresses everyone irrespective of the identities. A universal cannot be reduced to a letter of salvation, it cannot be specified. Hence, Badiou's universal does not designate an ideal place in which the rules of universality are determined. That is why he permanently prevails being over knowledge, as knowledge is a reflection of the count-as-one, whereas being, which is infinite multiplicity, can emerge as a truth, which is universal. A truth is always consistent with universality by its being, not by its specific attributes. Universality, in the end, is the subjective faith to the being of the teacher as in Kierkegaard's definition of faith. In this context, Badiou's universality can be associated with the One only in terms of subjective fidelity to the truth which summons everyone.

On the other hand, a truth's universality always springs from singularity; singularity does not contain any identity in itself, as it is not counted as one. That is why a singularity includes a quality that consists of everyone which makes it inherently universal. In other words, a singularity does not fit into any particularity. Particularity or identity is peculiar to what already is; the presentation of what is cannot represent any universal character accordingly. Badiou states that “every truth erupts as singular; its singularity is immediately universalizable.

---

131 Badiou, “Eight Theses on the Universal”.

132 Ibid.

Universalizable singularity necessarily breaks with identitarian singularity.”<sup>133</sup> Hence, one may reach to the conclusion that a truth cannot be in any account identified with race, sexuality, religion, ethnicity or any identity based difference. Politically speaking, there is no difference between a “Moroccan worker, or a housewife from Mali, what we can do together to assert that all of us exist in the same world, even if maintaining distinct identities.”<sup>134</sup> Of course Badiou does not deny the very existence of identities; but what he argues that in the evental times, when an event discloses a truth and when a subject decides to construct it, the alternative situation created by the event does not embrace any particularity. What is apparent in the eyes of the subjects of the event is a pure universality.

That a truth erupts as singular automatically denotes that universality is the very structure of the void. It has been explained the tie between truth and the void; a truth is the manifestation of the void of the situation. Remember that Badiou conceptualizes the foundation of being as the void; the void is the first multiple. In other words, the void can be thought as the essence of being that is hidden in a situation. For this reason, a truth must be universal just because of its ability to disclose the void. A truth is the procedure that creates “something in relation to the void of the situation.”<sup>135</sup>

Before moving to Chapter 6 it is necessary to elaborate event-subject-truth triangle specifically in the context of politics. Particular political examples from the history will strengthen the political context of this thesis.

#### **5.4 Event, Subject, Truth and Politics**

Badiou's analysis concerning real politics is an emancipatory one. It is easy to conclude that Badiou builds his emancipatory political stance not on consensus:

---

133 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 11.

134 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 66.

135 Badiou, “Ours is not a Terrible Situation”.

“Every consensual vision of politics will be opposed.”<sup>136</sup> Instead he develops his political insight by attempting to formulate ruptures. The essence of politics is, in the end, a “rupture with what exists.”<sup>137</sup> Hence he keeps his distance from any politics having a relationship with the order. For Badiou, party politics cannot be a part of eventual politics, as it is the very element of the status quo: “The electoral process is incorporated into a state form, that of capitalo-parliamentarism, appropriate for the maintenance of the established order, and consequently serves a conservative function.”<sup>138</sup> The main reason of dismissing any politics related to consensus is simple: consensus is the regime of the One. A political rupture cannot arise from consensus in any way. On the contrary, politics is what disrupts consensus. “In fact, anything to do with established political practices which are closely associated with the status quo (including not only parliamentary politics but also trade unions, for example) cannot be counted as true politics in the sense that he understands it.”<sup>139</sup> Hence, for example, “Obama's victory is not a political event.”<sup>140</sup> It can only be a fact, because it is already intertwined with factuality and does not contain any rupture effect.

Let us think in a different way. What consensual politics presents is a mere visibility, as consensus can be provided solely through what is. If a threat is visible, then there is always a chance to take precautions so as to preclude the consequences of the threat. On the other hand, what is not, since it cannot be known, is always a threat for consensual politics.<sup>141</sup> That is why “radical change is

---

136 Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 23.

137 Ibid., 24.

138 Alain Badiou, “The Communist Hypothesis”, in *New Left Review* 49 (Winter 2008): 31

139 Nick Hewlett, *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière Re-thinking Emancipation*, (London: Continuum, 2007), 57.

140 Alain Badiou, “Is the Word Communism Forever Doomed?”, (2009), [https://www.lacan.com/essays/?page\\_id=323](https://www.lacan.com/essays/?page_id=323).

141 The connection between visibility and threat can be understood by a simple analogy of dark



never found in those relations that are most visible, hence Badiou's repeated indifference to parliamentary politics."<sup>142</sup> In Badiou's eyes, consensual politics has not the capacity to cause a sudden change, since its visibility makes it known and reduces it to an object of knowledge. Being known means that there is a possibility to take precautions against its potential threats for the order. In other words, knowledge enhances its omnipresence by subsuming beings that are known. For this reason, Badiou argues that real politics is out of question if it is consensual, if it is visible. Emancipation cannot come from consensus or visibility. For him, politics do not reproduce what is obvious; politics is not at stake when it deals with bodies and languages. Any consensual politics is just what enriches the knowledge's encyclopedia. Hence, the political should do nothing if it is in connection with the encyclopedia, it should not "follow the given and hegemonic coordinates of what a meaningful action is any longer."<sup>143</sup>

In the context of visibility, Badiou also refuses all types of revolutionary struggle techniques. For him, "Marxism, the worker's movement, mass democracy, Leninism, the proletarian party, the Socialist state -all these remarkable inventions of the twentieth century- are no longer of practical use."<sup>144</sup> He insists that revolutionaries must invent their own ways of struggle in revolutionary moments. Leninism is not useful as a political strategy anymore, because the path it has opened during Bolshevik Revolution has become a proponent of the encyclopedia. This does not mean that Leninism was not useful in 1917. Conversely, Badiou argues that Leninism was useful solely for the revolutionary moment happened in

---

and light. In the light, one can see anything around and finds the opportunity to manoeuvre in the condition of a possible threat. However, in the dark where everything is invisible, there is no opportunity to prevent a threat, as there is no way to observe its happening. In this context, consensual politics is built on visibility, which consciously exclude any threat that harm it.

142 Graham and Shaw, 440.

143 Ruda, 93.

144 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 113.

Russia. Žižek states that when Lenin writes *April Theses*, “his proposals were first met with stupor or contempt by a large majority of his party colleagues.”<sup>145</sup> Lenin was a mad, for what he declared was something unrecognizable. What he enunciated was like an adventure that nobody can estimate its internal dynamics and consequences. However, Leninism, and other methods utilized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, should be replaced by something new which can be invented within the event.

So it is clear that emancipatory politics is a matter of invisibility, dissensus and it must be a product of newness. Politics begins with the emergence of an event. What a political event discloses is complete newness. For the very reason, the subjects of a political event should be the parts of the event itself, not doctrines showing the way of making a revolution: “Yes, we should be the students of these movements, and not their stupid professors. For they give life, with the genius of their own inventions, to those same political principles that for some time now the dominant powers tried to convince us were obsolete.”<sup>146</sup> There is a simple duality: whilst events are tied to newness, doctrines are necessarily tied to oldness without event's emergence. Or to put it in different terms: whilst events are tied to being, whereas doctrines are by their natures tied to knowledge.

A political event does not recognize the rules of the existing world; it must invent and apply its own rules. A more recent example, the Arab Spring, is a good display of the destruction of the rules of what has already been presented. An assertion given by a young Tunisian in the heat of the moment is remarkable: “We, children of workers and of peasants, are stronger than the criminals.”<sup>147</sup> A political event is always capable of inverting the order. It surpasses the stereotyped

---

145 Slavoj Žižek, “A Plea for Leninist Intolerance”, *Critical Inquiry* 28, no.2, (2002): 553.

146Alain Badiou, “Tunisia, Egypt, The Universal Reach of Popular Uprisings”, (2011), [https://www.lacan.com/thesymptom/?page\\_id=1031](https://www.lacan.com/thesymptom/?page_id=1031).

147 Ibid.

patterns of the situation. It has the capacity of transforming nothing into everything. Occupy Wall Street does not present something different. An American protester tells his reason of participating to the demonstrations: “I am a participant at Wall Street. I'm from Brooklyn. I'm here protesting because it's come to a point in my life where I'm left with no choice.”<sup>148</sup> The political screams of the young Tunisian and the American are nothing but the reflections of the desire of the transformation; the desire of inverting the order of the existing world.

And what is important is that the protesters reverse the rules within the movement in a political event. A political event produces its subjects, who decide the undecidability of the event. These subjects decide the fate of the event by experiencing and breathing the air of the event. An Egyptian says “As from today, January 25, I take in my own hands the matters of my country.”<sup>149</sup> This statement demonstrates two facts: the first one is that an individual, who has never politically decided his own future before, feels the possibility of shaping his life. In other words, an individual, whose political capacity has been ignored by the state, feels like a subject of the becoming process of the event. And the second one is that the Egyptian guy takes in his hands the matters of his country within the aura of the event. This is where the political doctrines are no more valid for the protesters solely because the event requires something new so as to invert the rules; and for Badiou, this is only possible in the becoming process of the event.

Politics has a very special feature which differs from the other three conditions, art, science and love. A political event is the only event that is collective. The construction of the political truth requires, virtually, everyone's participation. In other words, a political event inherently must imply collectivity; otherwise it cannot be named as a political event. That a political event is

---

148 Hannah Faye, *Occupy the World: From the Heart of the Protesters*, printed by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011, 42.

149 Badiou, “Tunisia, Egypt”.

collective does not mean that peoples all together revolt against the states. For Badiou, collectivity “is not a numerical concept.”<sup>150</sup> Its collectivity is something virtual. Put it differently, a political event's subjects do not necessarily imply everyone's participation, which is already impossible. Yet a political event “provides the vehicle for a virtual summoning of all.”<sup>151</sup> For Badiou, “science, art and love are aristocratic truth procedures.”<sup>152</sup> A political truth is intrinsic to everyone. This does not mean that other three conditions' truths do not address universally everyone. It was discussed that a truth, irrespective of its condition, is always universal. However, “in the case of politics, the universality is intrinsic, and not simply a function of the address.”<sup>153</sup> It is rather what is immanent to political truth.

The best way to understand what Badiou proposes through the claim that a political event is always collective is to analyze briefly his interpretation of Saint Paul. Saint Paul was an apostle who was a very influential figure in the spreading of the gospel of Christ in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. What everybody knows about Saint Paul is his encounter with the resurrected Jesus. When he goes from Jerusalem to Damascus, Jesus appears to him as resurrected. Paul is captivated by what he encounters so much that he begins to preach that Jesus is the son of God.

For Badiou, this religious, supernatural encounter of Paul with resurrected Jesus is one of the best examples of a political event clearly indicating collectivity. He argues that “the pure event is reducible to this: Jesus died on the cross and resurrected. This event is 'grace' (khoris). Thus it is neither a bequest, nor a tradition, nor a teaching.”<sup>154</sup> The miraculous event is unpredictable. No knowledge

---

150 Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 141.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid., 142.

153 Ibid. 141-142.

154 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 63.

of the situation may explain how Jesus is resurrected. So Badiou argues that the myth of resurrection is a pure event. It is a myth, because Badiou is of course aware that the resurrection of Jesus is just a story. Without doubt, he does not believe the resurrection. Yet this theological story is a political instrument in Badiou's eyes. Hence "what is religious, finally, for Badiou (...) is the *political* event."<sup>155</sup>

But how should one understand this interpretation of a theological event as a perfect example of a political event?<sup>156</sup> Badiou addresses the successful transformation in the narration of Christianity following St. Paul's encounter: from a figure of Father to the Son. He argues that before Paul, both Greek and Jewish discourses were the representatives of the discourse of the Father. Those discourses had the function of binding "communities in a form of obedience (to the Cosmos, the Empire, God, or the Law)."<sup>157</sup> In other words, the discourse of the Father was the discourse of the One. However, Christ's resurrection and Paul's fidelity to this event destroyed the discourse of the One. Instead of the discourse of the Father, Paul showed that a universal discourse is possible which is the discourse of the Son: "Only that which will present itself *as a discourse of the Son* has the potential to be universal, detached from every particularism."<sup>158</sup> The invention of the discourse of the Son<sup>159</sup> is that which opposes the discourse of the One, namely of

---

155 Amy Hollywood, "Saint Paul and the New Man", *Critical Inquiry* 35, no.4, (2009): 869.

156 "How can the potency of Christ's resurrection be transported to the current political realm?" (Ibid., 876.)

157 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 42.

158 Ibid.

159 It is an invention, the invention of the subject Paul. Put aside theological stories, Jesus never resurrected, nor is he the son of God. The discourse of the Son is what Paul invents by the emergence of a fictitious event. Fictionality of the resurrection does not preclude its eventual character. In the end, Paul believes the resurrection of Jesus to which he develops fidelity and creates a new discourse, which is of the Son. The resurrection of Christ, irrespective of whether it happened or not, is an event that ruptures the main discourse, and that invents something new

the Father. Badiou elucidates that “it is the son, not the father, who is exemplary,” and maintains that it is the son that “enjoins us not to put our trust any longer in any discourse laying claim to the form of mastery.”<sup>160</sup>

So Paul's fidelity to Christ's resurrection rejects any kind of mastery and replaces it with the discourse of the Son. This discourse, Badiou states, is the discourse of the universal, as it summons everyone to be an apostle. “In order to be an apostle, it is not necessary to have been a companion of Christ, a witness to the event.”<sup>161</sup> The event of the resurrection therefore produces a collective truth. It does not matter whether everyone wants to be an apostle or not. The significant thing is that political event summons everyone virtually without differing identities. The political truth must be constructed collectively, because a political event concerns everyone. An amorous truth is an interest of only the lovers. An artistic truth does not need anyone else, but the witness. A scientific truth necessitates only another scientist to be validated. However politics is always “the thought of all.”<sup>162</sup> One should not forget that the thought of all is not something real, but virtual. A political truth requires everyone virtually, but in reality this is not the case. In this context, Paul's fidelity to the Christ's resurrection is a very appropriate example in order to explain why a political event must be collective.

The intrinsic universal and collective character of political events and truths simultaneously uncovers another important value, which is equality. For a political event requires subjects regardless of identities, a political event involves equality in itself. Properly speaking, for Badiou, universality and equality are

---

through Paul's fidelity. Badiou says: “To which it is necessary to add that the Resurrection - which is the point at which our comparison obviously collapses- is not, in Paul's own eyes, of the order of fact, falsifiable or demonstrable. It is pure event, opening of an epoch, transformation of the relations between the possible and the impossible.” (Ibid. 45.) The discourse of the Son is an invention of this non-falsifiable encounter.

160 Ibid., 43.

161 Ibid., 44.

162 Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 142.

equivalent to each other. Just as universality, equality cannot be specified, it is not a goal. It is not a desire, nor is it a plan; it is not about a thing that should be, but about the moment, “here and now”.<sup>163</sup> This statement implies that political equality can neither be found in what is, nor should it aim at what should be. It cannot be coded in constitutions, which is done, for example, in the case of human rights. But on the other hand, it should not be aimed to be attained. A perfect equality can never be reached, because “equality neither presumes closure, nor qualifies the terms it embraces, nor prescribes a territory for its exercise.”<sup>164</sup> Rather, equality exists between what is and what should be; it is becoming within the eventual process. In brief, “the generic is *egalitarian*, and every subject, ultimately, is ordained to equality.”<sup>165</sup>

In the light of the explanations with regard to politics, let us examine a famous political event in order to summarize the points. Paris Commune is an ephemeral, radical socialist revolution taking place between 18 March-28 May 1871 manifesting the political capacity of the proletariat. This political capacity was self-evidently not a part of consensual politics, but on the contrary opposed to it. Indeed, the event of Paris Commune has not already any stability in itself. “As eventual multiplicity, 18 March 1871 has not the least stability.”<sup>166</sup> This instability contains the existence fight of the inexistent, as the event of 1871 is inexistent's struggle to exist within the situation. The event of Paris Commune is the site in which intensity and balance of existence change, and so to speak, are inverted. Badiou summarizes this change as follows: “The unknown members of the Central Committee, who were politically inexistent in the world day before, come to exist

---

163 Ibid., 99.

164 Badiou, *Conditions*, 173.

165 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 430.

166 Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, 222.

absolutely the same day as their appearing.”<sup>167</sup> In sum, the event of 1871 reversed intensities of existence within the situation through dissensual politics of revolutionaries. The “unknown members” of the committee became known. Paris Commune is the event in which what was invisible became the visible of the situation.

Secondly, 18 March produced an entire newness. A worker-being, Badiou argues, was just “a social symptom, the brute force of uprisings, and a theoretical threat” until that day.<sup>168</sup> The political capacity of the proletariat was out of question. “What is, exactly, in terms of its manifest content, this beginning called 18 March? Our answer is: the appearing of a worker-being (...) in the space of governmental and political capacity.”<sup>169</sup> Simply put, what was new for the situation was the political capacity of the proletariat. In this context, the emergence of newness is closely related to the change in the intensity of existence. That the in-existent of the situation finds the opportunity to exist means that what is new for the situation exists. One can grasp the meaning of newness through the connection that newness always erupts from the in-existent. To put it differently, newness is what comes from the singularity of the situation, and an event always derives from singularity. Badiou defines singularity as “a site whose intensity of existence is maximal.”<sup>170</sup> This maximum intensity of existence foreshadows the emergence of newness. “If, in the form of an eventual consequence, what was worth nothing comes to equal the whole, then an established given within the domain of appearing is destroyed.”<sup>171</sup> In brief, newness rises to the surface when intensity level of existences is inverted; that is the point that knowledge's authority is

---

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid., 204.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid., 215.

171 Ibid., 226.



broken. Paris Commune is not a fact, but an event by which newness captures the situation. One should always remember that “those who are nothing can only stick to a wager on the consequences of their appearing in the element of a new discipline.”<sup>172</sup> Paris Commune admittedly manifested this new discipline.

The event of the Commune did not create a different reality; instead, it only suggested a possibility. “Like every veritable event, the Commune had not *realized* a possible, it had created one.”<sup>173</sup> And this possibility, Badiou notes is “an independent proletarian politics.”<sup>174</sup> One should not forget that the event of the Commune, without any subject, can engender the possibility of an independent proletarian politics, but what makes this possibility actual is the subjects of the event. Hence, the Commune, as an event, is not more than the existence of a possibility, and this possibility is simply nothing unless political subjects decide to intervene. In the end, “a political rupture is always a combination of a subjective capacity and an organization -totally independent of state- of the consequences of that capacity.”<sup>175</sup>

Lastly, the event of the Commune is collective, as it is a revolt against mastery, it is an uprising against the One of the situation. Hence, the Commune, as the symbol of this opposition, is intrinsically collective. The event of the Commune was the beginning of politics in the situation, which sustains its existence by ignoring the existence of politics. “Politics begins with the (...) gesture by which Rousseau reveals the basis of inequality: leave all facts to one side.”<sup>176</sup> Leaving all facts to one side simultaneously implies the fact that the differences created by the One is no more valid in the circumstances of the event

---

172 Ibid., 228.

173 Ibid., 225.

174 Ibid.

175 Ibid., 227.

176 Alain Badiou, *Peut On Penser La Politique?*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1985) quoted in, Hewlett, 50.

which means that a political event generates a collectivity that does not recognize any identity, but considers the existents only as existents of the situation. In this regard, Paris Commune was immanently collective and destroyed what had hindered the composition of collectivity as a political form.

Regarding the previous paragraphs that have analyzed Badiou's ontology in a political manner, what sort of objections can be raised against Badiou? For instance, the following question might be raised: If an event is unpredictable, was the Leninist thought, for example, desiring a socialist revolution in Russia before 1917 futile? Nick Hewlett draws attention to the same point: "For example, the Bolsheviks surely did not wait for the 1917 revolution before behaving in a politically manner and becoming agents of change."<sup>177</sup> Is it really enough to argue that a subject is always between two events and thereby politically active? Was not Bolshevik Revolution an intended consequence? Without doubt, Badiou does not neglect the struggles, strategies or plans in the pre-evental period. Yet for him, intending for a revolution does not mean that what is happening cannot be an event at all. An event cannot be produced by a subject simply because a subject, who is finite, cannot get out of the boundaries of the structure by himself. The subject is not capable of producing something new, because he is only within the zone of bodies and languages unless there is an event. The structure of the situation can only be distorted and broken by itself. Hence, according to Badiou, in the case of the Bolshevik Revolution, Leninist revolutionary strategies preparing the revolution does not indicate the coming of an event in any sense. Jean Gronding argues that even though events are surprising, it "does not mean they are unexplainable."<sup>178</sup> If the notion of event is grasped in this way, then one might argue that Leninism intentionally created the event. However, this is not the case in

---

<sup>177</sup> Hewlett, 55.

<sup>178</sup> Jean Gronding, "In Any Event? Critical Remarks on the Recent Fascination with the Notion of Event", in *Being Shaken: Ontology and the Event*, ed. Michael Marder and Santiago Zabala, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 64.

Badiou's ontology. At the risk of repeating what was discussed, it should be stated that the emergence of the maximum intensity of existence is a matter of being, not knowledge. It is not related to being explainable accordingly. For this reason, a revolution should be understood in ontological sense rather than trying to explaining it in an epistemological context.

However, the claim that Badiou's understanding of politics is quite limited is a fair objection. "There is a danger that in Badiou's scheme of things political activism remains entirely defensive and local."<sup>179</sup> Despite his assertion that waiting for an event is pointless, being aware that it is impossible to be a political subject unless a political event shows up is considerably demotivating. Insofar as one is not a part of a political event, to what extent can he understand and actually feel the existential meaning of the previous events of which he was not a part?

On the other hand, the passivity of subjects renders also meaningless the position of political analysts; since if there is no event, then there is nothing for a political analyst to analyze, there is nothing political to be examined. "If true politics only begins with the rare and the extraordinary, with an event whose genesis is impossible to explain properly or to predict even partially, it also leaves the political analyst in a passive, rather ineffectual position."<sup>180</sup> For Badiou does not understand politics as something that analyzes the *natural* conditions of what is, it is necessary that an event must emerge which reveals what is political.

Badiou also can be criticized owing to his exclusion of any kind of programmatic action. "God preserves us from socio-political programs!" he says.<sup>181</sup> His permanent emphasis on infinity probably is the most significant reason of this evasion. In my view, this is a philosophical decision and it has of course

---

179 Hewlett, 56.

180 Ibid., 58.

181 Alain Badiou, "Réponses écrites d'Alain Badiou", (1992), [http://www.lasca.fr/pdf/entretiens/Alain\\_Badiou.pdf](http://www.lasca.fr/pdf/entretiens/Alain_Badiou.pdf) , quoted in Bensaid, 102.

certain consequences. For example, for Lotta, a social program is a definite necessity: “Badiou insists that equality is not 'social programme'. But to truly overcome inequality requires a 'social programme' of radical transformation.”<sup>182</sup> Lotta builds a 20<sup>th</sup> century style transformation model, particularly in the Leninist sense. Without doubt, Badiou strives to surpass traditional revolutionary political thinking. And obviously he aims at destroying the hegemony of epistemology in revolutionary politics by replacing it with ontology. In brief, if one considers Badiou's entire thought, today we need ontology more than ever.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 presented a comprehensive analysis of Badiou's ontology through specific analyses of significant concepts. Chapter 6 will analyze these concepts in both traditional and contemporary utopian thought in order to decide which type of utopian Badiou is.

---

182 Lotta, 36.

## CHAPTER 6

### BADIOU AND UTOPIANISM

What does Badiou present by his ontology within the context of the utopian thought? Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 have given significant clues as to Badiou's position between traditional and contemporary utopian thought. Platonism of the multiple, the rejection of the One, the void's implications concerning incompleteness and newness, state's attempts to perfectify what it subsumes and the certain emphasis on infinity delineated the main lines of Badiou's ontology's tie with contemporary utopianism. In this chapter, we will specifically focus on the terms analyzed separately in Chapter 5, event, subject and truth, so as to develop and strengthen the idea that Badiou rejects traditional utopian thought and comes to the forefront as a member of new utopian trend.

Before starting to elaborate utopian connotations of such concepts, it would be proper to remind the categorical difference between traditional and contemporary utopian thought. As it was stated in Chapter 2, traditional thought is mainly based on perfectionism, the idea of finitude, hope for a completed world, faith for the One and reproduction of the old, whereas contemporary thought's primary concerns are imperfection, infinity, hope as incomplete, faith for infinity and the emphasis on the permanent possibility of novelty. Whilst trying to locate Badiou to contemporary utopian approach, we will consider the distinction between these two approaches in the context of their main features.

The purpose of this chapter, and also the concern of the entire thesis, is to have an idea about Badiou's position in utopian thought. To do this, firstly I decided to write 10 statements with regard to traditional utopian thought in the light of the attributes discussed in Chapter 2 so as to constitute a discussion field in which one might find the opportunity to think Badiou in the context of utopian attributes. Hence, these statements will explicate the analyzed features of

traditional utopian thought by specifically considering his ontology. This will also provide the possibility of assessing the connection between Badiou and contemporary utopian thinking. In general, it will be possible to form an opinion about his position towards perfection, finitude/infinity, hope/faith and newness through these statements. The key importance of the following statements I will sort below is their capability to prove that his three important concepts, event-subject-truth, represent an opposition against traditional utopian values and seem more consistent with the contemporary utopian features. Indubitably, these statements can be enriched and enlarged; following statements should be read as a limited deduction concerning Badiou's ontology's relationship with utopian thought after an analysis of his important concepts.

Whilst sorting the statements, I categorized them under three sub-headings which is practically functional. First, I will discuss traditional utopian thought through the concepts of event and subject. Second, I will specifically focus on the problematical condition of hope and faith in order to be able to comprehend Badiou's position. And third, I will analyze truth-traditional utopian thought relationship to evaluate the arguments put forward in Chapter 5.

So we will begin first with the utopian connotations of the concept of event and subject.

### **6.1 Utopia, Event and Subject**

To begin, the statement that event is not a natural but a historical entity is appropriate. It is possible to locate this duality into the conflict between traditional and contemporary utopian thought.

**Statement 1:** Traditional utopias are possible if they involve no abnormality or inconsistency that may disrupt its perfection and finitude.

It was discussed that an event is an unpredictable possibility in a situation. Without doubt, the situations in which the probability of the occurrence of an event is disregarded may create a traditional type of utopia where no disorder can take

place. The natural situation, in which an event cannot emerge, is the very place, which is totalized and closed and therefore potentially can attain the perfection in itself. However, to accept the existence of a potential event in a situation invariably means that totalization, closure and thus attempts to perfectify the situation are in no way possible. Proclaiming the ontological existence of an event in four conditions clearly displays the fact that the situation is always open to disruptive threats, originating from within itself and yet unpredictable. Stability can never be reached, because an event's emergence is a pure chance that cannot be precluded by taking any precautions. Unpredictability of an event necessarily implies the failure of such attempts to foresee everything, to preclude the break of the consistency. The notion of event, which is the manifestation of inconsistency within the situation, hides within the structure as the unpredictable and perpetually reminds that obtaining totality is simply impossible. One may possibly infer therefore that for Badiou, perfection and finitude are out of question owing to event's potential emergence.

**Statement 2:** Because of traditional utopian thought advocates finitude, the idea of the One is a component of the traditional utopian approach.

An event inherently proves the non-existence of the One. For instance, Plato's ideal city is impossible in the sense of Badiou's ontology, as it is constituted as the One not allowing to any attempt of change. The idea of the One is the very opposite of the idea of change, because the One is only by transforming change into constancy. To put differently, an event's potential probability to happen simultaneously demonstrates that change remains always as a possibility which means that a static world is something unreachable. In the end, Badiou argues that the world “does not announce the serenity of a linear development, but rather a series of dramatic crises and paradoxical events.”<sup>1</sup> He advocates infinity of the being against the existence of the One which brings him closer to the contemporary utopian insight.

---

1 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 55.

Properly speaking, utopias and dystopias structurally correspond to the same meaning. In both, the following logic, shared by Giorgio Agamben, is valid: “I, the sovereign, who am outside the law, declare that there is nothing outside the law.”<sup>2</sup> The “I” in this statement refers to the rule maker of the utopia; for example, it refers to Plato for his *Republic*, or More for his *Utopia*. Plato or More, as the creators of their utopias, are outside the law they portrayed and since they are ideal cities, there is nothing outside the law in their utopias. The only valid law is the law of utopia's its own boundaries. Agamben's statement therefore crucially puts forward that traditional utopian thought represents a closed world in which the law verifies itself. It is a solid reflection of the idea of the One. Badiou's concept of the event exposes the fact that “there is nothing outside the law” is not a possible state; there is always a possibility of exit within the law that may point out outside the law.

**Statement 3:** Traditional utopias assume a closed reality in order to eliminate unpredictability; hypothetically, traditional utopian reality is based on the assumption of totality which indicates the characteristics of a fiction.

For Badiou, since the One is not, the assertion that there is nothing outside the law is out of question. This can be interpreted as a distortion of reality for him, since it contends the hegemony of the One. At the same time, portrayal of the non-existence of the One as the ultimate existence can be a fiction, not reality. Simon Pinet clearly proves the fictionality of the One over Badiou hypothetically:

Hypothetical reasoning works as follows: One can “make the hypothesis” from a statement A, which could very well be false, in order to draw conclusion B and then conclude on the truth of the implication A-B, (which does not, nonetheless, confirm in any way the hypothetical truth of A.) Badiou calls this a “fictive” or “fictional” situation.<sup>3</sup>

---

2 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 15.

3 Pinet, 176.



This reasoning model explicitly manifests the fictional existence of the One. The relationality between A and B is based on the assumption that A is true, which can be, as Pinet accentuates, false. The only way to constitute the One is therefore nothing but to begin with an assumption. If one interprets this hypothetical reasoning in the case of utopias, it might be argued that the assertion that “this is the most perfect world”, which refers hypothetically to A in the example, constitutes its rules upon this claim. The thought that what is idealized is the most perfect creates its own closed universe. This is logically impossible, as it is already impossible to prove that A is true without referring to another statement that “A is true” which lasts endlessly. In brief, traditional utopian thought constructs its own world through a fictional assumption. And this fictionality cannot be ruptured, for example by an event, because we can reach C from B, D from C or E from D. In other words, everything is under control, “there is nothing outside the law.”<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary utopian thought, on the contrary, is by no means based on the idea of the One. Badiou does not argue for a traditional utopia “since in its very impossibility, the politics that is described, the mythologized politeia, actually has a real.”<sup>5</sup> Pinet labels the following reasoning as absurd which somehow connotes Badiou's ontological thought:

Reasoning through the absurd follows apparently the same steps, but here, reason does not know where it wants to go, it does not know B. It is a wager, a leap that does not know where it will fall, how the situation might be changed. Here fiction works as a *supplement* that acts as mediation to truth.<sup>6</sup>

---

4 At this point, we should remember one more time Gödel. Gödel was simply saying the following: “For even if all the observed facts are in agreement with the axioms, the possibility is open that a hitherto unobserved fact may contradict them and so destroy their title to universality.” (Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, *Gödel's Proof*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 13.) What Pinet hypothetically shows means just skipping Gödel's proof; that is why it is fictitious.

5 Badiou, *Conditions*, 151.

6 Pinet, 176.

The main justification of this reasoning concerning why it does not know B utterly stems from the unknownability of A. This model is aware that A's truth is dependent on another variable. The undecidability of decisions, the wagers are direct results of this infinite determination process. That is why contemporary utopian thought is a fiction, but as supplement, it is constituent only in the wager, in the leap. It does not found the whole hypothesis, but bets within the hypothesis, because it is undecidable. The undecidability is the straight consequence of the existence of infinity. Contemporary utopian thought therefore stands at the opposite pole as the defender of infinity against the One, which is one of the most visible characteristics of the traditional utopian approach. In this context, it is possible to argue that Badiou stays close to contemporary utopian approach instead of traditional perspective.

**Statement 4:** Traditional utopias represent the dream of political states.

Russell Jacoby's study of anti-utopianism notes that utopia "has lost its ties with alluring visions of harmony and has turned into a threat. Conventional and scholarly wisdom associates utopian ideas with violence and dictatorship."<sup>7</sup> I deem this transformation in utopian theory significant despite its negative content. Contrary to expectations, in my view, what is violent and dictatorial is the virtual harmony of the political states. Traditional utopian attributes -the desire of perfection, the attempt to totalize or hope for completion- are dreams of a political state. Žižek emphasizes this dream as follows:

The global liberal order clearly presents itself as the best of all possible worlds; its modest rejection of utopias ends with the imposition of its own market-liberal utopia which will supposedly become reality when we subject ourselves fully to the mechanisms of the market and universal human rights.<sup>8</sup>

---

7 Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 81.

8 Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, (London: Verso, 2010), 38.

The same irony is also stressed by Rancière:

We are said to be living through the end of political divisions, of social antagonisms and utopian projects; entering an age of common productive effort and free circulation, of national consensus and international competition.<sup>9</sup>

This is not bounded with liberalism, but it is included theoretically in the concept of all types of political states. Toscano argues that for Badiou any state could not “function as the emblem of the politics of emancipation that once took communism as its name,” which means that any form of state cannot be a form or instrument of emancipation.<sup>10</sup> Every political state formally represents the One, and excludes any threat that may disrupt its unity and harmony. In other words, a state is always an attempt to build the One. If any Badiouean utopia is possible, then it should be searched within the emergence of the unpredictable threat within political states. It should not be included in the hope for the complete and closed universe of the political states whose sole instrument is a limited encyclopedia.<sup>11</sup> The threat, which is event in Badiou's terms, is what stands against the hegemony of knowledge. Badiou's potential utopia is a fight against the authority of knowledge.

**Statement 5:** Traditional utopias are imaginations of a limited knowledge.

In fact, the most significant aspect of Badiou's ontology in relation to utopian thought is the theoretical conflict between epistemology and ontology. An event's happening cannot be prevented, as its happening is not concerned with epistemological dynamics in any sense. Imagination of an ideal world, which is closely associated with perfection and finitude, can be a concern of knowledge, not being; as being represents inconsistency and infinity, whereas an ideal world inherently excludes these two. Traditional utopias' interest in “what should be” is an alternative combination of what already is, that is why it is not capable of

---

9 Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, (London: Verso, 1995), 3.

10 Toscano, “Communism as Separation”, 139.

11 For further information about the term encyclopedia, see Chapter 3.

producing something new, but only reproduces the alternatives of what is. Platonic utopia, according to the portrayal in Chapter 3, is a traditional type of utopia based on knowledge, not being just because being has no rule, no order and no limitation in Badiou's ontology.

It is necessary to expound this confrontation of epistemology and ontology in Badiou's theorization. In the light of Badiou's ontology, particularly as discussed in Chapter 4, we, as human beings, exist and what we are is a part of nothing but knowledge's immanence, since it is what oneifies us. We, as non-subjects,<sup>12</sup> cannot exclude knowledge from ourselves, we are equated to it. If there is something other than knowledge, we cannot know it until it becomes an element of knowledge. The knowledge we cannot exclude utterly encompasses our whole existence, it is not possible consciously to get rid of, to exceed the limitations of it. In brief, knowledge is us, the human beings as non-subjects. We cannot reveal being in itself, as we are already oneified by the structure, namely by the encyclopedia of the situation, whereas being is pure multiplicity, which is impossible for us to observe in default of an event. An event is what disrupts knowledge. Being cannot be imprisoned "within the dimension of knowledge" as constructivist approach does.<sup>13</sup> It is possible to see the precise conflict between being and knowledge in Badiou's ontology. He advocates being against knowledge, ontology against epistemology. Whilst knowledge implies certain boundaries and limitations, being in itself implies an endless construction with its emergence. Knowledge is what imprisons, what stabilizes being. "Knowledge calms the passion of being."<sup>14</sup> Being is not tied neither to a perfect projection, nor an ideal finitude. In this context, Badiou's utopia lies within the heart of the

---

12 We are non-subjects, as what determines us is solely knowledge in the absence of an event. We are amorously a non-subject if an encounter of love is not in question. That is why a non-subject is always equated to the encyclopedia of knowledge. He is solely a reflection of the structure; being a subject in these circumstances is out of question.

13 Badiou, *Being and Event*, 293.

14 *Ibid.*, 294.

unexplainable. It is only possible with the construction of the inexistent when it manifests itself as an event. His utopia is specifically related to the emergence of the being as it is; it is not based on imaginations of an ideal world based on the limited knowledge of the situation. Badiou's utopia is therefore always what is new, because an evental site "is the possibility of a new world; not the modification of the old one."<sup>15</sup> In this regard, it might be argued that Badiou positions himself against traditional utopian thought and shares the values advocated by the new utopian approach. Badiou's utopianism can be a sacrifice for the undecidability of the unknown. And this unknown's actualization is possible solely by the existence of the inexistents of a situation, namely by the event.

At this point, it is appropriate to remember Jacoby once again. It was noted that he draws attention to the transformation of the meaning of utopia. Jacoby also makes a distinction between blueprint utopias and iconoclastic utopias. In fact, this distinction coincides with this thesis' categorization of traditional and contemporary utopias. He argues that "iconoclastic utopians tapped ideas traditionally associated with utopia -harmony, leisure, peace, and pleasure- but rather spelling out what could be, they kept, as it were, their ears open to it."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, "blueprinters give the size the rooms, the number of seats at tables, the exact hours at which to arise and retire."<sup>17</sup> They "tether the future to past."<sup>18</sup> Let us reformulate Jacoby's last statement. Blueprinters imagine a utopia which is made by the past, namely the knowledge of the situation in Badiou's terms. They portray a utopian place of whom finitude is the very dimension. However, iconoclastic utopians does not "elaborate the future in precise detail."<sup>19</sup>

---

15 Graham and Shaw, 439.

16 Jacoby, 33.

17 Ibid., 32.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 33.

Jacoby argues that “the future, perhaps, can be heard, not envisioned.”<sup>20</sup> If one is tended to think of Badiou's ontology in a utopian context, then it is possible to re-write this sentence as follows: the future, perhaps, can be encountered, not envisioned. It can be encountered by the emergence of an event. This can be interpreted as his contemporary utopianism.

Nicholas Hauck also observes the same similarity between event and iconoclastic utopia: “We can identify striking similarities between iconoclastic utopian thought and Badiou's philosophy of the event.”<sup>21</sup> He argues that like event's capability to generate a rupture in knowledge, and to suspend status quo, “iconoclastic utopian thought refuses to use the tools and knowledge of the current society to plan and promote a future one.”<sup>22</sup> Hauck argues that both Jacoby and Badiou believe that “one cannot use the language of today to describe a future tomorrow as blueprint utopians tend to do.”<sup>23</sup> Hauck emphasizes the same conflict between epistemology and ontology by matching Badiou's thought with iconoclastic utopianism conceptualized by Jacoby.

**Statement 6:** Traditional utopias' ethics is founded in its desire of finitude and the reproduction of oldness.

One might deservedly ask that when an event occurs, subjects may produce a utopia in a traditional sense, because they are the sole elements who construct the alternative situation created by the event. At this point, one should remember Badiou's argument that evil is the desire to totalize. This statement alone confirms that his understanding of ethics is not utopian in traditional sense. It is possible to formulate the evil as follows: evil is any desire to build a traditional type of utopia.

---

20 Ibid., 36.

21 Nicholas Hauck, “Thinking through Philosophy: Alain Badiou and the Event of Transitory Citizenship”, *Journal of the Institute for the Humanities* 4, (Spring 2009): 149.

22 Ibid., 150.

23 Ibid.

Instead Badiou's ontology gives an emphasis on performativity.<sup>24</sup> Hence, there is no “general, abstract and speculative ethics.”<sup>25</sup> His ethical attitude “admits only of a politics of the possible, never of a utopian politics of liberation.”<sup>26</sup> Badiou does not formulate an ethics of knowledge which makes him a definite opponent of consensual, formal equality. His adverseness with any kind of certainty and unequivocalness is quite striking. Even if he offers something that should be done, he refrains from determinative attitude. For instance, he states regarding equality: “I shall put you on the track of eight practicable points. This is neither a programme nor a list, but rather a table of possibilities, naturally abstract and incomplete.”<sup>27</sup> It is in evidence that Badiou is not eager to close down the possibilities, but instead strives to give space to the performance. He is aware that a list of certain definitions of equality, universality, ethics, human rights and so on means nothing. The list must be conducted within the movement generated by the event, because only event is capable of producing a novelty within the situation. A general ethics, a general notion of equality, a general understanding of universality cannot simply go beyond the limitations of the structure, of the count-as-one. And Badiou elucidates that “we do not fundamentally need a philosophy of the structure of things.”<sup>28</sup> What we need is a permanent newborn inconsistency that may crack the structure of things.

**Statement 7:** There is no place for subject in traditional utopias.

The notion of subject is unnecessary in a world where there is nothing to cure, change or improve. Considering Badiou's approach towards epistemology and ontology, traditional utopian thought represents the death of subject; subject is

---

24 Trott, 86.

25 Guilherme Vasconcelos Vilaça, “Badiou's Ethics: A Return to Ideal Theory”, *Badiou Studies* 3, no.1, (2014): 274.

26 Ibid., 275.

27 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 43.

28 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 55.

imprisoned within what already is and no chance is given to him to produce a novelty. In a traditional utopic scene a subject is dysfunctional in a place where everything is perfect, static and total. However, an event always heralds, even though it is not necessary, the born of a new subject, because an “event is not death, it is resurrection.”<sup>29</sup><sup>30</sup> The subject, in Badiou's thought, is the very element of this resurrection. It can always reborn and produce newness by eluding from the structure.<sup>31</sup> A subject's connotation is invariably birth; it always involves the chance to construct newness and thereby to transform the situation. In Badiou's ontology the death of subject is only possible with the death of event, which is impossible. A traditional utopia, owing to its emphasis specifically on perfection and finitude, is the place where subject is dead. The motive of end in traditional thought is simultaneously the motive of death. Traditional utopian thought is therefore intrinsic to the states who declare the end of history, the end of radical transformations, the end of being a subject, more importantly who attempts the build the end itself.

---

29 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 66.

30 Remember the story of Paul the Apostle who witnesses the resurrection of Christ. One of the reason that Badiou chooses Paul's story as a crystal clear example of event-subject-truth triangle is the figurative meaning of resurrection. That the event is not death but resurrection strongly prevails life over death. He argues that “what constitutes an event in Christ is exclusively the Resurrection, that anastasis nekron that should be translated as the raising up of the dead, their uprising, which is the uprising of life.” (Ibid., 68.) In this context, Paul also symbolizes the subject of uprising, of life.

31 The relationship between subject and resurrection can be understood in a different sense by Arendt's book *The Human Condition*. One of the most striking detail in this book is Arendt's specific emphasis on natality. Independently of being a subject, Arendt argues that natality is “the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew.” (Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9.) Arendt does not relate newness with a ruptural condition, but attributes it to birth fact. “It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before.” (Ibid., 177-178.) In Badiouean sense, Arendt's concept of natality does not mean more than the reproduction of the structure. However, if Arendt's concept of natality is understood with the notion of event, what one might clearly see is that Arendt's natality is the very condition of Badiou's subject. In this respect, Badiou's subject represents always birth, not death.



## 6.2 Hope and Faith: Traditional or Contemporary?

The statements attempting to indicate that Badiou's stance is against traditional utopian thought fundamentally explain the opposition between Badiou and such traditional utopian elements of perfection, finitude and oldness. In Chapter 2, it was indicated that hope and faith have a special status, as they are intrinsic to both of them despite their characteristic differences. For this reason, it is necessary to sharpen the characteristic differences within the context of Badiou's ontology in order to demonstrate that his penetration to hope and faith embraces a contemporary utopian insight.

**Statement 8:** Traditional utopian hope is for an ideal world of which rules and patterns are adjusted.

In Chapter 2, the concept of hope was analyzed particularly in Blochian sense. In fact, Badiou's hope bears a resemblance to Blochian hope. For understanding this similarity between Bloch and Badiou, let us consider the following statement:

One could say that hope is not the imaginary of an ideal justice dispensed at last, but what accompanies the patience of truth, or the practical universality of love, through the ordeal of the real.<sup>32</sup>

If one remembers what Blochian hope is, Badiou's comprehension of hope, strictly speaking, implies the same “here and now” emphasis. First of all, underscoring that hope is not a portrayal of an ideal supports Badiou's refusal of the traditional utopian thought. His hope for the future does not contain any imagination of a utopian place; more precisely, future is located within the liveliness of here and now. Future is what is dynamical within becoming of now. That is why, there is no ideal picture of justice, equality or universality in Badiou's thought, nor is there any hope for their ideal realizations in the future. Badiouean hope is something permanently becoming and renewing itself according to the circumstances of

---

<sup>32</sup> Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 96.

becoming process. The emphasis on the term practical is therefore fairly remarkable, because “hope has nothing to do with the future,” but rather “it is a figure of the present subject.”<sup>33</sup>

What is important is not the future that should be; but rather what will shape the future is the scope of here and now. What nourishes hope is the very presence of here and now. However, this should not be disconcerted with the becoming, the here and now of what is. Hope is irrelevant if there is no event. One should not think of hope as an element of becoming in natural conditions; rather it may emerge only in eventual circumstances. Hope cannot be a concern of everyday life, because events do not take place permanently in the ordinariness of routine. In Deleuzian context, “rather than a product, final or interim, becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state.”<sup>34,35</sup> Hope is active in this type of dynamism of change in Badiou's ontology. The position of hope can be best described by the words of Zygmunt Bauman:

In the transgressive imagination of liquid modernity the 'place' (whether physical or social) has been replaced by the unending sequence of new beginnings, inconsequentiality of deeds has been substituted for fixity of order, and the desire of a different today has elbowed out concern with a better tomorrow.<sup>36</sup>

---

33 Ibid., 97.

34 Cliff Stagol, “Becoming”, in *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 26.

35 One should not forget that Deleuzeian understanding of becoming does not share the same point of view with Badiou. For Badiou, becoming can emerge, as a transformative power, only by the occurrence of an event. In this respect, we can also think about hope in eventual times. However, for Deleuze, becoming is what produces events: “For him, becoming is neither merely an attribute of, nor an intermediary between events, but a characteristic of the very production of events.” (Ibid.) So event should be considered as the inception of hope in Badiou's ontology. Deleuze's understanding of becoming is completely a different story, but resembles Badiou's uncertainty condition which is intrinsic to post-evental circumstances.

36 Zygmunt Bauman, “Utopia with No Topos”, *History of the Human Sciences* 16, no.1, (2003): 24

As the account goes, the concern of today prevails the importance of tomorrow. What will shape the future is not imaginations with regard to future, but the very materiality of today. In sum, Badiouean hope can only be an indeterminate attitude that borrows within here and now so as to shape the future, but only within the circumstances of an event.

One might obtain the conclusion that Badiou is not interested in any kind of idealism detached from the reality of now. His hope does not contain any idealistic emphasis, rather it is totally founded upon materiality. In a public seminar, he problematizes the relationship between idealism and emancipatory thought and reaches to the conclusion that idealism does not support emancipatory thinking in any way; it is a configuration which is no more alive, but completely dead that reminds the necessity of materialism for emancipatory politics.<sup>37</sup> His emphasis on the death of idealism, which resembles also Nietzsche's famous statement "God is dead", may provide an insight with regard to his opinions about hope. At the cost of repeating myself, considered Badiou's ontology, one should not forget that hope can only be conceptualized within material conditions, not idealistic imaginations, or utopias in traditional sense of future places. That is why it demonstrates once again that Badiou's hope is strictly opposed to the idea of traditional utopian thought, but takes his utopian source from contemporary approach. Traditional utopian hope represents the ideal of a perfect, closed, completed city in which there is no possibility to produce something anew, whereas contemporary utopian hope represents the ideal within here and now, which depends on the material circumstances of the movement and therefore always open to newness. However, it is very important to remember that without the emergence of an event, it is not possible for the contemporary utopian hope to take place as an element.

**Statement 9:** Because of the claim of obtaining the best world, traditional utopian faith is dogmatic.

---

37 Alain Badiou, "S'orienter Dans La Pensée, S'orienter Dans L'existence II", (2005), <https://www.entretiens.asso.fr/Badiou/05-06.htm>.

Along with the concept of faith, which is more problematic than hope concerning the distinction between traditional and utopian perspectives, Badiou's notion of hope is closely associated with faith, which can also be called fidelity.<sup>38</sup> He states that “hope is the subjectivity of a victorious fidelity, fidelity to fidelity, and not the representation of its future outcome.”<sup>39</sup> Beyond the same accent on the disregard of future consequences, Badiou equates hope to subjectivity of victorious fidelity. What does victorious fidelity mean? Victorious fidelity is basically that which has the capacity to construct an alternative that there is something other than law. For Badiou, “faith acknowledges that the subjective apparatus commanded by the law is not the only possible one.”<sup>40</sup> Faith, first of all, indicates the possibility of an alternative and declares that the law of the situation is not valid in the new possibility that it prescribes. In *Galatians*<sup>41</sup>, Paul states that “before faith came, we were kept under the law. (...) But after the faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”<sup>42</sup> Put aside the religious connotations of Paul's words, what he ascribes to the importance of faith is greatly striking. In this perspective, faith is seen as something emancipatory, as it is capable of saving oneself from the chains of the law, from the structure. In addition, one should not once again forget that the faith of Paul is built upon the event of the resurrection of the Christ. In other words, the emancipatory faith is possible only by the encounter with an event.

---

38 The reason that I prefer using the term faith rather than fidelity as a utopian feature is twofold: first, faith literally involves a more comprehensive meaning and is more appropriate for a study searching utopian attributes. In other words, faith is a more general term, whereas fidelity is more peculiar to Badiou's ontology. Second, Badiou does not hold himself back about using the term faith in *Saint Paul*. Hence, it facilitates to identify fidelity with faith.

39 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 95.

40 Ibid., 88.

41 *Galatians* is the ninth book of the *New Testament*.

42 Martin Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, (Grand Rapids MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1939), 76-78.

“Without resurrection, all faith is in vain.”<sup>43</sup>

Even though Badiou exemplifies faith as a component of emancipatory thought with Saint Paul, it does not have any idealistic connotations. In the example of Paul, Simon Critchley argues that faith is not a “metaphysical belief in God”, nor does it imply “a transcendent beyond”; instead it is “a lived subjective commitment to (...) an infinite demand.”<sup>44</sup> By the same token, for Badiou, “faith is the subjectivization of what is declared 'here and now'.”<sup>45</sup> In this respect, faith does not differ from hope; both exist within here and now and ignore the future ideals. Since a faith without an event is unable to construct a truth, what is idealistic is faith's condition in non-evental times and spaces. Faith may only show itself “in a situation of crisis where a decisive intervention is called for.”<sup>46</sup> Faith can positively acquire an emancipatory meaning only through an event's initiative for a truth procedure. And a truth procedure, contrary to general opinion, is not idealistic, but rigorously materialistic. Hence, one should differentiate Badiou's faith from the image of faith described in Koestler's books. Badiou's faith does not have an inclination towards tragic results as it was discussed in Chapter 2 by referring to Koestler's books. It cannot have a purpose to eliminate all illnesses and problems from the world, otherwise it is, according to Badiou's ethical theory, nothing more than an evil. This does not mean that it does not involve any kind of violence in the process opened by an event.<sup>47</sup> Violence cannot be a purpose, but can be a fact in

---

43 Simon Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology*, (London: Verso, 2012), 158.

44 Ibid., 162.

45 A. J. Bartlett, “Refuse Become Subject: The Education Ethic of Saint Paul”, *Badiou Studies* 3, no.1, (2014): 203.

46 Critchley, 161-162.

47 It should one more time be noted that Badiou's ethical understanding does not exclude violence. In the end, “the ethics of truths is always more or less militant, combative.” (Badiou, *Ethics*, 75.) When he tries to explain the problem of evil, he argues that terror is not an unequivocal concept and it is not identical in every cases. For instance, he differentiates the political terror applied by “Jacobin Committee of Public Safety” from the terror reduces all to “their being-for-

the construction process of truths. His faith is conducted on the construction process of truth: “Under the condition of faith, of declared conviction, love names a nonliteral law, one that gives to the faithful subject his consistency, and effectuates the post-evental truth in the world.”<sup>48</sup> We will analyze this statement more in detail in the next section where we will elaborate the concept of truth and its relation with utopian thought.

### **6.3 Truth as the One: Universality, Equality and Utopianism**

The disconnection between faith and the law may remind one the discussion with regard to Kierkegaard's definition of faith. In Chapter 2, it was discussed that Kierkegaard's identification faith with the actuality of teacher could be interpreted at least in two ways: one was leading to the conclusion that faith is a dogmatic One in the ontological sense, and the other was implying that faith is a dogmatic One in the epistemological sense. To be sure, Badiou's position cannot be located to epistemological One, because it has repeatedly been presented that Badiou's utopianism permanently rejects epistemological idealizations. Hence, faith cannot be a component of an epistemological One. However, the ontological One is also problematic, because the basic decision of Badiou is that the one is not.

**Statement 10:** Owing to its exclusionist character, the One of traditional utopian thought does not represent universality and equality of a truth, but produces identities.

Needless to say, Badiou constitutes his whole ontology on the decision that the one is not. But it was also stated that only the count-as-one is. Badiou argues that a political event always inaugurates its own count-as-one process: “To finally count as one what is not even counted is what is at stake in every genuinely

---

death”. (Ibid., 77.) The latter one grounds itself on not birth, but on death. However, Badiou's event implies the birth of a new life and virtually summons everyone without making any discrimination.

48 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 87.

political thought.”<sup>49</sup> The truth a political event reveals is by no means a closed and total One. It is always in the condition of a world-to-come. In this context, Badiou argues that “only a truth opens the world to the One of an over world, which is also the world-to-come.”<sup>50</sup> Badiou's truth does not in any way restricted to the One, which is not; but paradoxically its construction is a process which starts from infinity and marches to the One: “What singularizes the political procedure is the fact that it proceeds from the infinite to 1.”<sup>51</sup><sup>52</sup> This marching is the construction of the truth and the extension of the existing the situation. The One cannot be attained in any way, because there is always a possibility for the eruption of an event. Truths can never close or totalize a world accordingly.

The same implication of the One can also be observed in Paul's case. Badiou argues that all political truths involve “the One, the universal, the singular.”<sup>53</sup> In essence, Badiou draws attention to a simple dichotomy here. The state, which claims that it is the representation of the One, constitutes its Oneness upon differences which was discussed in Chapter 5 while universality was explained. The structure, the law, the state or whatever one calls it, implies a “fallacious One”, because it spuriously claims that it is the One whereas inherently ascribing disparate identities to individuals.<sup>54</sup> Hence, according to Paul, it is not possible for a law “to be an operation of the One”.<sup>55</sup> The only One can be the universality of a truth. In other words, “the One is only insofar as it is for all”, and

---

49 Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, 159.

50 Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, 24.

51 Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, 159.

52 Badiou says “1 is the numericality of the same, and to produce the same is that which an emancipatory political procedure is capable of. (...) 1 is the figure of equality and sameness.” (Ibid.)

53 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 76.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

Badiou maintains that it “follows not from the law, but from the event.”<sup>56</sup>

Two things are worth considering: First, the One is in the infinite construction process of a truth and can never be reached. Badiou's ethics of truths names the attempt to acquire the One as evil. Second, the One is intrinsic to a truth, because it is inherently universal and addresses the equality of everyone. The conclusion one may arrive is that the One is never a political goal, nor an ideal target to achieve. This One is always in the process of marching. That is why Badiou argues that “communism can only be a movement”.<sup>57</sup> And that is why Badiou is a Maoist owing to Mao's specific emphasis on the kinetic aspect of communism rather than a stable and static social life. In conclusion, the One, as universality and equality in the post-evental period, can only be performative. For this reason, the One of a truth cannot be associated with traditional utopian thought. It is a dynamical One and therefore addresses infinity and the exclusion of perfection which simultaneously implies that it is always open to the production of newness.

For Badiou, “there is only one world”.<sup>58</sup> Without doubt, the claim that there is only one world is neither a utopian fiction, nor a communist ideal for the future, but the fact underlying our very existence. This claim “is not an objective conclusion”, but rather it “is performative”.<sup>59</sup> As it was discussed more than once, the performativity is ascendant within the construction process of the truth after the event. The assertion that there is only one world simply indicates the fact that

---

56 Ibid., 81.

57 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 20.

58 Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 60.

59 Ibid. A similar approach is put forward also by Voltaire in a religious context: “It does not require great art, or magnificently trained eloquence, to prove that Christians should tolerate each other. I, however, am going further: I say that we should regard all men as our brothers. What? The Turk my brother? The Chinaman my brother? The Jew? The Siam? Yes, without doubt; are we not all children of the same father and creatures of the same God?” (Voltaire, “On Universal Tolerance”, (1763)  
<http://www.dfet.org/documents/Voltaire%20Treatise%20on%20Toleration%20Ch%2022.pdf>.



all people belong to the same world, as we all exist in the same circumstances. I am eager to quote a long, but explanatory and persuasive statement of Badiou so as to clarify this simple assertion:

One consequence, which is simple enough, concerns people of foreign origin who live amongst us. The African worker I see in the restaurant kitchen, this Moroccan I see digging a hole in the road, this veiled woman looking after children in a park: all these belong to the same world as me. This is the key point. That is where we reverse the dominant idea of unity of the world in terms of objects, signs and elections, an idea that leads to persecution and war. The unity of the world is one of living and acting beings, here and now. And I must absolutely insist on this test of unity: these people, who are here, different from me in terms of language, clothes, religion, food, education, exist in the same world, exist just as I myself do. Since they exist like me, I can converse with them, and then, as with anyone else, we can agree and disagree about things. But on the absolute precondition that they exist exactly as I do -in other words, in the same world.<sup>60</sup>

It is the states who neglect this existential fact concerning our position in the world. Nicolas Sarkozy, intentionedly or not, puts forward the discriminative function of the states very explicitly: “If foreigners want to remain in France, they have to love France; otherwise they should leave.”<sup>61</sup> For all states, there is a simple us and them; it is not peculiar to A state or B state. The “us and them” perspective is what separates the world and what tries to dominate people who are not compatible for the dominant culture of the world. For this reason, Badiou insistently underscores that there is only one world against all states that discriminate individuals.

Hence, if there is an ultimate truth for Badiou, it neither designates a utopian place, nor does it determine the rules of a finite world, nor does it give a prescription in order to build a perfect society. Badiou's utopianism finds its

---

60 Ibid., 60-61.

61 Ibid., 61.

meaning in the very reality of the world and within the flow of practice. That is why, in addition to event-subject-contemporary utopia relationship, Badiou's truth contains the same character with contemporary utopian thought and persistently attempts to eliminate traditional utopian values.

#### **6.4 Final Comment**

**Deduction:** Badiou does not share traditional utopian values and stays close to contemporary utopian approach.

In the light of the foregoing, one might reach to the conclusion that Badiou is not a traditional utopian. What is more is that he inverts all the striking attributes of the traditional utopian thought which is formulated as contemporary utopian approach in this thesis. In other words, Badiou's ontology is a definite opposition against traditional utopian values irrespective of its revolutionary or conservative structure. In fact, if traditional utopianism is seen by the eyes of Badiou, it represents a conservative character owing to its certain emphasis on perfectionism, finitude and oldness in particular.<sup>62</sup> What contemporary utopianism manifests, however, is a precise praise for revolutionary thinking which is conceptualized within the conditions of here and now and whose emphasis is always permanency of movement rather than stability and consistency of the order and the system.

To sum up, it is possible to argue that Badiou is a philosopher of incompleteness against completion, permanent movement against static states, multiplicity of being against the One, infinity against finitude, imperfection against perfection, materialism against idealism and newness against oldness. Whilst Badiou militantly advocates these values, what is impressive in his ontology is the plausible attempt to ingrate the concept of truth, which is perceived as a stable, static and epistemological value, into these liquid values, which can be considered as ontological components of the theory. Without doubt, Badiou's

---

<sup>62</sup> Of course, any attempt to obtain a traditional type of utopia requires a revolutionary thinking. However, what is paradoxical concerning its realization, its revolutionary aspect is always doomed to be conservative once it is achieved.

relation with contemporary utopianism offers a third way which saves truth from the chains of traditional utopian thought without renouncing the values such as universality and equality.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Whilst I was writing this thesis I have encountered with two major difficulties. The first difficulty of the thesis showed itself mostly in the parts that I attempted to explain Badiou's ontology through a comprehensive analysis of his fundamental concepts. It was challenging, because an entire explanation of complex and, so to speak, ticklish terms requires a full concentration and a large number of reading materials in order to present his ontology properly. In addition, the abstractness of some terms such as the void and infinity and Badiou's claim to portray them in a concrete way burdened me with the attempt to explain the material correspondences of those abstract concepts. In the end, carrying out a study on political ontology was a highly problematical process.

The second difficulty, on the other hand, was trying to present Badiou's ontology in a utopian context about which there is scarcely no studies. In order to do that, first of all, it was necessary to sketch a theoretical utopian approach; otherwise his ontology was including the risk of being irrelevant to utopian thought. In the light of the studies I could reach and read, I discerned that there is a definite detachment from the general understanding of utopia which led me to make a categorization of utopian thought as traditional and contemporary. Following, as I maintained to read and make a research on utopian thought and Badiou, I noticed that his ontology was totally excluding traditional utopian values, whilst embracing contemporary attributes; but what the difficult thing was, as I have stressed, that there was almost no reading material that approaches Badiou in a utopian context. Hence, interpreting him in this way, along with that it have not been untried yet, was quite challenging and tough.

Despite the difficulties I have encountered, the thesis, in the end, indicates a significant aspect of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's radical politics within the context of

Badiou. The political theoretical movement of which he is a prominent member overthrows all the traditional utopian values and attempts to form a new ground for radical politics. In particular, the rise of the social movements emerging all around the world creates their own rules and patterns, and necessitates a theoretical ground that always is open to renewal. More precisely, these social movements require a theory that does not conceive of things as stable, consistent and total, but rather a theory permanently underscoring the productive character of movement. Without doubt, Badiou does not sketch a certain type of event, subject or truth, but instead continuously emphasizes their capability to produce or to be intrinsic to newness. However, in my view, contemporary social and political movements also feel the absence of an anchor point which is supplied by Badiou's theorization of truth. In fact, he seems to be oscillating between old and new understanding of radical politics, although his political ontology cannot be ascribed to neither of these perspectives. Without doubt this thought presents a unique comprehension of radical political movements.

Of course, it goes without saying that Badiou is not alone in the theoretical field. Despite certain differences, some important philosophers such as Jacques Rancière, Slavoj Žižek, Sylvain Lazarus or Jean-Luc Nancy are trying to develop a new perspective with regard to radical politics. In this respect, the conferences titled *The Idea of Communism* might be seen as attempts to produce a new insight as to radical politics in which new ideas concerning the comprehension of communism are discussed. In addition, *L'organisation Politique*<sup>1</sup> is quite interesting which develops a political attitude without getting involved in party politics. Badiou rejects any kind of political activity related to state mechanisms.

---

1 *L'organisation Politique* is a post-Maoist political organization making policy without engaging with states. Hallward states that the organization “remains small, relying on several dozen committed activists to coordinate its various interventions and campaigns, ranging over issues of health and education, the status and representation of work and workers, and the treatment of undocumented immigrants, or *sans-papiers*.” (Hallward, *A Subject to Truth*, 43.)

The attitude of Badiou against states is fairly significant. This thesis has tried to show that for him, states are the representatives of traditional utopian thought. As it has been discussed throughout the chapters, they always endeavor to perfectify the situation, limit the boundaries of the system, govern the hope and faith of its citizens with the logic of the One and do nothing more than reproducing the oldness of the knowledge it dominates. Badiou therefore entirely rejects utopianism of the state mechanism and in fact attempts to save the notion of truth from the boundaries of the traditional utopian thought. He argues that truth should not be monopolized within the hands of states, of mastery: “Communism was the idea of a collective mastery of truths. But what then happened everywhere is the figure of a master reared its head, because truth was no longer separate from mastery. In the end, to love and want truth was tantamount to loving and wanting a master.”<sup>2</sup> In my opinion, Badiou makes a sad but true assessment with regard to truth's condition in radical politics. It should be rescued from the equation of truth to mastery, which is a definite characteristic of traditional thought, and should be given a new form. In fact, whilst he declares a war against states, he simultaneously decides to fight against traditional utopian thought.

And without doubt, Badiou's instruments in this fight are nothing but contemporary utopian values. These values provide an elbow room for the theory owing to its evasion from any kind of limitations and help him to draw attention to the practicality of movements rather than the suggestion of a prescription or a list showing the things that should be done. In this regard, his interest in ontology rather than epistemology plays a key role for the looseness of the theory in a positive sense. Badiou palpably strives for showing us the boundlessness and infinity of being and the impossibility of stabilization and immobilization of the being, which is perpetually within the condition of movement. Put it differently, his purpose is to advocate action against inaction, mobility against immobility.

---

2 Badiou, *Inaesthetics*, 53.

As a participant of Gezi demonstrations, I should confess that it was an event that is beyond the state's borders of domination. What was impressing as to Gezi movement was the experience of mobility and dynamism of being, which transcended the boundaries of the explainable. It created a sphere which seemed utopian in the traditional sense, but what sustained its existence was not stability or fixity of the sphere, but rather its permanent evolvement by perpetually producing newness rather than the reproduction of the old knowledge of the order. It did not generate a perfect place in which there was no problem, but instead proved the imperfection of systems, which might be cracked at any time and any place with an unpredictable way. It clearly demonstrated what a subject means and what it is capable of. What it strikingly attested was subject's collectivity, and hostility against the notion of the One. The hope in Gezi resistance was not for a future ideal world, but it was totally engaged with the momentary dynamics. There was a hope for the liquidity of the Gezi itself. The subjects' faith was not fixed to the success of the movement, it was the faith of the here and now, of breathing the air without feeling any identity. The truth it produced was utterly signifying universality, because it virtually summoned everyone without the consideration of any identity, as there was no identity in the streets; there was only the scream of the people who have represented, one way or another, the void of the situation. The political realm during the protests was recognizing the equality of the people. Without doubt, there was only one world in Gezi demonstrations in which participants were there only by their existences. In brief, Gezi revolt was a time frame in which one might experience all the values of contemporary utopianism and observe the inversion of all traditional utopian attributes.

One should not forget that radical politics needs contemporary utopian values more than ever today. The only way to efface the omnipresent seeming system of the One is to be a militant subject of a political event by having the faith for the construction of the truth, which ubiquitously manifests that there is only one world, by transcending the limits of the finitude within the infinity of being,

and knowing that there is always a possibility for the emergence and construction of newness in the situation woven with the oldness of knowledge. And Badiou is a genius guide not because he knows how to overthrow this unjust system, but because he indicates the possibilities of a being may realize.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Works by Alain Badiou

Badiou, Alain. "Affirmative Dialectics: from Logic to Anthropology." *The International Journal of Badiou Studies* 2, no.1 (2013): 1-13.

Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. Translated by Oliver Feltham. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Badiou, Alain. "Bodies, Languages and Truths." (2006).  
<https://www.lacan.com/badbodies.htm>.

Badiou, Alain. *Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitive Ontology*. Edited and translated by Norman Madarasz. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2006.

Badiou, Alain. *Conditions*. Translated by Steven Corcoran. London: Continuum, 2008.

Badiou, Alain. *Deleuze: Clamor of Being*. Translated by Louise Burchill. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000

Badiou, Alain. "Eight Theses on the Universal." (2004).  
<https://www.lacan.com/badeight.htm>.

Badiou, Alain. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Translated and introduction by Peter Hallward. London: Verso, 2001.

Badiou, Alain. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*. Translated by Alberto Toscano. California: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Badiou, Alain. *Infinite Thought: Truth and Return of Philosophy*. Edited by Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens. London: Continuum, 2004.

Badiou, Alain. "İdeası Komünizm Olan Şey." in *Komünizm Fikri Berlin Konferansı 2010*. Edited by Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012.

Badiou, Alain. "Is the Word Communism Forever Doomed?." (2009). [https://www.lacan.com/essays/?page\\_id=323](https://www.lacan.com/essays/?page_id=323).

Badiou, Alain. *Logics of Worlds Being and Event 2*. Translated by Alberto Toscano. London: Continuum, 2013.

Badiou, Alain. *Manifesto for Philosophy*. Translated, edited and introduction by Norman Madarasz. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Badiou, Alain. *Mathematics of the Transcendental*. Translated by A.J Bartlett and Alex Ling. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Badiou, Alain. *Metapolitics*. Translated by Jason Barker. London: Verso, 2005.

Badiou, Alain. *Number and Numbers*, Translated by Robin Mackay. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008.

Badiou, Alain. "Of Ideology." (2011). <https://tr.scribd.com/doc/47747975/Of-Ideology>.

Badiou, Alain. "On the Truth Process." (2002). <https://www.egs.edu/faculty/alain-badiou/articles/on-the-truth-process>.

Badiou, Alain. *Peut On Penser La Politique?*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. 1985.

- Badiou, Alain. "Philosophy as Biography." (2007).  
[https://www.lacan.com/symptom9\\_articles/badiou19.html](https://www.lacan.com/symptom9_articles/badiou19.html).
- Badiou, Alain. "Philosophy as Creative Repetition." (2007).  
<https://www.lacan.com/badrepeat.html>.
- Badiou, Alain. "Plato, Our Dear Plato!" Translated by Alberto Toscano. *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 2, no.3 (2006): 39-41.
- Badiou, Alain. *Platon'un Devleti Bir Önsöz, On Altı Bölüm ve Bir Sonsözden Oluşan Diyalog*. Translated by Savaş Kılıç and Nihan Özyıldırım. İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 2015.
- Badiou, Alain. *Polemics*. Translated and introduction by Steve Corcoran London: Verso, 2006.
- Badiou, Alain. "Réponses écrites d'Alain Badiou." (1992).  
[https://www.lasca.fr/pdf/entretiens/Alain\\_Badiou.pdf](https://www.lasca.fr/pdf/entretiens/Alain_Badiou.pdf).
- Badiou, Alain. *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Translated by Ray Brassier. California: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Badiou, Alain. *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*. Translated by Louise Burchill. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.
- Badiou, Alain. "S'orienter Dans La Pensée, S'orienter Dans L'existence II.", 2005.  
<https://www.entretiens.asso.fr/Badiou/05-06.htm>.
- Badiou, Alain. *The Century*. Translated by Alberto Toscano. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.
- Badiou, Alain. "The Communist Hypothesis." In *New Left Review* 49 (Winter 2008): 29-42

Badiou, Alain. *The Communist Hypothesis*. Translated by David Macey and Steven Corcoran. London: Verso, 2010.

Badiou, Alain. *The Concept of Model: An Introduction to the Materialist Epistemology of Mathematics*. Edited and Translated by Zachary Luke Fraser and Tauchien Tho. Melbourne: Re.press, 2007.

Badiou, Alain. "The Idea of Communism." in *The Idea of Communism*. Edited by Slavoj Žižek and Costas Douzinas. London: Verso, 2010.

Badiou, Alain. *The Meaning of Sarkozy*. Translated by David Fernbach. London: Verso, 2008.

Badiou, Alain. *The Rebirth of History*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2012.

Badiou, Alain. *Theoretical Writings*. Edited and translated by Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano. London: Continuum, 2004.

Badiou, Alain. *Theory of the Subject*. Translated and introduction by Bruno Bosteels. London: Continuum, 2009.

Badiou, Alain. "Tunisia, Egypt, The Universal Reach of Popular Uprisings." (2011). [https://www.lacan.com/thesymptom/?page\\_id=1031](https://www.lacan.com/thesymptom/?page_id=1031).

Badiou, Alain, and Critchley, Simon, "Ours is not a Terrible Situation." *Philosophy Today* 51, no.3 (Fall 2007): 357-365.

Badiou, Alain, and Tardy, Fabien. *Philosophy and the Event*. Translated by Louise Burchill. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

Badiou, Alain, and Truong Nicola. *In Praise of Love*, New York: New Press, 2012.

## Other Works

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. California: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Agar, Jolyon. *Post-secularism, Realism and Utopia: Transcendence and Immanence from Hegel to Bloch*. London: Routledge, 2014.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Baker, Gideon. "The Revolution *Is* Dissent: Reconciling Agamben and Badiou on Paul." *Political Theory* 41, no.2 (2013): 312-335.

Balaban, Oded. *Plato and Protagoras: Truth and Relativism in Ancient Greek Philosophy*. Lanham Md.: Lexington Books, 1999.

Balibar, Étienne. "The History of Truth: Alain Badiou in French Philosophy." In *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, 21-38. London: Continuum: 2004.

Barrachi, Claudia. "The Theater of Utopia: Deleuze on Acting and Politics." In *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, edited by Patricia I. Vieira and Michael Marder, 63-79. New York: Continuum, 2012.

Barris, Jeremy. *The Crane's Walk Plato, Pluralism and the Inconstancy of Truth*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.

Bartlett, A. J.. *Badiou and Plato an Education by Truths*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2011.

Bartlett, A. J.. "Refuse Become Subject: The Education Ethic of Saint Paul." *Badiou Studies* 3, no.1 (2014): 193-216.

Bauman, Zygmunt. "Getting to the Roots of Radical Politics Today." In *What is Radical Politics Today?*, edited by Jonathan Pugh, 17-26. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

Bauman, Zygmunt. "Utopia with No Topos." *History of the Human Sciences* 16, no.1 (2003): 11-25.

Bensaid, Daniel. "Alain Badiou and the Miracle of the Event." In *Think Again: Alain Badiou and The Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, 94-105. London: Continuum, 2004.

Berlin, Isaiah. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. London: John Murray, 1990.

Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope Vol. 1*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1996.

Bloch, Ernst. *The Spirit of Utopia*. Edited by Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery. California: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Bosteels, Bruno. "Can Change Be Thought?: A Dialogue with Alain Badiou." In *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions*, edited by Gabriel Riera, 237-261. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Buber, Martin. *Paths in Utopia*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996.

Burrell, Gibson, and Dale, Karen. "Utopiary: Utopias, Gardens and Organization." In *Utopia and Organization*, edited by Martin Parker, 106-127. Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 2002.

Calcagno, Antonio. "Alain Badiou: The Event of Becoming a Political Subject." *Philosophy Social Criticism* 34, no.9 (2008): 1051-1070.

Cioran, E. M.. *Tarih ve Ütopya*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2013.

Clarke, Patricia. "Appearance and Belief in Theaetetus 151d-187a." In *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, edited by Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, 125-148. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006.

Cooper, Davina. *Everyday Utopias: The Conceptual Life of Promising Spaces*. North Carolina: Duke University Press 2014.

Critchley, Simon. *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology*. London: Verso, 2012.

Crockett, Clayton. *Deleuze Beyond Badiou: Ontology, Multiplicity and Event*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Davis, J.C.. *Utopia & the Ideal Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Davis, Laurence. "History, Politics, and Utopia: Toward a Synthesis of Social Theory and Practice." In *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, edited by Michael Marder and Patricia I. Vieira, 127-139. New York: Continuum, 2012.

Derrida, Jacques. *On the Name*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Dews, Peter. "States of Grace: The Excess of the Demand in Badiou's Ethics of Truths." In *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, 106-119. London: Continuum, 2004.

Dewsburry, J. D.. "Unthinking Subjects: Alain Badiou and the Event of Thought in Thinking Politics." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32, no. 4 (2007): 443-459.

Faber, Roland. "A Prologue on the Improper Placing of Thought." In *Event and Decision: Ontology and Politics in Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead*, edited by Roland Faber, Henry Krips and Daniel Pettus, 1-14. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

Faye, Hannah. *Occupy the World: From the Heart of the Protesters*. Printed by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. 2011.

Feltham, Oliver. *Alain Badiou Live Theory*. London: Continuum, 2008.

Ferguson, John. *Utopias of the Classical World*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.

Goodwin, Barbara, and Taylor, Keith. *The Politics of Utopia: A Study in Theory and Practice*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009.

Graham, Ian and Shaw, Ronald. "Sites, Truths and The Logics of Worlds: Alain Badiou and Human Geography." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no.3 (2010): 431-442

Grenz, Stanley J.. *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Gronding, Jean. "In Any Event? Critical Remarks on the Recent Fascination with the Notion of Event." in *Being Shaken: Ontology and the Event*, edited by Michael Marder and Santiago Zabala, 63-69. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Hallward, Peter. *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.



- Hallward, Peter. "Introduction: 'Consequences of Abstraction'." In *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, 1-20. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Hansot, Elisabeth. *Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1974.
- Hatzistavrou, Antony. "Happiness and the Nature of Philosopher-kings." In *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, edited by Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, 95-124. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006.
- Hauck, Nicholas. "Thinking through Philosophy: Alain Badiou and the Event of Transitory Citizenship." *Journal of the Institute for the Humanities* 4, (Spring 2009): 147-159.
- Hegel, George W. F., and J. N. Findlay. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Hegel, George W. F.. *The Science of Logic*. Edited by Michael Baur. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Heisenberg, Werner. *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.
- Hewlett, Nick. *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière Re-thinking Emancipation*. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Hollywood, Amy. "Saint Paul and the New Man." *Critical Inquiry* 35, no.4 (2009): 865-876.
- Jacoby, Russell. *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

- Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York: Verso, 2005.
- Johnston, Adrian. "The Right Left: Alain Badiou and the Disruption of Political Identities." *Yale French Studies*, no.116/117 (2009): 55-78
- Kant, Immanuel, and Werner S. Pluhar. *Critique of Judgment*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.
- Karlsen, M. P. "Materialism, Dialectics, and Theology in Alain Badiou." *Critical Research on Religion* 2, no.1 (2014): 38-54.
- Kaufmann, Moritz. *Utopias*. London: Kegan Paul, 1879.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs*. Edited by Alastair Hannay. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Koestler, Arthur. *Darkness at Noon*. (1968). Web.  
[https://libcom.org/files/\[Arthur\\_Koestler\]\\_Darkness\\_at\\_Noon\\_pdf](https://libcom.org/files/[Arthur_Koestler]_Darkness_at_Noon_pdf)
- Kumar, Krishan. *Utopianism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Latour, Bruno. "'Thou Shall Not Freeze-Frame,' Or, How Not to Misunderstand the Science and Religion Debate." In *Science, Religion and the Human Experience*, edited by James D. Proctor, 27-48. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Lotta, Raymond, Duniya, Nayi, and K.J.A, *Alain Badiou Eleştirisi: Burjuva Dünyasına Hapsolmuş Bir Komünizm*, İstanbul: Patika, 2014

- Loty, Laurent. "Which Utopias for Today? Historical Considerations and Propositions for a Dialogical and Paradoxical Alterrealism." *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*, no.1 (Spring 2006): 98-116.
- Levitas, Ruth. *The Concept of Utopia*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Luther, Martin. *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, 1939.
- MacDonald, Malcolm. *Schoenberg*. London: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Maggio, J.. "The 'Birth of Truth': Alain Badiou and Plato's Banishment of the Poets." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36, no.5 (2010): 607-621.
- Marder, Michael, and Vieira, I. Patricia. "Existential Utopia: Of the World, the Possible, the Finite." In *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, edited by Michael Marder and I. Patricia Vieira, 35-49. New York: Continuum, 2012.
- Marin, Louis. "The Frontiers of Utopia." In *Utopias and the Millennium*, edited by Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann, 7-16. London: Reaktion, 1993.
- McLennan, Gregor. "Progressivism Reinvigorated." In *What is Radical Politics Today?*, edited by Jonathan Pugh, 145-152. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Meillasoux, Quentin. "History and Event in Alain Badiou." Translated by Thomas Nail. *Parrhesia* 12, no. 1 (2011): 1-11.
- Nagel, Ernest, and Newman, James R.. *Gödel's Proof*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural*. California: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. "In Place of Utopia." in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, edited by Michael Marder and I. Patricia Vieira, 3-13. New York: Continuum, 2012

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Dawn of Day*. New York: The Project Gutenberg, 2012.

Nirenberg, Ricardo L., and Nirenberg, David. "Badiou's Number: A Critique of Mathematics as Ontology." *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2011): 583-614.

O'hara, D. T. "Badiou's Truth and the Office of the Critic: Naming the Militant Multiples of the Void." *Boundary 2* 35, no.1 (2008): 169-175.

Phelps, Hollis. *Alain Badiou between Theology and Anti-Theology*. Durham: Acumen, 2013.

Pinet, Simone. "On the Subject Fiction: Islands and the Emergence of the Novel." *Diacritics* 33, no. ¾ (2003): 173-187.

Pinkney, Tony. "Kinetic Utopias: H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*." *The Journal of William Morris Studies* 16, no.2/3 (Winter 2005): 49-55.

Plath, David W.. *Aware of Utopia*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971.

Plato, and Samuel Scolnicov. *Plato's Parmenides*. California: University of California Press, 2003.

Pluth, Ed. *Badiou A Philosophy of the New*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010.

Politis, Vasilis. "The Argument for the Reality of Change and Changelessness in Plato's *Sophist* (248e7-249d5)." In *New Essays on Plato: Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*, edited by Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, 149-175. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2006.

Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume I The Spell of Plato*. London: Butler&Tanner Ltd., 1947.

Power, Nina, and Toscano, Alberto. "Politics" in *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*, edited by A. J. Bartlett and Justin Clemens, 94-104. Durham: Acumen, 2010.

Prozorov, Sergei. *Theory of the Political Subject: Void Universalism II*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Pugh, Jonathan. "What is Radical Politics Today?." In *What is Radical Politics Today?*, edited by Jonathan Pugh, 1-13. London: Palgrave Macmillan 2009.

Rancière, Jacques. *On the Shores of Politics*. London: Verso, 1995.

Rancière, Jacques. "Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no.2/3 (2004): 297-310.

Ree, Erik van. *Boundaries of Utopia – Imagining Communism from Plato to Stalin*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Reeve, C.D.C.. *Philosopher-kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2006.

Robbins, Jeffrey W.. "Alain Badiou and the Secular Reactivation of Theology." *The Heythrop Journal* 55, no.4 (2011): 612-619.

Ruda, Frank. "Idealism Without Idealism." *Angelaki* 19, no.1 (2014): 83-98.

- Sacilotto, Daniel. "Towards a Materialist Rationalism: Plato, Hegel, Badiou." *The International Journal of Badiou Studies* 2, no.1 (2013): 60-98.
- Santas, Gerasimos Xenophon. *Understanding Plato's Republic*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Schindler, D. C.. *Plato's Critique of Impure Reason on Goodness and Truth in the Republic*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
- Schofield, Malcolm. *Plato: Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Segel, Howard P.. *Utopias: A Brief History from Ancient Writings to Virtual Communities*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Sheppard, Darren J.. *Plato's Republic*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Shklar, Judith N.. *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*. Edited by Stanley Hoffman. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1998.
- Sotiris, Panagiotis. "Beyond Simple Fidelity to the Event: The Limits of Alain Badiou's Ontology." *Historical Materialism* 19, no. 2 (2011): 35-59.
- Stace, W. T.. *The Philosophy of Hegel: A Systematic Exposition*. New York: Dover Publications, 1955.
- Stagol, Cliff. "Becoming." in *The Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition*, edited by Adrian Parr, 25-27. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
- Vilaça, Guilherme Vasconcelos. "Badiou's Ethics: A Return to Ideal Theory." *Badiou Studies* 3, no.1 (2014): 271-321.

Tho, Tzuchien. "The Consistency of Inconsistency: Alain Badiou and the Limits of Mathematical Ontology." *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 12, no.2 (2008): 70-92.

Toscano, Alberto. "Communism as Separation." In *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, edited by Peter Hallward, 138-149. London: Continuum, 2004.

Toscano, Alberto. "The Bourgeois and the Islamist, or, the Other Subjects of Politics." *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 2, no.1-2 (2006): 15-38.

Trott, Adriel M. "The Truth of Politics in Alain Badiou: 'There Is Only One World'." *Parrhesia* 12, (2011): 82-93.

Voltaire. "On Universal Tolerance." (1763).  
<http://www.dfet.org/documents/Voltaire%20Treatise%20on%20Toleration%20Ch%2022.pdf>.

Wells, H.G., *A Modern Utopia*, Auckland: Floating, 2009, 13

Weng, Leihua. "Revolution and Event: Mao in Alain Badiou's Plato's Republic." *Comparative Literature Studies* 52, no.1 (2015): 47-64.

Yorke, Christopher. "Three Archetypes for the Clarification of Utopian Theorizing." in *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, edited by Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan, 83-100. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007.

Žižek, Slavoj. "A Plea for Leninist Intolerance." *Critical Inquiry* 28, no.2 (2002): 542-566.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. London: Verso, 2012.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Living in the End Times*. London: Verso, 2010.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*.  
London: Verso, 2000.



## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY

Radikal siyaset, toplumların baskılanan kesimlerinin ve bu kesimlerin isyan çılgınlıklarına ortak olma sorumluluğunu gösteren bireylerin teorik ve pratik araçlar bulabildiği bir alan olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Şüphesiz, radikal siyasetin içinde birçok farklı yaklaşımdan ve perspektiften bahsetmek mümkündür. Bu bağlamda radikal siyasetin çoğulcu bir yapıya sahip olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmaz. Bazı kesimlere göre radikal siyasetin bu çoğulcu yapısı farklı direniş alanları yaratmakta ve farklı amaçlar uğruna çeşitli mücadele biçimleri üretmekte başarılı iken, bir başka kesim bu farklılıkların siyasi ve etik, temel bir dayanaktan yoksun olduğunu, bu nedenle de kırılğan ve uzun vadede başarısızlığa mahkum olduklarını savunmaktadır. Alain Badiou'nun ontolojisi bu noktada bir üçüncü yol işaret etmektedir. Onun ontolojisi ne salt bir şekilde çoğulcu siyaset olarak adlandırılabilir, ne de siyasetin belirli kalıpların ve kuralların yer aldığı bir kontekste hapsedildiği bir bakış açısını temsil edebilir. Badiou'nun varlığın kendisini düşündüğü, onun tanımlanışını yeniden formüle ettiği ve sanattan bilime, aşktan siyasete, yaşamın her alanına nüfuz eden ontolojisi, bahsedilen iki yaklaşımdan öte yeni bir radikal siyaset anlayışını inşa etmektedir.

Bu çerçeveden bakıldığında, Badiou'nun önerdiği ontolojik yaklaşımı en iyi şekilde sunabilecek alanlardan bir tanesi onun felsefesinin ütopyacı düşünce ile paralel gittiği veya çatıştığı noktaların aydınlatılmaya çalışıldığı noktadır. Bu tezin iddiası şudur: Badiou'nun siyaset anlayışının ütopyacı düşünceyle olan ilişkisi analiz edildiği vakit, radikal siyasetin Badiou bağlamında hangi değerleri yücelttiği ve kendisini hangi kavramlar üzerinden kurduğu açıklık kazanacaktır. Bir başka deyişle, onun ütopyacı değerlerle kurduğu bağ, siyasette üçüncü yolun ne olduğuna dair ipuçlarını içinde barındırmaktadır.

Kuşkusuz, ütopya kavramı muğlak bir anlam taşımaktadır. Subjektif yorumlamalara oldukça müsait olan ütopya kavramı bu nedenle birçok ütopya araştırmacısı tarafından farklı özelliklerle bağdaştırılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu tez birçok özellik arasında bir indirgeme yapmakta ve ütopyacı düşünceyi kategorize etmektedir. Bu tez için seçilen 4 kavram; mükemmellik, sonluluk/sonsuzluk, umut/inanç ve yenilik, Badiou'nun ontolojisini mercek altına alıp dikkatle analiz etmek için oldukça uygundur. Aynı zamanda bu 4 kavram birbirlerine tamamen zıt özellikler gösteren iki ütopyacı akımı da açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Bu tezde, bu iki akımdan ilki geleneksel, ikincisi ise çağdaş ütopyacı düşünce olarak adlandırılmıştır. Çağdaş ütopya akımı, geleneksel ütopya anlayışından kopmaya çalışan ve kelimeye alternatif anlamlar kazandırma çabasında bulunan teorik çalışmaların temsil ettiği bir yaklaşım olarak formüle edilmektedir. Geleneksel ütopya mükemmellik, sonluluk, tamamlanma/kapanma umudu, Bir inancı ve eski olanın yeniden üretilmesi üzerine bir düşünce sistemi geliştirirken, çağdaş ütopyacı düşünce ise mükemmel olmayanın, sonsuzluğun, tamamlanmama/kapanmama umudunun, sonzuluğa olan inancın ve yeninin sürekli bir şekilde üretilebilirliğinin vurgusunu yapmaktadır. Bir diğer ifadeyle, bu iki yaklaşım birbirine zıt iki kutupta yer alan, iki farklı ütopyacı yaklaşımı temsil etmektedir ve bu bağlamda temsil ettiği değerler birbirlerine tamamen karşıt konumlarda bulunmaktadır.

Geleneksel ütopyalara atfedilen özelliklerden biri olan mükemmellik ütopya araştırmacıları tarafından çeşitli şekillerde yorumlanmıştır. Kimisi imkansızı elde etmenin sürekli arzusu, kimisi materyal olanakların radikal bir biçimde değiştirilmesi, kimisi birlik ve uyum, kimisi hareketsizlik olarak mükemmeli tanımlamaya çalışmıştır. Mükemmel olanın en önemli özelliği, kelime itibarıyla, içinde hiçbir problem, bozukluk, kusur ya da düzensizlik barındırmamasıdır. Tüm mükemmelci ütopya tasvirlerinin ortak paydada bulunduğu nokta alternatif dünyanın kendini bütün sorunlardan arındırmış ve onları dışlamış olmasıdır. Geleneksel ütopyaların bir diğer özelliği olan sonluluk ise,

mükemmellik ile aynı doğrultuda olarak, kapalılığın ve bütünlüğün altını çizer. Son fikri bu bağlamda mükemmellik fikriyle bir paralelliğin de ötesinde, iç içe geçme durumu oluşturur. Bunun aksine, çağdaş ütopyalardaki sonsuzluk, kapalılığın ve bütünlüğün mümkün olmadığını, ütopyacı düşüncenin “son algısı”nın yerlebir edildiği bir hareketin içinde var olabildiğini vurgular. Bir diğer ütopyacı özellik olan umut, şimdide var olan, varlığının kaynağını ise bir gelecek tahayüllünden alan bir kavram olarak sonsuzluğu vurgular. Umudun sürekli varlığının reddi ancak kapalı ve bütüncül bir toplum tasviriyle mümkündür. Umut ancak umudun sonunun deklare edilebileceği, çıkışın olmadığı kapalı bir düzende yok olabilir. Geleneksel ve çağdaş ütopyacı düşüncelerin umuda karşı yorumlaması bu açıdan farklılık gösterir: sonlu umut ve sonsuz umut. İnançta da durum farklı değildir. Çağdaş ütopya, inancın oluşun kendisi içinde var olan bir dürtü olduğunu öne sürerken, geleneksel ütopyanın inanç anlayışı bütünlüğe, sona ve kapalılığa ulaşmak üzerine kurulur. Bu bağlamda, geleneksel düşüncede sürekli bir şekilde eski olanın, başka bir deyişle hal hazırda var olanın yeniden üretimi söz konusudur. Yeni bir varlığa izin vermez, aksi takdirde mükemmelliği tehdit altına girebilir, sonluluğunun varlığı olumsuzlanabilir ya da umudu ve inancı nihai bir amaçtan uzaklaştırabilir. Çağdaş düşünce ise kendisini yeni düşüncesiyle var eder. Sonsuzluk sürekli olarak yeni olanın var olmasına olanak tanımak zorundadır. Umut ve inanç her daim kaynağını hali hazırda var olanın ötesinde bir yeni varlığın imgesinde bulur. Bu kavramlarla ilgili en ilginç nokta ise hepsinin iç içe geçmiş olması ve bu bağlamda ütopyacı düşünce açısından temel bir zıtlık inşa etmesidir.

Tüm bu zıtlıkların ötesinde, Badiou'yu ütopyacı düşünce ekseninde analiz edebilmek için bir kavram daha ortaya konmalıdır. Bu kavram şüphesiz hakikattir. Tartışılan tüm bu özelliklerin yanında hakikat kavramının öne sürülmesi, Badiou'nun Platon'la olan yakın bağından ve Platon'un ütopya literatüründe hatırı sayılır bir öneme sahip olmasından kaynaklanır. Badiou için Platon o kadar önemli bir yere sahiptir ki insanların felsefi duruşları ve hayatı kavrayışları Platoncu olup

olmamalarına göre ikiye ayrılır.

Platon'un *Devlet* diyalogunda, birçok Platon arařtırmacısına gre bir topya tasviri mevcuttur. Bu tasvirin dayandıđı topik zelliklerin tesinde, bu tezin esas gstermek istediđi Őey, Platon'un ideal toplumunun hakikat bayrađı altında inŐa edilmesidir. Onun filozof kral kavramsallaŐtırması ve hakikate ulaŐabilen filozof kralların toplumsal hiyerarŐide en st mertebede olması, Platon'un topyasının en nihayetinde hakikatin egemenliđinde olduđunu iŐaret etmektedir. Hakikatin egemen olmadıđı bir toplum ideal olmaktan uzaktır ve bu nedenle de topik bir zellik taŐımaz. Platon'un topyası kaynađını İyi'den aldıđı iŐin de aslında, temelde Bir inŐası olarak grlmelidir. Bir diđer deyiŐle, Platonik topya hakikatin kendisidir. Platon'un *Devlet*'i hakikat kendisi olarak topyanın inŐa edildiđi bir toplumun resmidir.

Bu noktada Őu soru sorulabilir: Platon topyacı bir filozof ise ve Badiou Platon'a felsefi bir yakınlık hissediyorsa Badiou da topyacı bir filozof olarak mı kabul edilmelidir? Bu sorunun cevabı Badiou'nun Platon'u nasıl yorumladıđı ve anladıđıyla yakından iliŐkilidir. O da, Platon'un *Devlet* diyalogunu yeniden yazdıđı *Platon'un Devleti* kitabında hakikatin egemenliđi vurgusunu sık sık yapar. Badiou, Platon'u olduđu Őekliyle, modern bir yeniden anlatım ile sunmaz; onun yerine Platon'u kendi anladıđı ve ona gre, anlaŐılması gerektiđi gibi anlatır. Badiou'ya gre Platon Bir'ci mantıkta deđil, okluku temelde okunmalıdır. Ona gre hakikatler tekil manada ya da daha genel bir ifadeyle Bir'ci manada deđil, okluku bađlamda dŐnlmelidir. Badiou'da herhangi bir topyacı dŐnce sz konusuysa bu kesinlikle Bir fikrine zıt bir topyadır. Bu bađlamda Badiou'nun Platon anlayıŐı geleneksel topya anlayıŐına da zıt bir yerde konumlanır. Ona gre tek bir hakikat yoktur, fakat sonsuz sayıda hakikat vardır.

İŐte bu noktada Badiou'nun ontolojisine bir giriŐ yapılmalıdır. Badiou'nun ontolojisinin aŐık bir Őekilde incelenmesi ve kavranması bize topyacı dŐnce zelliklerine ve hakikatin konumuna dair ayrıntılı bir resim sunacaktır. Bu noktada, boŐluk, durumun devleti ve sonsuzluk kavramları ilk aŐamada aŐıklıđa

kavuşturulmalıdır.

Badiou, varlığa dair bir karar vermemizi söylemektedir. Bu bir varsayım değil, fakat bir karardır. Badiou'nun varlığa dair kararı Bir yoktur önermesidir. Bir'in reddedilmesi otomatik olarak varlığın sonsuz çokluk olarak kavranması sonucunu doğurur. Fakat Badiou Bir kavramını tamamen reddetmez; ona göre Bir'in varlığı ancak bir olarak sayma işlemi ile mümkündür. Yani, varlık kendinde sonsuz çokluktur ve tutarsızdır; fakat varlığın kavranabilmesi ancak onun bir olarak sayılmasıyla mümkündür. Bir olarak sayma işleminin sonucu olarak sonsuz ve tutarsız olan varlık tutarlılaştırılır ve bir-leştirilir. Badiou'nun durum adını verdiği şey de bu tutarlı varlığın bir olarak sayma işlemine tabii tutularak sunulduğu yerdir. Buradaki en önemli noktalardan biri Badiou'nun varlığı gördüğü gibi ele almamasıdır. O, görünen varlığın altında, yani bir olarak sayılan varlığın altında, kendinde varlık olan sonsuz ve tutarsız çokluğu görür. Bir varlığın bilinebilmesi ve kavranabilmesi de ancak bir olarak sayma işlemine tabi tutulması ile mümkündür.

Sunum bu bağlamda yasanın kendisidir: her şeyin bir-leştirildiği, tutarlılaştırıldığı, kavranabildiği ve anlaşılabilirdiği yerdir. Yasa, Badiou'nun varlığını reddettiği Bir'in iddiasıdır. Fakat durumun içinde kendinde varlık, yani tutarsız ve sonsuz çokluk, bir hayalet olarak bulunmak zorundadır. Bir olarak sayma işlemi kendini Bir olarak tamamlayamaz, çünkü Badiou'ya göre Bir zaten yoktur. Bu nedenle de, tutarlılaştırılan bir-liğin içinde, bir-leştirilememiş en az bir tane tutarsız çokluk bulunmak zorundadır. Badiou durumun içindeki bu tutarsız çokluğa durumun boşluğu adını verir; çünkü bu çokluk durumun içinde kavranamayandır. Bir başka ifadeyle, boşluk durumun içinde, durumun gözünden var olmayandır. Fakat boşluğun duruma göre var olmaması onun gerçekten var olmadığı anlamına gelmez. Durumun, varlığı bir olarak sayma işlemi üzerinden tanımlaması, tutarsız çokluğun bir olarak sayılmaması sebebiyle durumun gözünde var olmadığı anlamına gelmektedir; fakat bu tutarsız çokluk sayma işleminin dışında kalarak, durumun gözünde bir boşluk olarak varlığını korur. Boşluk,

paradoksal bir şekilde durumun gözünde var değilken, varlığını durumun içinde sürdürür.

Boşluğun durum içindeki, fakat durumun içinden algılanamayan varlığı durumun kendisi için bir tehdit olarak durmaktadır; çünkü boşluğun tutarsız çokluk olarak ortaya çıkması, yani durumun içinde kendini göstermesi, bir olarak sayma işlemiyle kendini tutarlılaştıran durumun aslında bir bütünlüğe, bir-liğe ulaşamadığını göstermektedir. Badiou'nun boşluk işaretinin ütopyacı bağlamdaki en önemli sonucu her türlü mükemmeliyetçiliği ve sonluluğu reddetmesidir. Tutarsız çokluğun durumun içindeki algılanamayan varlığı, mükemmel ve kapalı bir düzen inşasının her an ve her yerde bozulabileceğini imlemektedir. Bu çerçevede, boşluk aynı zamanda sonsuz bir umudu temsil etmektedir; zira onun her an ve her yerde ortaya çıkabilme, durumun içinde görünür olabilme ihtimali, Bir'in kapalı evreninden çıkışın bir umudu olarak yorumlanabilir. Aynı zamanda boşluk, sayma işleminden kaçabildiği için yeni olanın kendisine içkindir; çünkü durum içinde sayılamayan boşluk, durumun bir-leştirdiği varlıklar üzerinden oluşturduğu bilgi ansiklopedisinin dışında kaldığından durum için tamamen yeni olan bir bilgi sunar. Bu bağlamda, boşluğun varlığı aynı zamanda çağdaş ütopyacı düşüncenin özelliklerinden biri olan yenilik vurgusuna da denk düşer.

Fakat boşluğun ortaya çıkmaması için, tutarlı bir düzenin tutarsızlık tarafından tehdit edilmemesi için, Badiou durumun devleti adını verdiği ve siyasi anlamda da devletin kendisini imleyen bir kavram ortaya atar. Badiou'ya göre durumun devletinin varlığı, boşluğun tehdidine karşı ortaya çıkar. Ona göre siyasi devlet aslında bu diyalektik içerisinde var olur; devlet boşluğa karşı düzeni temsil eden bir güvenlik operasyonudur. Bir başka deyişle devlet Bir'in koruyucusudur; Bir'in varlığını korumakla yükümlü yapıdır. Ütopyacı anlamda devletin varlığı tam olarak geleneksel ütopyacı yaklaşıma yakın durur. Devlet, düzenin koruyucusu olarak olabilecekler arasında en iyisi olduğunu iddia eder ve kendisine yöneltilen bütün tehditleri savurarak varlığını sürdürür. Bu bağlamda Badiou'nun devlet olarak kavramsallaştırdığı şey sonluluğun bir temsilidir; zira bütün alternatifleri

dışlamaya çalışan bir yapıya sahiptir. Bu durumda, boşluğun varlığı çağdaş ütopyacı düşüncenin özellikleriyle uyum içindeyken, devlet geleneksel ütopyanın temeli konumundadır.

Badiou'nun sonsuzluk kavramı da bu ikili karşıtlığı pekiştirmektedir. Badiou'nun sonsuzluk kavramsallaştırması, sonsuzluğun Bir'in kendisiyle eşlendiği teolojik sonsuzlardan tamamı ile farklıdır. Badiou'nun sonsuzluğu, içerisinde daima bir ikinci varlık barındıran ve sürekli bir şekilde ötekiyi imleyen bir sonsuzluktur. Bu sonsuz imleme hali hiçbir şekilde bir kapalılığa, otoriteye veya egemenliğe denk düşmez; tam tersine, varlığın sonsuz olması, onun her an ve her yerde her türlü kapalılığı, otoriteyi ve egemenliği sarsabileceğinin işaretidir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, sonsuzluk tamamlanmamışlığın işareti olarak Badiou'nun ontolojisindeki yerini alır.

Tüm bu soyut terimler Badiou'nun olay kavramıyla somut bir hale dönüşür. Olay, boşluk olarak kavramsallaştırılan tutarsız çokluğun durum içerisinde, maksimum yoğunluk seviyesinde ortaya çıkmasıdır. Bu bağlamda, olay boşluğun varlıksal bir patlamasıdır. Olay durum içinde hiçbir şekilde tahmin edilemeyen ve ön görülemeyendir. Onun ortaya çıkışı durumun bilgisiyle açıklanamaz. Bu nedenle, olayın durum içinde ortaya çıkışı var olan bilginin ötesindedir. O, durumun tutarlılaştırılmış, bir-leştirilmiş bilgisinin karşısındaki tutarsızlık ve çokluk tehdidinin vuku bulmasıdır. Aslında olayın ortaya çıkışı durum için var olanın ötesinden gelen bir varlıktır, fakat aynı zamanda olayın kendisi duruma içkindir. Olay bir yoktan var olma hali değildir; fakat durum içinden görünen, olayın sanki yoktan var oluşudur. Bu durum, olayı dini motifler içeren mucizelerle karıştırma eğilimini içinde barındırır, fakat Badiou bundan kesinlikle kaçınmaya ve olayı materyalist bir temele dayandırmaya çalışır. Onun öngörülemez ve açıklanamaz oluşu boşluğun durum içerisinde kavranamaz oluşundan kaynaklanmaktadır. Badiou hiçbir şekilde doğa üstü bir varlıktan söz etmemektedir.

Olayın durum içinde ön görülememesi, onun ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte bir karar verilemezlik durumu yaratır. Olay karar verilemezdir; çünkü karar verilebilen şey durumun bilgisine dairdir. Olayın durumun bilgisinin dışında var oluşu, onun varlığının gerçekten var olup olmadığı sorunsalını beraberinde getirir. Badiou'nun özne kavramını ileri sürdüğü yer tam da bu karar verilemezlik noktasıdır.

Badiou'ya göre özne, işte tam bu noktada karar veren kişidir. Özne, olayın varlığı üzerine bahse girer; çünkü onun gerçekten var olup olmadığından emin olamaz. Öznenin girdiği bu bahse Badiou müdahale adını verir. Özne olayı tanımaya, onu adlandırmaya ve anlamlandırmaya başlar. Olayın duruma tamamen yeni bir şey olması olayla karşılaşan kişinin gözlerini kamaştırır, fakat özne girdiği bahisle ve oluşturduğu müdahale ile onu olay olarak tanır. Özne böylece yapının, yani durumun zincirlerinden kendisini kurtarmış olur. Tutarsız ve sonsuz çokluk olarak ortaya çıkan olay, sonlu özneye sonsuz olma fırsatını tanıyıp, yapıdan kendisini soyutlayabilme olanağını yaratır. Badiou'ya göre sonlu öznenin yapının içindeki kapalı ağdan çıkmasının yegane yolu, bir olaya karşı gösterilen militanca sadakattir. Olaya sadık olmak, durumu durumun kurallarıyla ve kalıplarıyla değil, olayın gözünden incelemek demektir. Bir başka deyişle, olaya sadık olan özne, durumun alternatifini alternatifin kendisinin içinden izler ve onu kurar.

Bu bağlamda, olay hiçbir zaman kendi başına salt bir alternatif sunmaz. Olay bir alternatif gerçeklik değil, fakat bir olanak işaret eder. Alternatif gerçekliğin kurulmasının tek yolu öznenin, olayın varlığı üzerine girdiği bahis sonucu yaptığı müdahale ve geliştirdiği sadakattir. Bu sadakatin sonucu olarak da özne, Badiou'nun zorlama adını verdiği yolla durumu dönüştürür. Zorlama, olayın kendi kurallarının oluşturulduğu nokta olarak tanımlanabilir. Fakat şu unutulmamalıdır ki, öznenin olayın yarattığı yeniliği zorlaması hiçbir zaman bir kapalılığa, sonluluğa, ya da daha genel bir ifadeyle Bir'e işaret etmez; zira Badiou'ya göre öznenin olayı zorlaması son fikrine evrildiği noktada etik olarak kötüdür. Badiou'nun altını çizerek vurguladığı şey her olayın, oluşturduğu yeni



durum içinde yeni boşluklara gebe olduğudur. Bu da demek olur ki, durumun içindeki tutarsız çokluk olarak boşluk, her türlü düzenliliğin ve tutarlılığın karşısında bilinmeyen ve algılanamayan bir tehdit olarak sonsuz bir şekilde var olur.

Tüm bu kavramlar Badiou'nun Platon ile olan ilişkisinde tartışılan hakikat kavramına geri dönmeyi ve onu açmayı gerektirir. Hakikat, bir olayın açığa çıkardığı şeydir. Olayın varlığı olmaksızın hakikatten bahsedilemez. Bir başka ifadeyle, hakikat, hayatın gündelik ve rutin akışında ortaya çıkan şeyler olarak tasvir edilemez; hakikat ancak durum içindeki ani bir kırılmann ürünü olabilir. Ortaya çıkan şey bir hakikattir, çünkü ortaya çıkan şey kendinde varlıktır, birleştirilmemiş varlık. Sayımdan kaçmış varlık, belli bir var olma yoğunluğuna erişip ortaya çıktığı vakit varlığın kendisini, yani hakikati açığa vurur. Bu bağlamda, hakikat varlığın sonsuzluğuyla ve tutarsızlığıyla kendisini eşler. Hakikat çoğuldur ve hakikat süreçleri hiçbir şekilde tamamlanamaz; zira tamamlandığı takdirde hakikat Bir'in kendisi olur.

Ortaya çıkan hakikat, kendinde olan varlığın bir özelliği olması sebebiyle evrenseldir; çünkü sonsuz ve tutarsız çokluk, varlığın kendisidir ve her birleştirilmiş varlığın temelinde bulunur. Bu nedenle hakikat doğası gereği evrenseldir; herkesin varlıksal olarak içinde bulunduğu ve herkese yöneltilen şeydir. Hakikat, durumun devleti tarafından sayım esnasında yaratılan kimliklerin tam karşısında durur. Hakikatin kimliği yoktur; onun tek özelliği insanı varlık temelinde ele alması ve herhangi bir ayırım yapmamasıdır.

Tüm bu felsefi anlatılar siyasi pratik bir karşılığı içinde barındırır. Olay kavramından anlaşılacağı üzere, Badiou'nun siyasi anlayışı hiçbir konsensus fikri üzerinden inşa edilemez. Tam tersine, siyasetin ortaya çıktığı alan konsensusun bozulduğu ve kurgusal bir şekilde inşa edilmiş gerçekliğinin reddedildiği noktadadır. Bu nedenle Badiou'ya göre parlamenter siyaset hiçbir şekilde özgürleştirici olamaz; parti siyaseti, durumun kendi kuralları içerisinde yeniden üretilmesinden başka bir şey değildir, çünkü görünür ve öngörülebilir bir yapıya

sahiptir. Özgürleştirici siyaset öngörülemez olandan türemek ve yayılmak zorundadır, bu nedenle de olay her zaman özgürleştirici siyasetin öncülü konumundadır. Siyasi bir olay hiçbir şekilde durumun kurallarını ve düzenini tanımaz; onun ortaya çıkışı tüm bu düzenin alt üst edilmesi fikrine dayanır. Bu bağlamda, Badiou'ya göre tarihte siyasi olay olarak adlandırılacak devrimler mevcuttur. 1789 Fransız İhtilali veya 1917 Bolşevik Devrimi siyasi olaylara örnek niteliği taşır; zira Badiou'ya göre bu olaylar o zamanki durumun gözünden hiçbir şekilde kavranamaz olan siyasi patlamalardır.

Siyasi bir olayın hakikati kolektif bir kurma eylemine dayanır; zira siyasi bir olay, sanatsal, aşksal ya da bilimsel bir olayın aksine herkesi ilgilendirir. Siyasi bir olay, eylem düzeyinde belli bir grup tarafından gerçekleştirilse bile, fillen herkesi kendi hakikatine çağırır. Bu çağırma eylemi aynı zamanda, siyasi bir olayın eşitlik ile olan bağımlı açığa çıkarır; çünkü varlık düzeyinde herkes eşittir; Hint bir temizlik görevlisiyle Alman bir doktor arasında varlıksal olarak hiçbir fark yoktur. Bu eşitliği yok sayıp eşitsizliği yaratan şey bir olarak sayma işlemi sonucunda durumun devleti tarafından yaratılan kimliklerdir.

Tüm bu kavramların ve onları siyasi düzlemdeki karşılıklarının analizinden sonra Badiou'nun ontolojisine dair, geleneksel ve çağdaş ütopyacı düşünce bağlamında bir yorumlama yapmak mümkündür. Geleneksel ütopya özelliklerine bakıldığında, açıkça görülen şey şudur ki bir geleneksel ütopya, tutarsızlığı ve anormalliği dışlayabildiği ölçüde kendisini gerçekleştirebilir. Halbuki Badiou'nun anahtar kavramları olan boşluk ve olay bize bunun hiçbir şartta mümkün olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu çerçeveden bakıldığında Badiou mükemmel olmayı imleyen çağdaş düşünceye yakın durmaktadır.

Bunun yanında, geleneksel ütopyanın yeni olanı dışlamasını ve sonluluğa dair vurgusunu göz önünde bulundurursak, onun öngörülemezliği yadsıyan, kapalı bir bütünlük inşası içerisinde bir kurgu olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Badiou'nun ontolojisi, bilhassa olay ve hakikat kavramlarıyla, bu kapalı ve bütün olan kurgunun tam karşısında yer almaktadır. Geleneksel ütopyacı düşünce

varsayımlara dayalı kurgusal bir gerçeklik yaratırken, Badiou varsayımsız bir realitenin sonsuz bir imleme içerisinde kendini yarattığı, bu nedenle de herhangi bir kapalı bütünlüğün söz konusu olamayacağını vurgular. Aynı şekilde, bu yaklaşım onu geleneksel ütopyacı düşüncenin karşısında konumlandırırken çağdaş ütopyacı düşünceye bir adım daha yaklaştırır.

Tüm bunların ışığında, Badiou'nun ontolojisinden ütopyacı düşünceye dair çıkartılabilecek en çarpıcı sonuç, onun bütün geleneksel ütopyacı özellikleri alt üst eden bir ontoloji sunduğudur. Badiou, tamamlanmışlığa karşı tamamlanmamışlığın, statik durumlara karşı hareketin, Bir fikrine karşı çokluğun, mükemmeliğe karşı mükemmel olmayanın, idealizme karşı materyalizmin ve eskiye karşı yeninin filozofudur.

Badiou'nun savunduğu bu değerler 21. yüzyıl radikal siyaseti için üçüncü bir yol işaret eder. Dünyanın her yanında sayısı ve etkinliği artan toplumsal hareketler için de eşsiz bir teorik kaynak sunmaktadır. Bu hareketlere dair sabit, tutarlı ve bütüncül bir teori yerine, hareketin üretkenliğini ve akışkanlığını vurgulayan, öznenin olayın içerisinde kendisini ve olay sonrası değerleri kurduğu, olayın kendisinin hareketin kurgusunu belirlediği, fakat aynı zamanda evrensel bir hakikati barındıran, eşitliğin olayın kendisine içkin olduğu, ontolojik bir bakış açısı sunan Badiou, radikal siyasetteki evrensellik-yerellik çizgisinin de ötesine geçmeyi başarabilmiştir.

Badiou tabii ki bu alanda tek başına bir üçüncü yol temsil etmemektedir. Jacques Rancière, Slavoj Žižek, Sylvain Lazarus ve Jean-Luc Nancy gibi siyaset teorisyenleri de kendi teorik bakış açıları çerçevesinde farklı, fakat yeni olma iddiasında bir perspektif sunmaktadırlar. *Komünizm İdeası* başlığında gerçekleştirilen konferanslar da, radikal siyasette yeni bir bakış açısı sunma girişimleri olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bunun yanında, Badiou'nun içinde bulunduğu *L'organisation Politique* de bu bağlamda önemli bir radikal siyaset girişimi olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Unutulmamalıdır ki, radikal siyaset bugün çağdaş ütopyacı değerlere her zamankinden daha çok ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bir'in her yerde ve her zamanda var gibi görünen, ama aslında olmayan varlığını reddetmenin tek yolu, siyasi bir olayın, hakikate olan inanç ekseninde, militan öznesi olmakta yatmaktadır. Badiou radikal siyaset açısından şüphesiz dahice bir ontoloji ortaya koymuştur. Bu dahilik, onun adaletsiz bir sistemi nasıl alaşağı edeceğini bilmesinde değil, varlığın kendini gerçekleştirmesine dair ihtimalleri göz önüne serebilmesinde yatmaktadır.

## B. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

### YAZARIN

Soyadı : Kahvecioğlu

Adı : Şeref Anıl

Bölümü : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : Alain Badiou's Ontology and Utopian Thought

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası .....

Tarih .....