

“LIVING WITH AN IDEA”: ETHICS AND POLITICS IN BADIOU’S *Logiques des mondes*

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The essay addresses the main shifts in Badiou’s conception of the event and the subject as they unfold in his late Logiques des mondes. In this text he develops an objective phenomenology of appearing in view of specifying the logical character of real change. The main focus of the essay is how Logiques des mondes stipulates a set of directives for an “ethics of living with an Idea,” that is, a subjective incorporation to truth as exception. How does Badiou’s text write what is excluded from the inertia of a restricted economy of Being? I show that in order to account for this exception, Logiques des mondes must resituate the notion of site, prevalent in Being and Event, and that it does so in terms of the notion of world and of the localisation of appearing (both of which entail the formulation of an objective phenomenology of appearing or logic of appearing). This logic posits the articulation of a new transcendental regime whose major coordinates unfold as a true war machine against cultural relativism, or what Badiou calls “democratic materialism” and to which he contraposes a “materialist dialectics” (dialectique matérialiste).

In *Logiques des mondes*¹, part two of *Being and Event*², Alain Badiou develops an objective phenomenology of appearing in view of specifying the logical character of real change as it takes place in a real given world. This real change, event, or strong singularity results from a truth process that modifies both by its own power, and by the disconcerting force of its

¹ Alain Badiou, *Logiques des mondes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006). Parts of this book have appeared as “Logics of Site” in *Diacritics* 33, 3–4 Fall/Winter, 2003, 141–50, and in Justine Clemens and Oliver Feltham (eds.), *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2003). Throughout this essay I will refer to this book as LM.

² Alain Badiou, *Being and Event* tr. O. Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005). Originally published as *L’Être et l’événement* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988). Throughout this essay I will refer to this book as EE.

consequences, the appearing of multiplicities in a world. When it happens, real change imposes an effective discontinuity upon the world it comes to affect.

The truth-process is the subjectivised synthesis of the event’s consequences, what Badiou calls a *faithful subject* (*sujet fidèle*). By this, one must understand an objective formalism whose operation consists in the production of a present: a political sequence, an artistic configuration, an enchanted new reality for the couple in love, or a new mathematical theory.³ This production of a present results from a decision, from a set of consequences that the *evental* trace brings into the world. If from *Be-*

³ It should be pointed out that the production of a present rich in consequences is twice localised: on the one hand, it appears in *a* world, on the other hand, it can only take place *within* one of the four conditions from which philosophy thinks the epochal disposition of the truth. *Being and Event* and *Logiques des mondes* both present, in different registers, the compossibility of the four conditions, that is, the unified conceptual space in which to think the *evental* consequences that serve as points of departures for the truth procedures. Badiou has devoted several books to each of the four conditions and to its specific truth-procedures: *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), for artistic truths; *Metapolitics* (London: Verso, 2002), for political truths; parts of *Conditions* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil 1998), for amorous truths; *Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2005), and *Number and Numbers* (London: Polity, 2008), for mathematical truths. With the exception of Book I, the schema of the four conditions does not explicitly appear in *Logiques des mondes*. In Book I that deals with the formal theory of the subject, the diagram of subjective destinations is explicitly plotted in terms of the schema of the four conditions. Nevertheless, the latter is presupposed throughout. While the political and the mathematical conditions remain more or less unchanged, the condition of the poem opens itself to a broad series of artistic productions beyond poetry proper: paintings, plays, opera, novels, music. The love condition continues to slide between the encounter of two single individuals and its discursive representations: if in *Being and Event* and other texts, love and the psychoanalytic discourse on love was conflated, in *Logiques des mondes* its effects and worldly localisation are conducted from the perspective of literary works, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Berlioz’s opera *Les Troyens*. A delicate point, impossible to address here, is whether, once treated as an *example*, politics, the poem, love and mathematics can continue being a condition *for* philosophy. In “For an Ethics of ‘Mystery’: Philosophy and the Poem,” I have addressed these questions working around the limits and aporias of the logic of exemplarity in Badiou’s treatment of the poetic condition. See Gabriel Riera (ed.), *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2005), 61–86.

ing and Event onwards, the event figures as the subject's effective condition, this time, in *Logiques des mondes* Badiou adds the concept of body to it. It would be wise to put aside any biological or organic pre-interpretations, since a body is a multiple that carries and supports a subjective formalism and that, therefore, allows the subject to appear in a world. In *Logiques des mondes* we are always faced with "bodies with organs" (the linguistic operations of a poem, Spartacus's army in its search for emancipation, the historical state of an algebraic problem) that affirm a point, that is, that sustain the subject's appearing and its *durée*, accounting for an eternal truth that can be created in a particular world.

In the end, *Logiques des mondes* stipulates a set of directives for an ethics, an *ethics of living*, if by such an expression one understands a subjective incorporation to truth as exception, to the consequences of a truth that the event brings about, of finding "point by point" the affects that authorise the continuation of the process thereby instantiated.

Badiou posits an *ethics of living with an Idea*, which he places once again under Beckett's motto: "I can't go on, I must go on."⁴ In this sense, *Logiques des mondes* is a theory of (the) exception, of what subtracts itself from the law, of its localisation: its matrix derives from Mallarmé's syntax, the "*sinon que*" that shapes the book's first materialist axiom: "There are only bodies and languages, except there are truths (*sinon qu'il y a des vérités*)." (LM 12)⁵ This turn of phrase inscribes the exception. The "*sinon que*" reads as a "to exist as subject"; it is the non-pronominal marker that signals "the fragile scintillation of what does not have place to be in the continuity of being." (LM 53)⁶ The axiom thus points to the production of effects that exceed the inertia of a restricted economy of Being and for which there are only bodies and languages; those effects are what Badiou calls truths. In the end, a new body is the organisation in the present of a type of subjectivity without precedent. This subjectivity organises the truth procedure that has opened up the

⁴ Beckett's motto comes from *The Unnamable*. Beckett has been a constant presence in Badiou's thinking throughout the years. See Alain Badiou, *On Beckett* (Manchester: Clinamen, 2003).

⁵ For Mallarmé's constant presence in Badiou's thinking, see Pierre Macherey, "The Mallarmé of Alain Badiou" in *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions*, 109–16, and Andrew Gibson, *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from *Logiques des mondes* are mine.

former to an experience of the inhuman, namely, the possibility of a becoming Immortal.

In order to account for this exception, *Logiques des mondes* re-situates the notion of site, prevalent in *Being and Event*, and it does so in terms of the notion of world and the localisation of appearing. This is primarily due to the fact that *Logiques des mondes* no longer operates, as did *Being and Event*, within the field of being-qua-being, that is, within the framework of an ontology stipulated by the categories of set theory. It should be noted that in so far as ontology deals with pure multiplicities, it is indifferent to the localisation of any multiples, to their appearing.⁷ Because *Logiques des mondes* operates within the field of logic, it is thus concerned with multiplicity’s modes of appearing and, fundamentally, with their consistencies. Unlike ontology, logic is the science of being-there and, consequently, it is not concerned with pure multiples; rather, it deals with the world and objects or consistent multiples. An object, which here is totally independent of a subject in the Kantian transcendental sense, is what counts-as-one in appearing; it is the unity of appearing-in-a-world.

Because *Logics* aims to localise the appearing of consistent multiplicities, it is only starting from a site that one can account for real change. A site “makes itself appear” (*se fait apparaître*), “an event is a site endowed with the ability to bring the inexistent proper to the object that underlies a site into existence in a world. This swinging from the inexistent to the appearing singularizes, in the *ex post facto* of its logical implications, an *evental* site.” (LM 474) A site thus marks the irruption of being as such in the appearing. From this it follows that *Logiques des mondes* seeks to stipulate a unifying doctrine of being and appearing.

Logiques des mondes presents a more flexible model to account for what in *Being and Event* was the interplay between the state of a situation and the event’s site. Moreover, the question of the consistency of what appears compels Badiou to rethink the relation between the One (that there-is-not) and the count-as-one, the interaction between representation and presentation. By focusing on the retroaction of appearing over being and on the point of anchoring of any appearing object, *Logiques des mondes* posits the existence of an obligatory articulation between the

⁷ I have dealt with the axiomatic of *Being and Event* in more detail in the “Introduction” to *Alain Badiou: Philosophy and Its Conditions*, 1–19.

logics of appearing and the ontology of the multiple, namely, the One. This point of logical articulation is the crux of the analytic section of *Logiques des mondes*, as it rethinks Heidegger's ontological difference as well as Deleuze's fold.

The "Grand Logic" Badiou proposes thus examines under which conditions multiple beings can be thought in a world; it determines the concepts through which the appearing of a multiple being can be apprehended, and thinks the worldly multiple in terms of its appearing or localisation. The purpose of this logic is to provide a rational theory of the being-there, an understanding of real change. "It is a question of forcing thinking to acknowledge that the whole situation of being—any "world"—far from reducing itself to the pure multiple (being as such), possesses a transcendental organisation." (LM 102)

Insofar as his philosophy unfolds in a context dominated by phenomenology, the expression "objective phenomenology," with which Badiou characterises his project, merits some comments. The axis of the whole Husserlian phenomenological edifice, that which constitutes its foundation and thus renders it problematic, is the dyadic subject (transcendental Ego, situated Cogito, or *Dasein*)/object (thing, essence, reality, or world). The last century has tolled the bell of the transcendental subject; it has sanctioned its destitution as the ground of the transcendental field, which in turn precipitated the fall of phenomenology's axial structure. Moreover, the epistemological and ontological legacy of the twentieth-century consisted in acknowledging that the subject is nothing more than an effect of discourse, its being only supposed by the discourse that comes to represent it. This in turn entailed the invalidation of any teleology of the object as one to which the subject could appeal or privilege as its transcendental correlate. In this context, Badiou's intervention has been decisive. Far from presupposing a unified object obtained at the end of the process of phenomenological reduction, it is rather the multiple that shows itself as originary to any presentation. The object constantly fashions, undoes and refashions itself in the background of the multiple. In order to constitute a world the modes of regulation of its logic have to be taken into account; one must recognise that it is the Multiple that makes the Ones. The intelligibility of these modes of regulation prescribe that they cannot have any guarantor other than themselves and that, consequently, they have to be read not in terms of a dyadic correlation, but in terms of consistency. Finally, phenomenology

mistakenly took consciousness for the founding principle of a transcendental organisation, when it is now widely accepted that it is merely its operator.

Against phenomenology, Badiou’s materialist axiomatic prescribes that the subject cannot serve as the ground for the unity or coherence of a given world’s transcendental organisation and, therefore, the latter is logically prior to any subjective constitution. The unifying principle is found in a conception of the object that is totally independent from the subject. “The concept of object designates the point where the phenomenon and the noumenon are indistinguishable, the point of reciprocity between the logical and the ontological. Every object is the being-there of the entity’s (*étant*) being.” (LM 255)

An object is thus what counts-as-one in the appearing of a being-there and, more importantly, appearing and counting-as-one in the appearing of a being-there, or transcendental indexation, are one and the same thing. The degrees of existence of different consistent multiplicities are founded on something absolutely real, what Badiou calls an atom. The object thus bridges the gap between ontology (the multiple pure) and logics (being-there or consistent multiplicities).

This objective phenomenology or logic of appearing posits the articulation of a new transcendental regime whose major coordinates unfold as a true war machine against cultural relativism, or what Badiou calls “democratic materialism” and to which he contraposes a “materialist dialectics” (*dialectique matérialiste*). One has to pause here and pass beyond the polemical value that this watchword brings into play. In the Introduction to *Logiques des mondes*, when anticipating what he surmises may be the reader’s reaction, Badiou affirms that his choice of the expression “materialist dialectics” to characterise his project could amount to “bringing back a syntagm from the dead.” (LM 11) Badiou may very well be right about this, although there is no footnote to alert the reader that he himself had posited the need to be done with these terms.

During the 1970s and particularly in the essay “*Six propriétés de la vérité*” (“Six Properties of the Truth”)⁸, an essay that marks a bridge between his Maoist and mathematically oriented thinking, Badiou pro-

⁸ Alain Badiou, “*Six propriétés de la vérité*” in *Ornicar? Revue du camp freudien*, 32, Jan.–Mar. 1985, 39–67 and 33, Apr.–Jun. 1985, 120–49.

poses dispensing with “dialectical materialism,” talking instead in terms of events or *cuts* that break into a given analytic situation and fracture its language. What is at stake in bringing back to life something that one has previously declared finished? Why is it that after the harsh discipline of the *matheme* displayed in *Being and Event*, the logics of appearing need once again to be placed under the banner of a ghost, even if Badiou employs the inverted expression, *dialectique matérialiste*, to signal that he is not interested in restoring an outdated ideology? Since the question of fidelity is central for Badiou’s *Logiques*, it is pertinent to ask why something that was dispensed with at first returns, albeit in an inverted form, to prop up a logical edifice whose purpose is to account for the *evental* consequences and for its operator—a faithful subjectivity. What can be achieved by conceiving the exception, the excess of presentation over representation, and the force of creation in terms of a *dialectical* model? Does the adjective dialectical diminish the force of Badiou’s unsettling *materialism*?

The ghostly return of dialectical materialism under the guise of the *dialectique matérialiste* goes hand in hand with the return of a motif that had also been abandoned in previous texts: destruction. They are systematically implicated: “materialist dialectics will assume without any particular joy that, up to the present, no political subject has reached the eternity of the truth he unfolds without moments of terror.” (LM 98)

Badiou argues that the concomitant violence of democratic materialism makes itself visible in the underside of its false injunction concerning the “end of ideology” whose most obvious truth is the imperative “Live without Idea,” or “Buy your enjoyment.”⁹ Badiou’s untimely Platonic doctrine, now placed under the banner of materialist dialectics, instead proposes that living must be conceived as something more than the mere administration of enjoyment and that, consequently, it can only be envisaged starting from and in view of an Idea, that is, of a subjective incorporation to a process of truth whose consequences are eternal:

What is astonishing for materialist dialectics is the present’s stagnant immobility: there is little decisive change in the nature of the question of thinking since Plato. But starting from truth

⁹ For a critique of so-called ethical ideology, see Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (London: Verso, 2002).

procedures that unfold subjectivised bodies point by point, it is possible to reconstitute a different past, a history of achievements, of findings and breakthroughs, that is not simply a cultural monument but a readable succession of eternity’s fragments. A faithful subject creates the present as the being-there of eternity, so that to incorporate oneself to the present amounts to perceiving the very past of eternity itself. (LM 532)

If living means to experiment in the past the eternal breadth of the present, *Logiques des mondes* would have, as part of its program, to articulate a new dialectics of the present able to welcome the trans-logical force of an Idea whose effects are deemed to be eternal. Moreover, this new dialectics of the present thinks, beyond the mere dominant archival and memorialising compulsion of democratic materialism, another way of incorporating the past to the consequences of a present marked by the force of the event. Badiou calls this synthesis of the present resurrection, a “destination that reactivates the subject in another logic of his appearing-in-truth...a supplementary destination of subjective forms.” (LM 74) What characterises a faithful subject is his ability to “reincorporate into the *evental* present the fragment of truth which the old present has passed under the bar of occlusion (*I’occultation*).”¹⁰ (LM 75) Badiou’s ethics of thinking, this strange wager that is *Logiques des mondes*, consists precisely in enacting the formalisation of the faithful subject.

Against the metaphysical tradition that defines the human being as a rational animal, that is as a being of language, or the post-

¹⁰ Book I of *Logiques des mondes* proposes a formal theory of the subject understood as the active and identifiable form of truth-productions. For Badiou, a subject presents itself as what formalises the effects of a body (\subset) according to a certain productive, counter-productive or disastrous logic. Badiou’s matheme of the faithful subject, $\varepsilon / \varnothing \Rightarrow \pi$, is a formula in which a split new body (\varnothing) becomes, under the bar of repression ($/$), a sort of active unconscious for the event’s trace (ε). This passing under the bar signals an activity, an exploration of the consequences of what has happened, that produces an expansion of the present, thus exposing a truth. Because this type of subject results from the production of the event’s consequences, it is called a faithful subject. It is a subject faithful to a vanished event of which (ε) is its trace. The work/product of this fidelity is the new present (π) that welcomes a new truth.

metaphysical tradition in its Heideggerian bent that defines being human in terms of finitude, Badiou instead defines it in terms of its logical ubiquity or logical grace, of its capacity to take part in numerous worlds, to appear in different places under different modalities of appearing. It is no longer a question of waiting for a god that could save us, but only the infinity of worlds that “save us from any finite disgrace.” (LM 536)

Logiques des mondes consists of an analytic section, the “Grand Logic,” that exposes the most abstract and constitutive laws (pre-linguistic ones) of a world understood as a general form of appearing. This analytic completes the mathematics of multiple being of *Being and Event* with the logics of appearing. However, neither the mathematics of the multiple nor the logics of the world can comprehend the exceptions that singularise a materialist dialectics, truths understood as exceptions, and the subject understood as the active form of these exceptions.

Logiques des mondes presents itself in the proximity of Hegel’s thinking, of its systematicity. However, it is safe to say that Badiou appeals to Hegel more as a way of propping up a *dialectical* thinking than as a way of erecting a system of Absolute Knowledge. Since Badiou is dealing with plural logics of multiple and different worlds, this means that there is no possibility of determining the being of a Whole—“*il n’y a pas le Tout*”; there is no single or all-encompassing logic of presentation. This explains the heterogeneous nature of the book, in which empirical examples taken from the four conditions (politics, art, mathematics and love) alternate with a demanding formalism grounded in category theory.

While for Hegel totality, understood as its own realisation, is the unity of Truth, for Badiou, totality’s inexistence fragments the conceptual exposition and sanctions that there are only local truths. Whereas Hegel’s totality takes the idea of speculation’s unconditioned autonomy to its limits, for Badiou, philosophy is always under the condition of external truths. Although a world is, like the Hegelian Absolute, the unfolding of its own infinity, unlike Hegel’s Absolute, a world cannot construct the concept or measure of its infinity from within just as Cantor’s axiomatic and, in particular, the inaccessible nature of an infinite cardinal stipulates.

As I mentioned earlier, the crux of *Logiques des mondes* is to think real change, to provide an explanation of how an eternal truth proper to one of the four conditions that emerges in a given situated world (let us say the pre-historic paintings of horses in Chauvet’s cave)

can communicate with other worlds across a broad span of time (Picasso’s painting of horses during the 1930s). It should be remembered that insofar as there is no whole, the worlds in question are disjointed. Although different and heterogeneous series must enter in some sort of resonance, even when it is a question of a legible series of fragments of eternity, resurrection here cannot, as with Proust’s Combray and its surrounding, “emerge from a cup of tea.”¹¹ In order to account for the subjective process of incorporation to real change, a reformulation of the key concepts of event and subject are crucial. I must briefly turn to them before adding some final thoughts on Badiou’s ethics of thinking.

1. The Event: From the Ultra-One to the Mix of Pure Being and Appearing

For Badiou, an event arises as the inconsistency of Being that shatters the consistencies of presentation. The event thus releases the virtual potentials of a given situation. (EE 274) Being the expression of the void within the particular situation at hand, the event functions as a radical supplement to the indifferent multiplicity of Being. In *Being and Event* Badiou’s typology of being reveals the existence of a type of multiplicity that transgresses the laws of the axiomatic that were set to formalise it and is, therefore, indiscernible from this very axiomatic.

The axiomatic of set theory isolates two types of relations among multiplicities: belonging and inclusion; it is from the latter that the excessive type of multiples originate. Therefore, in Badiou the axiomatic of set theory defines the site of the inexistence that produces truths—the event. The event is an exceptional multiple that is added to a given situation by tracing the passage of an interruption. It produces an interruption since it opens a perspective from which to discern what a situation cannot know or grasp, namely, that which is left unaccounted for by the

¹¹ I am thinking here about Marcel Proust’s famous episode of the *madelaine* in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, where he presents the *evental* effects of involuntary memory in terms of a logic of a set of parts that are finally integrated into a whole: “...comme dans ce jeu où les Japonais s’amusent à tremper dans un bol de porcelaine rempli d’eau, des petits morceaux de papier jusque-là indistincts qui, à peine y sont-ils plongés s’étirent, se contournent, se colorent, se différentient ... de même maintenant ... tout Combray et ses environs, tout cela qui prend forme et solidité, est sorti, villes et jardins, de ma tasse de thé.” Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, I (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 42.

situation's meta-structure. The event, therefore, points to the void or inconsistency out of which a situation holds together. The event is destined to a given situation and it confers a local extension to it. (EE 196)

Badiou calls *evental* site (*site événementiel*) the singular multiple whose elements do not present themselves in a situation. The state of the situation cannot count the terms that make up this singular and abnormal multiple (for example, a family of illegal immigrants whose members are unregistered and thus lack public status), therefore, lacking existence. A site is always in the position of internal exclusion in regard to the situation within which it is presented insofar as the site belongs to the situation without being included in it. What is excessive regarding the classes the state counts is neither one (the retroactive result of a structural operation) nor consistent; it is a nothing (*rien*). A site is unclassifiable since its excess exceeds what the state designates as being a legitimate part of a situation. Moreover, a site is precarious and ephemeral, and although it is a requisite for an event to appear, it is not the event's cause but its idiosyncratic condition.

Because of its intrinsic feature, Badiou defines the event as an "extraordinary multiple" or "ultra-One"; it is, *at the same time*, the situation of the multiples of its own site *and* its own situation, which means that the defining feature of the event is its self-belonging. The event, then, is an unfounded and autonomous set or situation that subtracts itself from the axiom of foundation.¹² Ultimately, the event is unfounded and autonomous in terms of the situation within which it arrives. What is decisive for the subject is to inscribe the event within a situation to which it does not belong, given that the event only belongs to itself.

The event's modality of manifestation is that of the eclipse; it is a fading and fragile appearing that produces the dispersion of the site's elements. However, given that the event belongs to itself, its dazzling passage leaves a remainder—a name, the only element by means of which it can survive its own disappearance. The name forbids that the event's disappearance give way to a discourse whose grammar and syn-

¹² This formulation appears in Alain Badiou's *Court traité d'ontologie transitoire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998), 58. Translated as *Briefings on Existence: A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, tr. N. Madarasz (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006). This text predates the formulation of *Logiques des mondes*.

tax are grounded in the encyclopaedic and classifying language of the state.

In *Being and Event* the event as Ultra-One was a problematical construction for the corresponding conception of a subject understood as fragment of the event. The supernumerary character of the event and its subjective naming implied that the subject was something more than the fragmentary aftermath to the event's sudden eruption, that it was its effect and its source. Therefore, there was a need to supplement the ontological description of the event with a logical description able to elucidate the temporality proper to the event.¹³

In *Logiques des mondes*, the event is a hybrid; a mix of pure being and appearing and, consequently, the thinking of the event is neither ontological nor transcendental, which explains why the specification of the site, of its singularity, must redouble the ontological delimitation proposed in *Being and Event* with a logical characterisation. Between the site and the event, Badiou unfolds the transformations that real change undergoes. Badiou's logical characterisation of the event takes the existential intensity with which real change endows a multiplicity as its point of departure.

If in *Being and Event* the event's eruption shattered the consistency of a presentation, in *Logiques des mondes* it produces a deregulation in the logic of the world, a sort of transcendental malfunctioning or disruption. In other words, the event modifies the rules of appearing. This modification can be seen in any genuine event, for example, something or someone whose value in a given world was null or weak, suddenly acquires a strong or maximum existential intensity. Therefore, the event conserves its ontological character as a surging forth of the site in a moment of self-belonging and, at the same time, it produces a brutal transformation of a given regime of intensity so as to allow that which was inexistent to come into existence. This entails that the regime of truth also acquire a double status. Although it maintains its generic characteristic, the regime of truth produces the reconstruction of the whole set of rules by which things appear (by taking into account that something or someone that previously did not appear must appear now).

¹³ On this particular topic, see the "Introduction" to Alain Badiou, *El ser y el acontecimiento* (Buenos Aires: Manantial, 1999).

If in *Being and Event* supplementation was the only term that accounted for the rearrangement of transcendental correlations, *Logiques des mondes* reintroduces a term that used to play a more decisive role in *Théorie du Sujet*¹⁴, namely, destruction. Something must disappear in order for an inexistent element to appear in the world. The site is now conceived as a “reflexive multiple” and, insofar as it transgresses the laws of being, it is a multiple that belongs to itself. Further, a site is the fleeting revelation of the void that haunts multiplicities. Finally, the site is the ontological figure of an instant; it appears only to disappear: “Self-belonging annuls itself as soon as it appears. A site is a vanishing term: it appears only as disappearing. The problem consists in registering the consequences of the appearing.” (LM 392)

Due to the site’s fleeting and vanishing nature, its true duration must be placed on the side of its consequences or on the logical interpretation of the relation among the different degrees of intensity, which means that the logic of the site is the distribution of the degrees of intensity around a vanishing point. An event is a strong singularity that enables its consequences to exist maximally; it is the only type of real change that brings into existence “the inexistence proper to the object-site.” (LM 397)

2. The Subject: From the Naming of the Event to the Incorporation to Its Consequences

Regarding Badiou’s theory of the subject, the major shift that takes place in *Logiques des mondes* consists in that the subject’s effective operation no longer concerns naming the event, but “in imposing the legibility of a unified orientation” (LM 54), that is, an evaluation of the intensity common to the appearing of two beings. In order to fully grasp the implications of this shift I will first focus briefly on how the subject is conceived in *Being and Event*.

For Badiou the subject is not a universal or given category, neither a transcendental nor empirical subject, less a constructed one. Subjectivisation, if it happens and when it happens—let us remember that the subject is as rare as the event—only takes place in the wake of an event.

¹⁴ Alain Badiou, *Théorie du sujet* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982).

It is unthinkable apart from it and it is always the subject of a particular condition since there is no subject in general.

Badiou calls the recognition by which the event testifies to its unexpected and incalculable arrival an intervention. The intervention unleashes a “discipline of time” that controls the putting into circulation of the paradoxical multiple of the event. (EE 232) In Badiou there is no way of knowing beforehand whether someone is connected to a given event. Fidelity names a process that separates and discerns “the becoming legal of chance.” (EE 257) A truth is thus what results from a subjective process once the subject puts the event’s name into circulation. For Badiou, a subject refers neither to a network of representations grounded in experience nor to the transcendental constitution of any possible object of experience. It instead signals the linkage that brings together the event and fidelity, or the relation between subjectivisation and the subjective process. (EE 264) By the latter Badiou understands the subject’s seizure by the event’s eruption as well as the act by which the subject gets hold of the event’s name in order to make it intervene in a given situation. The subject does not pre-exist the event since she only becomes subject thanks to the interrupting force and the arresting power of the event. (EE 48)

If in *Being and Event* the subject is conceived as a finite fragment of a truth-procedure or as a finite instance of an infinite process, *Logiques des mondes*, as I mentioned in the previous section, instead proposes a different distribution of subject and truth that no longer coincides with a finite/infinite distribution. Moreover, Badiou introduces the fundamental notion of consequence. Badiou shows that the subject is identified by a type of marking, a post-*evental* effect, whose system of operations is infinite, which means that once the subject is constituted under the mark of the event, subjective capacity is infinite. This occurs because subjective capacity amounts to drawing the consequences of a change and, if this change is *evental*, its consequences are infinite.

In *Being and Event*, subjectivisation fades away; its status remains indeterminate outside the problematic of the event’s name, which makes it difficult to conceive of subjective capacity in an immanent way. In *Logiques des mondes* the notion of consequence is bound to the subject and, therefore, immanence is possible. The subject is an active and identifiable form of the production of truths. The logic of consequences replaces the logic of naming.

Logiques des mondes determines that a subject is the set of consequences deriving from the relation it establishes between a trace and a body. If the ethics of the subject entails finding an order of affects that authorises the continuation of a process, this compels us to reassess the “reappearance” of “materialist dialectics” beyond its immediate polemical value. The book is not only the presentation of a thesis concerning the appearing of the world and the subjective fidelity to the consequences an event brings to it. It also exposes itself to the event and maps the trajectory of a subjective incorporation that, by exploring its consequences and broadening the scope of the present, bears witness to a truth. This explains why the opposition between “democratic materialism” and *matérialisme dialectique*, or rather their disjunction, sustains a transcendental trial or test (*une épreuve*) for the appearing of a truth. This is what Badiou calls a point, which always takes the form of an alternative. Insofar as a point is the condensation of infinity, it localises the action of a truth that the event has allowed to appear in a world. A point is always an instance of the Two, and in order to be effective, it must be localised. If a point splits infinity into the figure of two (yes/no) by condensing the appearing of a truth in a place in the world, it is precisely the opposition democratic materialism/materialist dialectics that displays the topology of the appearing of the truth. The ethics of living with an Idea is, therefore, inextricably linked with a fidelity to thinking the political event of emancipation.

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