'The history of truth'

Alain Badiou in French philosophy

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The twenty-first meditation in Alain Badiou's *L'Etre et l'événement*, which is devoted to Pascal, opens with the following quotation from the *Pensées*: 'The history of the Church should properly be called the history of truth.'[1] The *pensée* in question is numbered 858 by Brunschwicg, and 776 by Lafuma. Although it is not my intention here to discuss Badiou's proposed interpretation of Pascal for its own sake, or to discuss all the problems raised by this provocative formula, I must begin with a few comments on both points.

Reduced to a sentence, this *pensée* of Pascal's has a very strange status: although it is not impossible to relate it to others in such a way as to outline a possible Pascalian doctrine of history or of truth, of even of their reciprocity, it has yet to find its rightful place in any of the various arrangements of the *Pensées* that have been proposed. In his very interesting attempt to reconstruct the continuity of the several Pascalian 'discourses' that may have existed prior to the posthumous fragmentation of the *Pensées*, Emmanuel Martineau is unable to find any satisfactory place for it, which suggests *a contrario* that it marks a discontinuity, a singular utterance, and that it is in some way in excess of the theoretical economy and the writing regime of the *Pensées*.[2] We might add that it has very rarely been commented upon as such in the enormous literature devoted to Pascal, which means, amongst other things, that its genealogy remains obscure, despite the undeniable family resemblance to major theological formulations of medieval origin and, going further back, of Augustinian origin, such as that of the *traditio veritatis*, which designates the function of the Church within the history of salvation. For my own part, I am tempted to think that the *French* expression was coined by Pascal, and I will come back in a moment to the enigma of its posterity.

Turning to the few discussions of this fragment that do exist, we find that in the conclusion to his *Blaise Pascal: Commentaires* (1971), Henri Gouhier

sees it as the slogan for a militant struggle designed to provide a topical inscription for the truth of the Church Fathers, the tradition of which is preserved by the Church. This means that it is always possible for it to correct its errors by going back to its origins.[3] For his part, Jean Mesnard extends its meaning to the sequence of the Old and New Testaments, and makes it the basis for a whole theory of 'figures', or of the twofold movement of the veiling and unveiling of the truth that has been going on since the world began, and whose overall meaning is supplied by the sequence of prophecies and miracles.[4]

To the extent that Badiou does elucidate the formula – he does so only indirectly, as the phrase is used as the epigraph to a chapter in which, although it is not formally discussed, it does find an interpretation – his reading is midway between Gouhier's pragmatism and Mesnard's grand narrative: the Church is not so much a pre-existing institution established by divine right, as a retroactive effect of the 'intervening logic' or of the decision to choose in which that logic is concentrated. That decision's sole referent in reality, or in other words history, is the absolutely anti-natural and undecidable event of the miracle, and the most miraculous of all miracles, namely the coming of the Saviour, which contradicts all rules ('the symbol of a suspension of the law') and therefore demonstrates the inadequacy of rules. It should also be noted that this chapter in Badiou's book is one of those – there are not many of them, but they are all significant – which include professions of atheism on the part of an author who speaks in the first person. Such professions are always found together with references to militant faith or to fidelity as correlates of the evental (*événementielle*):

> Even though I can scarcely be suspected of Christian zeal, I have never enjoyed this self-seeking nostalgia for a scientific and moralizing Pascal. I can see all too clearly that his object here is to provide

truth with a militant apparatus.… What I admire above all else in Pascal is, on the contrary, the attempt, in difficult circumstances, to swim *against the current*, not in the reactive sense of the word, but in order to discover modern forms for an old conviction.[5]

I find it very interesting that Badiou should not only place a meditation on Pascal at the heart of his study of ontology, but that he should also choose to cite this excessive and enigmatic formula. It would be interesting to ask Badiou what – in a transposition that is certainly devoid of any Christian zeal – becomes of the term *Church*, which is tautologically placed by Pascal in a complete equivalence ('should properly be called') with 'truth', as defined, at least, by the modality of history: is it a meaningless remainder, a hidden key, or a relative condition? But that is not how I wish to begin, as I do not believe that any theologico-political principle is immediately at work in the theorization of truth elaborated by Badiou, or that its importance can be marked in that way. I am, on the other hand, convinced that Badiou has intervened in an original manner, or a 'strong' way, in a philosophical conjuncture marked by a characteristic debate about the question and even the term 'history of truth', not in order to offer a different conception, but to disagree with most of his contemporaries by swimming against the current. What he has done, not only by using the expression but also by signalling its Pascalian usage, is of the greatest interest, both for the reason he gives and for another reason on which I will now dwell for a moment by outlining the most schematic points of reference for what might, in other circumstances, make a chapter in a history of French philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century.

Derrida, Canguilhem, Foucault

The expression *histoire de la vérité* is not, whatever we might think, a very common expression. And nor is it an expression that can be easily translated, not in the sense of finding a literal equivalent (there is nothing to prevent anyone saying 'History of the Truth' in English, *Geschichte des Warheit* or even *Warheitgeschichte* in German, or *Historia de la verdad* in Spanish – in the sense that Borges wrote a *Historia de la eternidad*), but in the sense of establishing its acceptability within the philosophical idiom. And yet it is one of the main themes of the logico-phenomenological, and logico-epistemological, debate which, from the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1980s, helped – perhaps for the first time – to confer upon French-language philosophy a relative autonomy with respect to its international environment. To demonstrate that this is

the case, one has only to study the way in which an expression that is, I repeat, both unusual and restrictive circulates in the writings of a constellation of authors. At the same time, it signals the differences between them: it constitutes, in other words, the index of a point of heresy that both unites and divides them, or brings them together in a 'disjunctive synthesis' around their differend. Let me simply give three essential points of reference: Derrida, Canguilhem, Foucault.

Let me begin with Derrida and Canguilhem, who both use the expression in a hypothetical and, ultimately, critical way. Derrida does so in certain key passages in his *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, which dates from 1962:

> The culture and tradition of truth are marked by a paradoxical historicity. In one sense, they can be divorced from all history, as they are not intrinsically affected by the empirical content of real history.… For both those who confine themselves to historical facticity and those who lock themselves into the ideality of value, the historical originality of the story of truth can only be that of myth. But in another sense, which is in keeping with Husserl's intention, the tradition of truth is history at its most profound and most pure.… Once phenomenology escapes both conventional Platonism and historicist empiricism, the moment of truth it wishes to describe is indeed that of a concrete and specific history whose foundations are the act of a temporal and creative subjectivity.… Only a communitarian subjectivity can produce and fully vouch for the historical system of truth.… In any case, if a history of truth does exist, it can only be this concrete implication and reciprocal encirclement of totalities and absolutes. Which is possible only because we are dealing with ideal and spiritual implications.… Husserl therefore provisionally refrained from discussing the historical content of the *Erstmaligkeit* only in order to first raise the question of its objectivation, or in other words its being launched into history and its historicity. For a meaning [*sens*] enters history only when it has become an absolute object, that is to say an ideal object which must, paradoxically, have broken all the moorings that tied it to the empirical ground of history. The preconditions for objectivity are therefore the preconditions for historicity itself.[6]

I cite these formulations at some length because their object is obviously very close to the object we will be dealing with in *L'Etre et l'événement*. In a sense, it is still the same debate. Here, Derrida 'reads' the problematic of the history of truth in the Husserlian text he is translating but elsewhere – in a series that began with *Of Grammatology* and that still continues in recent texts such as *Specters of Marx* – he absorbs it into his own critical discourse at the cost of a decisive torsion: the history of truth becomes a fable or trap

(*leurre*), but that trap is as essential as a transcendental appearance:

> This experience of the effacement of the signifier in the voice is not an illusion like any other – since it is the precondition for the very idea of truth – but we will demonstrate elsewhere how it traps itself. That trap is the history of truth…[7]

> The story of the ghost remains a phantomalization, and that will indeed be a history of truth. Of the becoming-true of a fable, unless it is the opposite, or a fabrication about truth, a story about ghosts in any case.[8]

We in fact know that, for Derrida, the temporalization of idealities is always already caught up in the movement of the dissemination of their meaning because their status as writing or, more accurately, *archi-écriture* has inscribed in their origins the gap of a difference that escapes all appropriation or mastery.

I will immediately contrast these formulations of Derrida's with others from Canguilhem. They are contained in a single but essential text: the 1969 essay 'What is a Scientific Ideology?':

> A history of the sciences that describes a science in its history as an articulated succession of acts of truth (*faits de verité*) does not have to concern itself with ideologies.… A history of the sciences that describes a science in its history as a gradual purification of *norms* of verification cannot but concern itself with scientific ideologies. What Gaston Bachelard described as, respectively, the obsolete

history of the sciences and the sanctioned history of the sciences must be both separated out and interlaced. The sanction of truth or objectivity in itself implies a condemnation of the obsolete. But whilst what must later become obsolete does not at first initially expose itself to sanctions, verification itself cannot make truth appear.… By insisting on writing the history of mere truth, we write an illusory history. M. Suchodolski is right on this point: the history of mere truth is a contradictory notion.[9]

I have demonstrated elsewhere that this formulation is related, on the one hand, to the famous expression borrowed from Koyré to resolve the long posthumous debate, which actually founds modern epistemology, about the status of Galilean science with respect to hypotheses and proofs: 'Galileo did not always speak the truth, but he was in the true.'[10] Which is to say that he worked by establishing 'the true' within the unfinished process of the verification of a mathematical theory of physico-cosmological invariants or 'laws of nature'. On the other hand, it is also related to the reworking of the analysis of 'epistemological obstacles' in terms of scientific ideologies, which demonstrates not only that error is characteristic of scientific objectivity but also that it relates to the conflict that constitutes its practical relationship with the imaginary and with life. That is why, as it happens, Canguilhem describes error as the 'mark of thought'. As we can see, Canguilhem adopts the idea of a history of truth only in a hypothetical sense, and does so in order

to transform it into its opposite or, rather, to make it contain its opposite and thus give it a constituent meaning.

In order to complete and specify these two formulations we would have to inscribe them within their own genealogy. Where Derrida is concerned, we would have to look in particular at Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analyses, which he in a sense takes up where – as we are now in a better position to know – Merleau-Ponty left off,[11] of 'rationality in contingency' and the sensible preconditions for the intersubjectivity that 'step by step links us to history in its entirety', on the basis of the last writings of Husserl.[12] Where Canguilhem is concerned, we would have to look at Bachelard's attempts to theorize an 'epistemological history of the sciences' in which the actuality and efficacy of science, and the division it establishes, determine, through recurrence and rectification the meaning or direction (*sens*) of progress in the order of explanation. In a sense, Derrida is attempting to invert Merleau-Ponty by exploding his representation of meaning, just as Canguilhem attempts to correct Bachelard and to ground his idea of the normativity of knowledge in a critical anthropology. It is very striking to discover (and it would take only a short while to demonstrate the point) the extent to which both attempts are, whether they admit it or not, informed by a meditation on – or the aftereffect of – Cavaillès' formulations in *Sur la logique et la théorie de la science*,[13] whose enigmatic evocation of a dialectic of the concept, as opposed to the activity of consciousness, a constant stimulus to the search for a viable philosophical formula, irreducible to both historicism and essentialism, for the equating of truth with historicity. We would also have to recall in some detail how these formulations (starting with Cavaillès himself, as he cites Husserl's *Crisis*) form a counterpoint to the gradual reception of Husserl's work on historicality (*Geschichtlichkeit*) and the Heideggerian theme of history of Being (*Seinsgeschichte*), on which any position with respect to the problem of 'the essence of truth' must obviously be based. *Histoire de la vérité* is in a sense the French equivalent of *Geschichlichkeit* or of the *Seinsgeschichte-Unverborgenheit*, but the profoundly idiomatic use made of it by both Derrida and Canguilhem also reveals an irreducible discrepancy, which probably relates to a very different idea of 'culture'. This takes us to the heart of the great debate, which is both epistemological and metaphysical (or post-metaphysical), characteristic of the French philosophical moment of the second half of the twentieth century.

But we now have to introduce a third character, who was by no means averse to playing the role of spoilsport: Michel Foucault. 'The history of truth' figures in remarkable fashion in several of his texts, most of them later than the ones I have just evoked, rather as though he were attempting to summarize the debate whilst at the same time decisively displacing it. The *history of truth* becomes a 'political history of truth' (which is not to be confused with a history of political truth, always assuming that there can be such a thing). At first sight, this seems to mean the 'subjective' sense of the *historia rerum gestarum*, or in other words that, when we are dealing with any enunciation of the truth, even in the form of scientific disciplines and their logical norm, we must reconstruct the system of the relations of power and the institutional divisions that govern its discursive being or its discursive materiality. But, ultimately, it also has the 'objective' sense of *res gestae*, or in other words the 'politicity' intrinsic in the 'truth-telling' of the 'discourse of truth' that constitutes the *active* moment in the relations of power, which is the prime issue at stake in the differential between domination and resistance, at least in certain historical societies. More specifically, this reworking of the concept, which means that the history of truth 'should properly be called' a *political* history of truth, must be inscribed within an uninterrupted series.

I will look only at the most obvious points of reference by taking us all back to our not too distant readings. First, *L'Ordre du discours*, where – at the cost of a break with Canguilhem's epistemology that still pays tribute to it – we find the final, rationalist and even *aufklärungisch* version of Foucault's Nietzscheanism ('It is as though, from the great Platonist divide onwards, the will to truth had its own history, and it is not the history of constrictive truths…').[14] Next, *La Volonté de savoir*, where the question of the history of truth intersects with that of politics and that of modes of subjectivation:

> Western man has become a confessing animal … confession frees, but power reduces one to silence; truth does not belong to the order of power, but shares an original affinity with freedom: traditional themes in philosophy which a 'political history of truth' would have to overturn by showing that truth is not by nature free – nor error servile – but that its production is thoroughly imbued with relations of power.[15]

And finally *L'Usage des plaisirs*, together with a series of texts – now readily accessible – contemporary with the turn executed by Foucault in his projected history

of sexuality, in which he establishes an equivalence between the notion of the history of truth and the history of thought, which are indissociable from certain truth games (reluctantly, I will not comment here on that expression's Wittgensteinian connotations):

> What I have tried to do … is an effort to isolate some of the elements that might be useful for a history of truth. Not a history that would be concerned with what might be the true in the fields of learning, but an analysis of the 'games of truth', the games of truth and error through which being is historically constituted as experience, that is, as something than can and must be thought.[16]

Foucault thus brings about a total inversion of the entire problematic of the 'principle', no matter whether it is thought logically, in terms of criteria, or transcendentally, in terms of conditions of possibility, and also of any philosophical investigation into the realization or non-realization of the principle in history or, conversely, into the historicity or historiality of the principle's constitution (including its antinomic constitution or impossible constitution). He replaces it with a problematic of *necessary truth-effects* and of the recognition of discourse as a discourse of truth, no matter what the contingency of its causes. He reinscribes the question of 'true thinking' in a pragmatics of 'true speaking', but that pragmatics is a genealogy of relations of power, and a construct and critique of history. Make no mistake about it: at the heart of this history, which is 'our' history, it is not a mere logic of the instrumentation of the will to truth and true speaking that is being deployed by figures of power and the norm, but an *agôn* that makes it an issue or the political issue *par excellence* – as we can see from, among other things, Foucault's final research into the question of *parrhèsia*.

Let me make two comments.

1. The position gradually elaborated by Foucault represents, as we know or as we can see quite clearly, precisely what Badiou calls a *sophistics* in which the subordination of the question of truth, not to the question of meaning, as in the phenomenologists, but to that of expression and its language games, results in a prioritization of effect and efficacy: not the effects and efficacy of *the* or *a* truth, but truth as effect, or in other words as phenomenon, and efficacy, or in other words a power-differential induced by knowledge (including self-knowledge). Foucault's position is still comparable with that not only of Nietzsche, Wittgenstein or Heidegger, but also of Pascal. I find proof of this in the echo that we hear in passing of certain formulations in the *Provinciales* (XII) about relations between truth and power, and especially in the way that we find the same short-circuiting of the question of truth and the question of the *statist* (in the broad sense of the term) political institution. We might metonymically describe as a 'Church' any order of discourse in which the question of truth is posed as a question that brings into play the being of the subject. Foucault may well be a heretical Pascalian, or an anti-Pascal Pascalian, but he remains a Pascalian.

2. To go back for one last time to questions about words and the destiny of words, just where do Derrida, Canguilhem or Foucault find the simple and paradoxical expression *history of truth* – which designates both the point where their preoccupations converge (and we can clearly see that what is at stake is nothing less than the status of philosophy and its relationship with knowledge) and the heretical point that crystallizes all their differends, their dispersal to opposite points of the political compass – where do they find it, if not in Pascal? Being a philologist and having become a Talmudist, I want to follow the chain of utterances and texts. *Who*, before the Derrida/Merleau-Ponty differend of the year 1960, before questions about the historicity proper to science circulated between Bachelard, Canguilhem and Koyré in the late 1950s and early 1960s (and they were already being echoed, in 1961, by an astonishing 'review' published by Michel Foucault in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*),[17] who, in other words, could have used, or even coined, this expression – with all the problems it raises – in *French*? For the moment, I can find no one but Pascal, and specifically this one utterance. We have to admit that it is tempting to assume that Pascal is the forgotten cause of the configuration taken, so long after the event, by the French philosophical debate, or, to adopt a different representation, that it signals a *latency period* that is coextensive with the whole of modernity, and that lasts until the metaphysical question on which it feeds can finally be named.

You can now see why I was so struck by Alain Badiou's use of Pascal's formula, even though he does not resolve all its enigmas, at a central point in *L'Etre et l'événement* and in connection with an author who is regularly invoked (together with, from this point onwards, St Paul and a few others) as the archetypical 'militant of truth', as the exemplary representative of this 'intervention' or 'decision about the undecidable' without which truth, in the strict sense of the word, does not exist. (Only knowledge exists, and knowledge has no effect upon the constitution of the subject.) Once it became clear that this is no mere coincidence, and that it is indeed a way of characteriz-

ing Badiou's solution to the difficulties involved in the contemporary encounter between metaphysics, logic or epistemology, and politics and history and his way of inscribing it in a tradition to which he is, as he himself puts it, trying to 'give modern forms', I had to take it completely seriously and even make it the main theme of this article.

Other than… Derrida, Canguilhem, Foucault

My hypothesis will therefore be as follows: Badiou has attempted, at least at some point, to develop a conception of the history of truth (or more specifically, to construct a concept of truth which is at the same time, and in an original manner, the concept of its history) so as to occupy, within the configuration I have outlined, a position *other* than those we can identify thanks to the names Derrida, Canguilhem and Foucault. In doing so he is attempting to prove the hitherto unsuspected existence of that position. This would allow him to turn a triangle into a quadrilateral, weaving together the questions of the relationship between truth and meaning, between the being of discourse and its effects, between the continuity and discontinuity of knowledge, between the univocity and the equivocity of the true, in a way that relates neither to the idea of a transcendental appearance, that of an intellectual dialectic, nor that of self-knowledge, and which would thus oblige us to rework our understanding of this philosophical conjuncture, and to recognize that it is not complete. It would no doubt be possible to take these remarks as the starting point for a formal discussion of the relative symmetries and distances between the protagonists, as with any system of oppositions, but I would prefer, in a necessarily schematic way, to concentrate upon Badiou's project and to try to identify at least some of the questions it raises (for me).

I will do so in two stages: first, I will attempt to demonstrate, by recalling some well-known texts, that Badiou's 'meta-mathematics' (which is my term for the 'matheme of the indiscernable' that Badiou extracts from set theory) in itself constitutes an intrinsic way of historicizing the relationship between truth and its conditions; second, by hijacking the Sartrean expression 'the legend of truth', I will attempt to demonstrate how the concepts of truth and universality are articulated, or how the doctrine of the pure multiple or 'the multiple with no "one"', which implies that truths are radically singular (and which, strictly speaking, makes the common noun 'truth' meaningless), is complemented after the event by a doctrine of subjective universality which forces us to conclude that the multiple is in its turn, if not subsumed, at least correlated with a qualitative unity that is not numerical or no-longer numerical, and which becomes immanent within it.

The point of articulation between these two movements, or the point where what is in excess of the order of knowledge is converted into a principle of fidelity, is of course a radical conception of 'choice' or decision-making, not within the order of action or of pure practice (as appears to be the case with a German philosophical tradition going from Kant to Fichte, and from Fichte to Carl Schmitt or even Heidegger), but within the order of thought (as is the case for certain French philosophers, assuming that the adjective has a univocal meaning: Pascal, of course, but also Descartes – the Descartes of the 'creation of eternal truths' – Mallarmé, and perhaps a certain Sartre). The particular difficulty raised by this articulation (which it is tempting to liken to a conversion followed by a process theology) is whether or not, and how, the 'genericity' that constitutes the hallmark of 'truth procedures' continues to exist on both sides of the divide. It is possible that this genericity, which concerns subjective universality (or 'universalism', as Badiou finally puts it in more political terms, or the 'Universal church' or, if I may so bold as to say so, 'Catholicity', as Pascal and St Paul would have it) is in reality the object of a second postulate or a peremptory declaration. In any case, it has to do with the question of *the name*, and the use of *names*. We should therefore ask ourselves what retroactive effect its transformation into the foundations of universalism has upon the construction of the historicity of truths, or the way we understand it. I am not, however, able to discuss that question fully and will therefore have to be content with a few hypotheses about it.

To take the first point. I have spoken of metamathematics, but I am not going to spend too long on justifying that indicative term. My point is that Badiou is no doubt the first person in France since Cavaillès to have taken seriously not only the need to discuss the question of truth in terms of an essential relationship with mathematics, which is immanent in the construction of axioms, but also the question of whether or not that relationship can, whilst still being articulated with the question of principles of demonstrative procedures, be extricated from all subordination to the logical concept of a rule and from syntactico-semantic correspondence.[18] Cavaillès restricted himself – or could do no more than restrict himself prior to his death – to juxtaposing a critique of various philosophies of

axiomatics and their intrascientific effects, with an epistemological history of the emergence of set theory, and a philosophical aporia relating to the idea of a dialectic without a consciousness. Badiou is attempting *to use metamathematical means* – that is, mathematics applied to mathematics itself – *actually to construct a definition, theory or concept of truth*. To be more accurate, he is attempting to demonstrate that that concept is 'already there', even though it has not been there for long, and that we have only to recognize it or give it its name: 'an indiscernable generic extension of a situation'.

On this ground, he immediately encounters not a rival, but a predecessor with whom he is on polemical terms: not simply the logical empiricist notion of 'verifiability' in general but, much more specifically, Tarski's schema of the 'concept of truth in formalized languages'.

It will be recalled that Tarski's schema has nothing to do with the question of verification criteria, that it merely, if we can put it that way, postulates that such criteria do exist, or in other words that they are implemented practically, and that they can be subsumed with the general – and supposedly intuitive – notion of a 'correspondence' between an utterance and a state of things or a situation. That, then, is not his problem, but his starting point. His object is to give a mathematical definition of correspondence and to demonstrate that, on certain conditions or within certain limits, mathematical proof can be 'founded' as a truth procedure. What Tarski is trying to mathematicize – in the sense of equating it with a mathematical construct (even and especially if it is a matter of the mathematicization of logic) – is not the criterion of truth, but the very concept of truth. Hence his polemic against philosophers. Its weak point is the denunciation, in banal neo-positivist style, of the obscurities and absurdities of their language, but its strong point is the assertion that their essentialist ambition no longer has any object.[19] I think that Badiou wanted to occupy this ground and completely reverse the situation by taking as his ally and supporter the last born of the great theorems to have emerged from research into 'the limitation of formalisms', namely Cohen's theorem.[20] I recall (and not simply to evoke a youthful comradeship) that Badiou began by taking a lively interest in the 'theory of models' and in the various uses – 'scientific or 'ideological', as we used to say at the time – that could be made of the concept of a model, to which he devoted a little book in 1970 (it originated in the *Cours de philosophie pour scientifiques* of 1967–68).[21]

It seems to me that Badiou's position is as follows: first, paradoxically, Tarski's schema makes only an *instrumental* and weak use, and not an intrinsic use, of set theory, which is in keeping with his watering down of ontology into logical semantics, whereas it is possible to make an *intrinsic* and strong use of it. Second, Tarski's schema relies, as he himself makes perfectly clear, upon the reduction of the concept of truth to a supposedly more general, and therefore more basic, concept: that of satisfying a prepositional function within a determinate domain (set) of objects. The problem of truth is therefore transformed (1) into the problem of the conditions under which the properties of the axioms of a formal system can be satisfied by any choice of constants or by any interpretation within a domain of objects or what, like Badiou, we might term a situation, and in which being 'always true' extends to the whole class of expressions constructed on the basis of those axioms by applying rules of proof (theorems), and (2) into the problem of the limits of the validity of this correspondence or modelling. Badiou remarks that the idea of 'satisfaction' is merely a concept from set theory, and therefore requires it not to serve as an instrument for moving from the satisfaction of prepositional functions to the truth of theories, but to *define* what constitutes a principle or condition of possibility for the 'well founded' use of the name 'truth', as applied to those constructs.

Third, and finally, Tarksi's schema is inscribed within a general account of theorems of limitation or finitude, and can be interpreted – as Tarski himself interprets it – as meaning that there are both extrinsic and intrinsic limitations to the very notion of truth. Extrinsic limitations, because the proposed schema is meaningful only when applied to formalized languages, or even to a certain class of formalized languages. This leaves wide open the question of ordinary language, which constantly comes back to haunt its philosophical applications, as we can see for example in Davidson (can 'ordinary' language in theory be formalized? Or is it *de la langue* which, by its very essence, resists all formalization and therefore invalidates the claim of logical semantics to be dealing with the question of truth in general?) Intrinsic limitations, because the main result of Tarski's schema is a rigorous demonstration that there is, even though it is empirically non-assignable, an irreducible gap between syntactic provability and semantic verification, or, if we wish, between the mathematizable versions of concept and intuition.

Badiou's response consists, first, in demonstrating that the problem of extrinsic limits is meaningless,

given that the objective of a theory or definition of truth is not to determine the frontiers of the mathematical or the mathematizable, and to ignore the non-mathematical, but to construct or exhibit in the mode of mathematical certainty the paradoxical 'being' of truths. This brings us close to the philosophical interpretation of their concept, provided only that those truths are derived from a 'knowledge' in accordance with a proof procedure or, more generally, a process of rational enquiry that gives an effective meaning to the notion of an encyclopedia, or in other words a classification of the properties of objects belonging to a certain infinite domain. Second, the problem of intrinsic limits has precisely the opposite meaning of that assigned it, once we accept Cohen's findings and establish a continuity between them and the series of *decisional acts* or decisions made in *a situation of undecidability* that makes classical set theory poss-ible: from the choice of the axiom of choice to Cohen's 'forcing', which, if I have understood it correctly, means that, being a 'generic part' of a situa-tion, the nameable indiscernible *also* has all the properties of the situation under consideration, albeit it in an undecidable manner and in defiance of all procedures for the application of a law.[22] At this point, the idea of limitation turns into its opposite: it does not mean finitude in the sense of a *non plus ultra* injunction or a frontier between the knowable and the unknowable, but it does mean that an absolute does indeed lie at the heart of any knowledge that is retroactively consti-tuted as a site of truth, as a domain for the production of a truth that is both in excess of and excessive with respect to that knowledge (a truth in the sense that it neither contains nor prescribes, but is still the truth *of that situation* or, more accurately, *for* that situation, to which it gives generic expression). This means that every knowledge contains an absolute to the extent that infinity does exist and that the infinite is indissociable from the indiscernible and the aleatory, defined in the radical, ontological sense of the term. We have here in a sense a repetition, an extension, of Cantor's conversion of the famous 'paradoxes of infinity', which embarrassed classical philosophers and seemed to defy reason, into a *definition* of infinite sets – which are the real objects of set theory – and into the principle behind their systematic ordering (the 'aleph' series).

Badiou also says that this form of the absolute, which he calls the 'wandering [*errance*] of excess', and which is synonymous with the fact that the event is necessary to being, not in the sense that one is reducible to the other, but in so far as the event exceeds being in determinate or 'situational' fashion, introduces the agency of the subject into knowledges, or perhaps obliges us to give the name 'subject' to the operator of the forcing that reduces truth (*vérité*) to veridicity, or event to knowledge.[23] Such a subject must obviously be totally impersonal; and, *a fortiori*, a subject that is quite foreign to the question of consciousness, and therefore to the whole empirico-transcendental doublet, as well as the conscious/unconscious alternative. And yet this subject does possess certain qualities. Its generic name is, if you like, itself indissociable from certain 'qualities' that describe the modalities of its operation; and here we begin to approach the question of the effects of nomination in Badiou's philosophical discourse, and that is a difficult question because it is at once totally disqualified and practically unavoidable. Its prime quality, and perhaps the only one that counts, is 'fidelity' – fidelity to the event constituted by the emergence of an indiscernible which is itself in excess of knowledges that faithfully follow investigative or cognitive procedures. 'Fidelity' could also be called a link, or a link without a cause, a random link instituted by a dependency that has no conditions of dependency. The subject is not dependent upon conditions, or is another name for the unconditional character of truth or, to be more accurate, of every truth, of every truth-event. It is probable that this represents another way of thinking the 'non-being' of decision-making or, rather, as Badiou puts it, of the intervention. It would be worth exploring the link with a certain philosophical tradition. I am thinking in particular of the Cartesian

God who 'creates eternal truths': Badiou's subject is, perhaps, such a God, but a God both multiplied to, which is itself recreated by random situations, and reduced to anonymity. I will not venture so far as to invoke here the interpretation of Mallarmé's throw of the dice, as that is beyond my competence.

Before reaching any conclusions about this first point, I would like to make two comments. The first is telegraphic. I have described Badiou as the anti-Tarski. This means that his construct has a potentially devastating power that could destroy the defences of so-called analytic philosophy, to the extent that it can still recognize itself in Tarski's semantics: it is difficult to see how it could put up any resistance, if it took the trouble to look at it carefully. Following Tarski's own suggestions, we have become accustomed to thinking that there is an Aristotelian basis to semantics, to the extent that the 'T schema' is grounded in the inversion of the liar's paradox and in a certain interpretation of the principle of non-contradiction. This may seem quite in keeping with the fact that, for his part, Badiou constantly claims to be a Platonist, even if it means effecting a subversion or inner reversal in which the Multiple replaces the One. For my own part, I am tempted, rather, to relate Tarski's 'realism' and the conditions of its generalized reception to an old Thomist tradition in that the distinction between object-language and metalanguage reintroduces an objective transcendental that divides the agencies of truth between an adequation of the intellect to things, or demonstrable truths, and a more basic adequation of things to the intellect, or a system of rules of correspondence or semantic limitation itself.[24] This means that Tarski's schema has profoundly hierarchical implications. This highlights the powerful *egalitarianism* of Badiou's conception of multiple truths, which are themselves related to an indefinite number of infinite multiplicities that are at once similar in terms of their emergence procedure, and absolutely independent of one another. Although I can do no more than raise the question here, this would add further interest to a closer comparison, which Badiou has not to my knowledge undertaken (even in his unpublished lecture on the *Tractatus*[25]), with other radically egalitarian semantic and quasi-ontologies, such as those of Frege and Wittgenstein, which do not in my view imply even the least degree of ontological reduplication or any transcendental guarantee, even though they may be either antinomic or unsatisfactory.

My second comment is this: if Tarski is not so much an Aristotelian as a neo-Aristotelian, or in other words a Thomist, is Badiou a Platonist and if so, in what sense? I do not think there is anything simple about this question, and not only because of the paradox inherent in replacing Plato's Idea with the intervention of a 'multiple with no "one"'. As has already been said, it is not certain that Plato himself was a 'Platonist' in the sense of giving the One a unilateral primacy over the Multiple, as Aristotle constantly accused him of doing. I am tempted, rather, to see Badiou as a neo-Platonist for whom 'Ultra-One' of the event lies beyond knowledge and therefore essence, or 'in the vicinity of nothingness', in the sense that Badiou describes the impersonal subject, or the operator of the forcing of truth in the situations whose truth they represent, as lying 'on the edge of the void'. But that is still too crude a formulation, and I prefer to leave the question in suspense at the point where the two themes – or perhaps they are one and the same – of the principle and historicity intersect, as the philosophical interpretation of the metamathematical clearly depends upon them.

Badiou is clearly not one of the principle's detractors. To be more accurate, he is not one of the anhypothetical's detractors. On the contrary, it seems that his post-Platonist project consists in reinterpreting the idea of the anhypothetical in the strict sense of an absence of conditions or, more specifically, as the dissolution of the conditional link with its set of conditions and as a retroactive effect of the dissolution on that link. In other words, not only does Badiou quite naturally not want the anhypothetical itself to be dependent upon conditions; he does not want it to be the *condition for conditions*. He does not want, in other words, conditions to derive, emanate or proceed from it in any causal sense. The anhypothetical is truth for conditions in so far as it is absent from the efficacy or the power to determine the conditions that it names. Perhaps it is this that makes one think of neo-Platonism.[26] The absolute causes nothing: it is neither caused nor causal. This also means – and this is the precondition for an abolition of hierarchical schemata – that the anhypothetical is nowhere, neither above nor below. It is not a Foundation or base. It is not an intelligible Sun. Is it a Good? Let us wait and see. This means, finally, that the absolute is an example of a radically detotalized totalization. That is at least one way of understanding the 'generic' property of the indiscernible: it contains within it, without any control, all the predicates of the determinate and discernable elements of the situation or, if we like, all that can be named within a given infinite universe.

But are these characteristics of the anhypothetical or the absolute really anything other than Badiou's

way of thinking – at this level – the history of truth? I suggest that they are not. In the chapter ('meditation' 35) of *L'Etre et l'événement* devoted to the 'theory of the subject', Badiou once more takes up Pascal's question and advances a new formulation: 'the hazardous historicity of truth'.[27] What does this historicity consist in? Or, to be more specific, in what sense does it merit the name *historicity*, which takes us back to the heretical point in contemporary philosophy to which I made allusion at the beginning, and which therefore cannot be used in an absolutely arbitrary fashion? I suggest that this historicity lies in the juxtaposition of the following moments, which are like so many stages in an abstract or typical narration, and which are therefore subtly out of step with the 'dialectical' prototype of Plato's cave but also, and whether we like it or not, with the movement of a 'negation of a negation' (the difference being that the representations of a journey, movement, transition, totalization, and so on, have to be radically evacuated): first, the deployment, within a given situation, of 'generic procedures', and therefore the constitution of the infinite language of that situation and the knowledge specific to it; second, an event constituting a truth that 'makes a hole in knowledge', and whose concept can be constructed on the edge of ontology, as the existence of a generic indiscernible; third, the 'subjective' forcing of the truth from the event within that very situation, which does not constitute a reorganization of the state of that knowledge, and which therefore leaves it unchanged in a sense, but which establishes after the event the veridicity of its procedures, whilst at the same time manifesting its infinity, and the infinite openness of their field of application. Historicity is basically the same thing as the concept of a principle that is neither conditioned nor conditioning; it is the heterogeneous association of a determinate knowledge and a name for the truth, which demonstrates precisely the infinite or radical incompletion of that knowledge.

This historicity is, as we can see, intrinsic. It is not something that *happens to* truth, and nor is it something that truth *generates*; if truth were of the order of being, it would, rather, be what true 'is'. Let us say that it connotes truth's negative, or subtractive, relationship with being: its *pros ti*.

The legend of truth

I will now outline, in no more than allusive terms, what I announced as a second movement or a reflexive presentation – I hope it is not too inaccurate, though I can see its limitations – of what I see as the meaning of Badiou's propositions about the relationship between the question of truth and that of universality. I have borrowed the expression 'the legend of truth' from a text, much of which has been lost, by the young Sartre because I wanted a change of terminology, and also to draw attention to something new: *something does happen to truth* now. (Even if, in its total impersonality, we can assume that truth remains indifferent to it, the same is presumably not the case for its subject; or perhaps we have to assume that the subject is also present in the truth–subject doublet, or must be distinguished by name if the relationship with truth is not to be one of indifference. We are, after all, talking about militancy, and the idea of an indifferent militancy really would be a difficult paradox to sustain.) What happens to truth is that it comes to be a support for a foundation, or perhaps we should say that what happens to multiple truths is that they are the support, the non-existent and purely subjective basis for a multiplicity of foundations. And that is not exactly a minor adventure.

If we have to choose our references or textual supports here, I think we should refer not to the texts collected and collated first in *Conditions*, and then more recently in the *Court Traité or the Abrégé de métapolitique*, but to *L'Etre et l'événement*, together with *Saint Paul*, the little *Ethique* and, in some respects, the *Deleuze* too.[28] What I have to say consists of questions rather than assertions.

These questions do not, ultimately, relate to the problem of the univocity of the universal. To the great scandal of many Deleuzeans – which may or may not be justified – Badiou sees fit to attribute to Deleuze a 'metaphysics of the One', and contends that the thought of differences is not its opposite, but on the contrary its realization, in the form of a schema for the infinite differentiation of intelligibles. He even sees fit to describe the *univocity of Being* as a point of agreement or disagreement around which their respective 'Platonisms' cluster: the Platonism of differential ideas and the virtual, and the Platonism of the Multiple and the possible. I conclude that, strictly speaking, the category of univocity is not, for Badiou, applicable to the universal but to being, and that it is thanks only to the meanders of an ill-advised polemic that he appears (because he is reacting to the formula 'an equivocity of the universal') to be defending completely the opposite thesis. For Badiou, the universal is basically a category of subjectivity that escapes ontology, whereas the idea of univocity is, it seems to me, basically 'ontological'. If there is a problem here, it lies, rather, in the powerful dualism of Badiou's

philosophy. In negative terms, we can, however, say that the universal or universals are necessarily *non-equivocal*, which is another way of saying that they essentially derive from a 'fidelity' to the unique event (but not the one event) that founds them.

If they have nothing to do with univocity, what are my questions about? Essentially, at this stage in my work, two points: first, the meaning acquired by the notion of 'fidelity' in the light of a transition from the question of truth to that of the universal, or what I call 'legend'; and, second, the strange reduplication that makes the true/false opposition connote the universal itself – we have a 'true universal' and a 'false universal', or if we prefer to use the terminology of the book on *L'Ethique*, we have Good and Simulacrum (*du Bien et du Simulacre*).

To conclude, let us examine each of these points. The question of fidelity becomes clearer, which is to say that its difficulty becomes more apparent, if we suggest that the difference between a 'hazardous historicity of truth' and the legend of truth, or the adventure of its transformation into a universal or its 'universalization' is a new movement of extension. And I am tempted to follow Canguilhem in saying that it is a presumptious transcendence of the relationship between knowledge and truth that provided our starting point. There is extrapolation because we have to take into consideration the fact that the subjective movement inseparable from the truth – resulting from the fact that truth exists only as the choice and forcing of the indiscernible – begins before the truth and takes us beyond it, and that between this 'before' and this 'beyond', we have, if not a dialectic, perhaps a negative correspondence, which it is tempting to call a correspondence 'on the edge of the void', to use an expression dear to Badiou's heart. To be very schematic, this means that being, or the being of the existent, is essentially the 'void' or in other words, and contrary to the teachings of the metaphysical tradition, that the notions of being and property are originally incompatible. Being originally consists in membership, and even its degree zero or neutral figure: non-membership. All properties are derivatives. Similarly, at the opposite extreme, universalism as such is, for Badiou, anticommunitarianism, or in other words an in-common without a community or a membership without membership that creates no property links, no ontological or anthropological difference, but only fidelity to an Event. It is perhaps no accident that we find here formulae similar to certain of Derrida's negative expressions, which are themselves derived from Blanchot.[29] That is why, even though it means

displacing the notion's point of application, Badiou thought he could recognize himself in St Paul – the theologian of the Christian kenosis, and the very inventor of that category.

The fact remains that the transference of the operator of fidelity from one side of the event to the other, from the register of retroactive intervention into the field of knowledge to the register of militant anticipation within the field of history, presupposes at least – though this 'at least' is very likely to become an 'at most' – the presence of *name*, or a change in the function of nomination. In one of the articles in the 'Dictionary' appended to *L'Etre et l'événement*, Badiou writes of *unicity*: 'The entire void is unique … any unique multiple can be given a proper name, such as Allah, Yaweh, O or Omega.' I am therefore tempted, with Stanislas Breton's fine article on the 'violence of tautological propositions' in mind,[30] to add that tautology is the privileged mode of the enunciation of any name specific to unicity: the entire void is void, God is God, the Law is the Law (or the General Will is the general will, and not particular wills, as Rousseau might have said; and Badiou does evoke Rousseau in connection with the idea of a generic part), the Revolution is the Revolution, the Worker is the Worker, and so on.

My question is therefore: at what moment, to what extent, and in accordance with what subjective modality, does generic fidelity, which has become the operator that founds the universal (or that constitutes a multiplicity-to-come that is not virtual but situationally possible, as an action – being militant – rather than an act, and which *annuls differences*, or which regards them as indifferent), come to be dependent on a proper name?

Second and final question: what is the meaning of the return of the true/false opposition in the theorization of the universal, *after* the concept of truth has been disintricated from that of veridicity (which is, apparently, the only thing to stand in a relationship of opposition to the false or the *pseudos*)? And what relationship exists between this return – if it does occur – and the introduction of the category of the Good into the critical discussion of the problem of ethics, or in other words into the defence of an ethics of truths against an ethics of the Other or of Justice? This is not a simple question, and we must be wary of simplifying it. It arises because Badiou is trying here to trace a double line of demarcation on two edges, and using two quite different evaluative criteria.

On the one hand, we have a demarcation between the true or veritable universal, typified by Christian

or Communist militancy (or what Badiou and Balmès once called the insistence of 'communist invariants'[31]), and the false universal typified by the laws of exchange and the market, the capitalist universal, or money.[32] One might think that this a pure *petitio principi*: where is the criterion that allows us to make this distinction? But Badiou's allusions to the problem allow us to suggest that, in his view, we are dealing with what logicians would call an analytic proposition: the universal of the market is false because – or at least this would appear to be what experience teaches us – its condition of existence is not the elimination of communitarian differences but, on the contrary, their multiplication and their systematic exploitation. Perhaps.

On the other hand, we have a more subtle demarcation between two forms of veritable universalism, and it appears when Badiou explains that St Paul's fidelity to Christ's revelation is indiscernible from fidelity to an evental truth in the order of knowledge, even though we are dealing, on the one hand, with – and I quote – a 'fable' or 'fiction' in which *we* can no longer believe (who is this 'we'? Presumably the 'we' of atheists, assuming that the term does not connote a particularity), and, on the other hand, with an 'effective truth' related to investigative procedures, and not a revelation.[33] It seems, then, that this difference is what had to be *neutralized* in some way in order to bring out the generic characteristics of the subjective universalization of a singularity, of the relationship between fidelity and event, as opposed to the existing opposition between the true universal and the false universal. The universal must also be based on the false, or at least the non-true or fiction, if we are to be able to understand the radical difference between it and its Simulacrum or even its extreme simulacrum, that being – if I may be so bold – the 'forcing' of difference as the name of truth. I suspect or, let us say, I ask myself whether we do not have here one of the profound reasons which, conjunctural requisitions and polemics aside, lead Badiou to go one step further in his fidelity to Platonism, by reintroducing the mutual convertibility of the True and the Good into the principle of his ethics.

Translated by David Macey

Notes

1. Alain Badiou, *L'Etre et l'événement*, Seuil, Paris, 1988, pp. 235 f.; Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966 (the translation follows the order established by Lafuma).

2. Blaise Pascal, *Discours sur la religion et quelques autres sujets*, *restitués et publiés par Emmanuel Martineau*, Fayard/Armand Colin, Paris, 1992.

3. Henri Gouhier, *Blaise Pascal. Commentaires*, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1971, pp. 362–5.

4. Jean Mesnard, *Les Pensées de Pascal*, 2nd edn, SEDES, Paris, 1993, pp. 269 f.

5. *L'Etre et l'événement*, p. 239.

6. Edmund Husserl, *L'Origine de la géométrie*, translation and introduction by Jacques Derrida, PUF, Paris, 1962, pp. 48–53; *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey, Yays, Stonybrook, 1978, pp. 59-64; trans. modified.

7. Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, Minuit, Paris, 1967, p. 34; cf. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri C. Spivak, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976, p. 20.

8. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx*, Galilée, Paris, 1993, p. 200; *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, ch.5.

9. Georges Canguilhem, *Idéologie et rationalité dans l'histoire des sciences de la vie,* Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1977, pp. 44–5. Canguilhem alludes here to Bogdan Suchodolski's article 'Les Facteurs du développement de l'histoire des sciences', XIIe Congrès International d'Histoire des Sciences, colloques, Textes des Rapports, *Revue de Synthèse*, no. 49–52, 1968, pp. 27–38.

10. Georges Canguilhem, 'Galilée: la signification de l'oeuvre et la leçon de l'homme', in *Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences*, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1968, pp. 44–6. I discuss these texts in my contribution to the Canguilhem colloquium, '*Etre dans le vrai?' Science et vérité dans la philosophie de Georges Canguilhem*, now in Etienne Balibar, *Lieux et noms de la vérité*, Editions de l'Aube, La Tour d'Aigues, 1994.

11. Thanks to the publication of Merleau-Ponty's last lectures, together with the preparatory material: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Notes de cours 1959–1961*, Gallimard, Paris, 1996; *Notes de cours sur 'L'Origine de la géométrie' de Husserl, suivi de Recherches sur la phenomenology de Merleau-Ponty*, PUF, Paris, 1998.

12. Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eloge de la philosophie et autres essais*, Collection 'Folio', Gallimard, Paris, 1989, pp. 54, 93, 121.

13. Jean Cavaillès, *Sur la logique et la théorie de la science*, Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 1987.

14. Michel Foucault, *L'Ordre du discours*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971, pp. 15–20; 'The Discourse on Language', trans. Rupert Swyer, published as Appendix to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London, pp. 215–37.

15. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981, pp. 59–60.

16. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume II: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1987, p. 67.

17. Michel Foucault, review of Alexandre Koyré, *La Révolution astronomique*, *Nouvelle Revue Française* 108, 1961, reprinted in *Dits et Ecrits 1954–1988, Vol. 1 1954–1969*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, pp. 170–71: 'There are sad histories of truth: those plunged into mourning by the tale of so many magical and dead errors.'

18. My hasty reference to 'the first person since Cavaillès' calls for two qualifications. First, to point out that

we are still speaking of the French environment. And second, to mention in counterpart, and remaining within that tradition, the work of J. Vuillemin and Michel Serres, and especially J.-T. Desanti who, in his *Idéalités mathématiques* (1968) attempted to do the opposite of what Badiou is doing: to construct a phenomenological meta-mathematics that takes as its specific object the historicity of theories.

19. See, for example, the second part of the essay on the semantic conception of truth and the foundations of semantics in A. Tarski, *Logic, Semantics and Meta-mathematics*, 2nd edn, Hackett, Indianapolis, 1983.

20. Cf. Paul J. Cohen, *Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis*, W.A. Benjamin, New York and Amsterdam, 1966.

21. Alain Badiou, *Le Concept de modèle. Introduction à une épistémologie matérialiste des mathématiques*, *Cours de philosophie pour scientifiques IV*, Collection 'Théorie', François Maspero, Paris, 1970.

22. *L'Etre et l'événement*, meditation 31, pp. 361 f.

23. There could, perhaps, be no better demonstration of the profoundly different philosophical orientations of Badiou and Foucault than this terminological reversal, as it turns the utterance into a relationship with knowledge: for Foucault, 'veridicity' or 'truth-telling' is the active mode of truth which, at the heart of knowledges, unmasks and shakes their power-function; for Badiou, veridicity is a linguistic inscription that is inseparable from knowledges (in discursive 'encyclopedias'), whilst the eventual truth marks a break with them.

24. Thomas Aquinas, Translated excerpts from *Question disputée de la vérité* (Question I), in *Philosophes médiévaux des XIIIe et XIe siècles*, under the direction of R. Imbach and M.-H. Méléard, UGE 10/18, Paris, 1986, pp. 69–94

25. Alain Badiou, 'Silence, solipsisme, sainteté. L'Anti-philosophie de Wittgenstein' (unpublished).

26. See, for example, Jean Trouillard, Procession néo-platonicienne et creation judéo-chrétienne', in *Néoplatonisme. Mélanges offerts a Jean Trouillard*, *Les Cahiers de Fontenay,* March 1981, pp. 1–30; Stanislas Breton, *Du Principe. L'Organisation contemporaine du pensable*, Bibliothèque des sciences religieuses, Aubier-Montaigne, Paris, 1971, pp. 150 f.

27. *L'Etre et l'événement*, p. 445.

28. Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, Seuil, Paris, 1992; *Court traité d'ontologie transitoire*, Seuil, Paris, 1998; *Abrégé de métapolitique*, Paris, Seuil, 1998; *L'Ethique. Essai sur la conscience du mal*, Paris, Hatier, 1993 (*Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, Verso, London, 2001); *Deleuze. La clameur de l'être*, Hachette Littéraire, Paris, 1997 (*Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000).

29. It should, however, be noted that the 'opposition in juxtaposition' of the 'X without X' thematized by Derrida on the basis of Blanchot (see in particular 'Pas', in *Parages*, Galilée, Paris, 1986) is always related to a *to come* or an *advent* that has no foundations in presence; in Badiou, the 'X without X' that subtends the idea of taking 'a step further' is related to an event that has taken place or will take place.

30. Stanislas Breton, *Dieu est dieu. Essai sur la violence des propositions tautologiques*, in *Philosophie buissonière*, Jérôme Millon, Grenoble, 1989. Cf. his profound exegesis, *Unicité et monothéisme*, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1981.

31. A. Badiou and F. Balmès, *De l'idéologie*, Maspero, Paris, 1976.

32. 'What is the real unifying factor in this promotion of the cultural value of oppressed sub-sets.… It is, quite obviously, monetary abstraction, whose false universal is perfectly in keeping with communitarianist medleys' (Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme*, PUF, Paris, 1997, p. 7).

33. 'The fact that this revelation is of the order of a fable prevents Paul from being an artist, a scientist, or a State revolutionary, but it also denies him all access to philosophical subjectivity, which is either of the order of conceptual foundation or self-foundation, or subject to *real* truth procedures. For Paul, the event of truth disqualifies philosophical Truth just as, for us, the fictive dimension of that event disqualifies its claim to be a real truth' (*Saint Paul*, p. 116).