

Badiou's Passage – The End of Antiphilosophy

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Abstract: This article examines the function of the last antiphilosopher, Lacan, in Badiou's oeuvre and argues that philosophy is systematically determined by at least two historicizing operators: one it encounters through identifying events taking place in what Badiou calls conditions (they impact philosophy's concept of truth) and one originating in antiphilosophy (and have an impact on philosophy's concept of the subject). It is the latter that can help resuscitate philosophy in times of a crisis of philosophy – which is why its two paradigms are Marx(ism) and psychoanalysis. The present article examines Badiou's concept of philosophy vis-à-vis the latter.

Keywords: Badiou, antiphilosophy, conditions, Lacan, historicization, subject, sophistry.

“Lacan's genius lay in seeing that... if a truth cannot originate from its being given, it must be because it has its origin in a disappearance.” (A. Badiou)¹

“Is it one living being that doth
One life through dear division run?
Or are these two, self-chosen, and both
Fain to be known as one.

The meaning true I will divine
Whereby to make such riddles plain;
Feelest thou not in these songs of mine
That I am one and twain.” (J.W. Goethe)²

“Antiphilosophy is always what, at its very extremes, states the new duty of philosophy, or its new possibility in the figure of a new duty.” (A. Badiou)³

0. Modern Inadaptation

In 1954 Jacques Lacan declared, “modern man has become singularly unused to broaching the grand themes. He prefers to resolve things in terms of conduct, of adaptation, of group morale and other twaddle.”⁴ The grand themes were those addressed in the “fundamental dialogues on justice and courage in the great dialectical tradition”,⁵ grand themes that, now, have become matters of idle talk, rigmarole and babble. They have been replaced and overwritten by explanation of social dynamics, group orientation and habitualization that unexplain modern man's second nature. Thus these grand themes became obscure. Modern man has replaced a second nature apt for tackling grand themes in their singular

existence with a nature that de-issues these issues, de-dialecticizes dialectics and turns courage and justice into, at best, mere social customs and collective habits. But what these grand themes of the dialectical tradition also concerned is, ultimately, nothing less than the knot of “being, truth and the subject.”⁶ The problematic undoing of this knot and its substitution therefore cannot but produce a whole series of problems and questions. Is such covering-over that appears to have incapacitated modern man complete and unchangeable? Or are there still resources left to be tapped into? Is there and can there ever, even, be any proper history or historicity of man without these grand themes? Did the tradition run out of steam? Was it hijacked and overpowered? Or is modern mankind ill-equipped to keep up with the grand themes because it has proved unable to reinvent and to modernize them? Where does the specifically modern inadaptation – to the grand themes – come from?

My hypothesis in the following will be that Lacan, in raising this very issue, gestures toward a radical renewal of the grand themes and therewith provides the condition for a renewal of philosophy. Lacanian psychoanalysis allows for the reactivation, as it were, of a certain desire that had been fenced off and foreclosed, and it is precisely such desire that, in a historically specific conjuncture, is crucial for the rebirth not only of the grand themes but also of the dialectical tradition – i.e. philosophy – in modernity and for modern man. All this, as articulated by Alain Badiou. But this is, apparently, only possible under a series of conditions, one of them being that “Lacan offers an occasion to think the real nature of the desire of philosophy.”⁷ So, even though Lacan is often harshly critical of philosophy, this critique must, for Badiou, be read against the background of the fact that under modern conditions, psychoanalysis and philosophy are also, in a certain sense, allies. For “philosophy and psychoanalysis” – both – “make no sense without a desire for something to take place other than the place.”⁸ It is Lacanian psychoanalysis that allows philosophy to once more gather the courage⁹ to take another step, to go one step further. Since philosophy can learn from (Lacanian) psychoanalysis that “we can always go one step further.”¹⁰ This means in the delineated context that “antiphilosophy educates philosophy to be in modernity.”¹¹

Yet it is instructive to provide an analysis of what incapacitated modern man and modern philosophy in the first place – for if properly understood, such an incapacity can be raised to a point of impossibility and then reformatted. Crucial for any consideration of Lacan’s placement in Badiou’s corpus is therefore the precise frame of the diagnosis of the self-incarceration, self-enclosure, and exhaustion that befalls not only modern man, but also philosophy. Such an exhaustion is not – at least not necessarily – the result of an intervention of a non- or a-philosophical outsider. Rather it is systematically self-imposed. An exhaustion of philosophy brought about by philosophy itself – philosophy thereby becoming the insult that adds another injury to the already existing injury.¹²

Its self-exhaustion affects philosophy's ability to tackle the grand themes and ultimately suspends all of philosophy's actual potential for and of thought. Sure, philosophy's ill-health has been diagnosed, repeatedly, under the name nihilism.¹³ But this is not identical to the psychoanalytic diagnosis. Rather it is philosophy's own self-diagnosis (as if it started googling its symptoms and pretended to professionally interpret what it found online). This auto-diagnostic auto-incapacitation is one of the reasons that psychoanalysis positions itself as anti-dote to philosophy. It is one of the reasons why it positions itself as an antiphilosophy. Antiphilosophy then becomes not an evaluative term, but rather a purely functional descriptor. However this does not necessarily mean, as Alain Grosrichard once stated, that for antiphilosophy "it was not a question... of considering philosophy as a whole as an enemy to be vanquished" but rather "to be an 'antiphilosopher' is still to be a philosopher but in a different way."¹⁴

Yet if antiphilosophy were just philosophy done differently the "anti" in antiphilosopher appears to be a misnomer. Different from seeing in it primarily a change of the philosophical modus operandi (or of its discursive organization), it appears, rather, to be comparable to the way in which Deleuze once approached Nietzsche – another antiphilosopher –'s thought. For Deleuze stated that "if we do not discover its target the whole of Nietzsche's" – and Lacan's – (anti-) "philosophy remains abstract and barely comprehensible."¹⁵ It is Slavoj Žižek who has elaborated instructively how we can comprehend what this means for Lacanian psychoanalysis. Žižek diagnosed that the philosophical conjuncture in which Lacan declared to rise up against philosophy – so the philosophy against which Lacan takes up his arms – is a very specific one: "it is already the post-Hegelian philosophy itself which, in its three main branches (analytical philosophy, phenomenology, Marxism), conceives of itself as "antiphilosophy", "not-anymore-philosophy".... One is therefore tempted to risk the hypothesis that what Lacan's "antiphilosophy" opposes is this very philosophy qua antiphilosophy: what if Lacan's own theoretical practice involves a kind of *return to philosophy*?"¹⁶

In the following, I will fundamentally agree with Žižek's claim that Lacanian antiphilosophy allows for a return and a novel beginning of – dialectical – philosophy.¹⁷ However, it does so, as I will argue with Badiou, in a conjuncture that is not only saturated by the three not-anymore-philosophies Žižek enumerates, but also in a historically specific situation that is marked by the powerful effect of one of the last philosophers (post-Hegel), namely Heidegger (who I therefore would not entirely subsume under the signifier "phenomenology"). Badiou's far-reaching effect on the philosophical conjuncture implies that with and after Heidegger philosophy is torn between "hermeneutic orientation..., analytic orientation" and "the postmodern orientation", with the first orientation setting the scene for the two others. This is a scenario in which meaning becomes more relevant than truth, and language becomes

“the great historical transcendental of our times”, which leads to the effect that philosophy is “rendered... incapable of sustaining the desire which is proper to it.”¹⁸ Philosophy’s incapacitation is thus linked to the effective success of Heidegger’s project. For he succeeded in turning philosophy Pre-Platonic (and to some extent pre-philosophical) again. Heidegger’s was such a powerful turn and turning back of the historical clock of philosophy that Badiou links to the name ‘Heidegger’ a multi-form suturing of philosophy to one of its conditions (of which Heidegger was the most influential *philosophical* proponent) – to poetry – which in its aftermath manifests in the predominant role of language and the effective suspension of the category of truth.

This is why the philosophical conjuncture in which, for Badiou, Lacan’s antiphilosophy is not only saturated by antiphilosophical no-longer-philosophies but it is also structurally undone by “the last universally recognized philosopher”¹⁹ whose thought effectuated an aftermath of a multi-form suture. Suture and saturation lead to a suspension of the dialectical tradition and it is thereby that such a state of philosophy made the incapacitation of modern man worse. It is then this situation into which Lacan’s antiphilosophy – in my reading of Badiou – intervenes, and in which it creates the condition of a novel beginning of philosophy.²⁰ It is in this sense that antiphilosophy “is situated *within* philosophy, because the affirmative philosopher draws very interesting lessons from antiphilosophy itself.”²¹ Antiphilosophy is a post-anti-philosophical philosophical concept. Antiphilosophy read in this way is a second mode in which the discourse of philosophy – philosophy as practice – is and can be historicized.²² Not only do novelties in philosophy’s condition affect the very concept of truth, but a certain renewal and innovation – namely of its concept of the subject – effectively derives from antiphilosophy. And maybe this is especially true in times of the crisis of philosophy. There is a peculiar negation of negation at play – an exhaustion of philosophy and a negation of exhausted philosophy by antiphilosophy – that allows for what Badiou calls an affirmation. In times of crisis, it can be the best option to up the anti. The guide in the subsequent examination, the master of the following trajectory, *le peut-être-maitre*, will be, unsurprisingly, Badiou.

Yet it is not an easy task to examine the relationship not only between Badiou and Lacan, but more generally between philosophy and this specific form of antiphilosophy. For “it is always perilous to approach Lacan from a philosophical point of view...For... no one is entitled to take this description [i.e. antiphilosophy] lightly.”²³ The philosopher in Badiou’s rendering is not entitled to take “this description” lightly because it refers to an experience that is “radically exterior and foreign to philosophy”²⁴ (inter alia because psychoanalytic antiphilosophy is located where philosophy is not: in the clinic). For the antiphilosopher rejects two claims are fundamental for any philosophical position: they reject that there is the

universal power of the concept (i.e. that there is something that can be transmitted without relying on experience). They reject this even if what is transmitted – by and in the medium of the concept – is what is universal in an experience (but thereby exceeds the very form of experience). They also reject that the concept of truth has any practical or orientational validity.²⁵ Antiphilosophical, then, is any position that emphasizes a (non-) concept that exceeds all concepts (paradigmatically one can think not only of the role of anxiety in Kierkegaard, but also of Lacan's endorsement of Kierkegaard against Hegel²⁶). It marks an experiential grounding or, more precisely, an ungroundedness which is so singular and unique that it undermines all possibilities for any universalism of the concept. If it allows for a universalist dimension at all, as for example in Saint Paul who opposed the reasoning of the Greek philosophers on the basis of his Damascus-experience, this is a universalism that is linked to singularity, to which philosophy seems forever unsuitable as it can only bring together singularity with universality under the aegis of the latter and thus at the cost of the former. Such – in this specific sense – an anti-conceptual dimension of experience does not simply challenge conceptual approaches but indeed brings them to ruin. Following this, I will explore how to understand less the existence of but rather more the *philosophical function* of antiphilosophy, and specifically, of Lacanian antiphilosophy in its relation to (Badiouian) philosophy. How, to put it differently, does the singular mode of historicization of philosophy through antiphilosophy operate?

One can start answering this question by emphasizing that despite the foreignness and exteriority to philosophy, the “antiphilosopher” is nevertheless “that particular kind of philosopher” – note that an antiphilosopher is a philosopher! – “who opposes the drama of his existence to conceptual constructions, for whom the truth exists, absolutely, but must be encountered, experienced, rather than thought and constructed.”²⁷ Antiphilosophy is thus not an attack per se on the category of truth – even though there are also some antiphilosophers who attack truth –, but an attempt to singularize truth and link it to a concept of experience.²⁸ The antiphilosopher's discursive articulations take the form of “neither system nor treatise nor even really a book. He propounds a speech of rupture, and writing ensues when necessary.”²⁹ Antiphilosophy speaks in breaks, and thus holds itself always close to the real. The present article will not aim at reconstructing and unraveling the intricacies, nuances and developments of Badiou's concept of antiphilosophy. It rather (only) aims at situating the one position that Badiou describes as the last – contemporary – antiphilosophical position, Lacan's, within Badiou's philosophical system, and examines the contours that allows Lacan to be identified as “a condition of the renaissance of philosophy.”³⁰ For this purpose, the precise placement and function of antiphilosophy within a post-Heideggerian philosophical conjuncture is crucial.³¹

1. Antiphilosophy – Philosophically

Antiphilosophy is a term that was used in rather occasional manners by Lacan to describe his own enterprise.³² It was invented by Coleridge in 1818 and marks, broadly speaking, a position that rebels against the arrogance of philosophy, against philosophy's arrogance of assuming mastery and being "a self-sufficient discourse."³³ Historically, this auto-delineation "refers to the mostly religious and conservative, if not outright reactionary, thinkers who resist the arrival of rationalism, deism, or materialism on the part of French enlightenment thinkers, the so-called philosophes, such as Diderot, Voltaire, or d'Holbach."³⁴ But Badiou does not take antiphilosophy as such to be a reactionary phenomenon. Rather it is a inner-counter-philosophical position that organizes, in different variations, a complex network of determinations that *can* include the assumption that truth is ultimately only an effect of language and "an appeal to what lies beyond language, or rather at the upper limit of the sayable"³⁵, which is irreducible to whatever concept of truth and can only be activated through "the dimension of the act".³⁶ This is a category that brings together, for example, late Nietzsche's declaration to break history into two and transvalue all values and Kierkegaard's insistence on a leap of faith. There is thus an inversion of hierarchy: the act is more significant than any (conception of) truth. Lacan's very own appropriation of the term of antiphilosophy introduces quite some nuance into the term, deriving from the fact that for him truth – paradigmatically – is "making a hole in knowledge"³⁷ and the subject – a term Lacan, for Badiou, so drastically rethought that he effectively periodized it and opened the "*second epoch*"³⁸ of its doctrine. The subject thereby becomes the "border-effect... of such a hole piercing."³⁹

According to Badiou, Lacan's self-description as antiphilosopher thus does not suggest a conservative gesture – and certainly not at all an endorsement of irrationalism.⁴⁰ Rather, it appears to highlight a specific characteristic of Badiou's conceptualization of antiphilosophy (post-Lacan), namely that all philosophical discourse – at least in its present form – misses something. As Badiou states "the idea of the 'remainder' can be found in every antiphilosophy, which builds very subtle networks of relations only so as to track down the incompleteness in them and to expose the remainder to its seizing in the act."⁴¹ The *anti-* of antiphilosophy then finds its place in the emphasis of that which remains foreign within philosophy – be it life, grace, existence, or enjoyment – that philosophy cannot get rid of. Philosophy thereby is ultimately considered to be a form of *Weltanschauung* that is formulated on the back of the assumption that everything – whose philosophical name is 'being' – is consistent and whole and can be grasped – is knowable – as such.⁴² There is what one could describe as a Parmenidean arrogance in philosophy, which results from the assumption that being and thought are one and the same and that therefore philosophy is discourse of the master, of

the *maitre*, the master of being, a *m'etre*.⁴³ Philosophers would aim and claim to be the masters of being by means of thought. The means of domination are applied to being through the very idea that it could ever be mastered – and the form in which this is done is, inter alia, by means of knowledge (which is why philosophy in this sense can be identified with the university discourse⁴⁴). But if such attempted mastery appears as a form of Parmenidean arrogance and therefore ultimately not only idealist but potentially outdated and part of a bankrupt project, it might be that in modernity we have to gather the courage to face that which – in the right ways – cannot be mastered and give up – also in the right way – our attempts to master it.⁴⁵ Thus “one must declare [philosophy’s] *effective* expiration, along with that of every figure of mastery.”⁴⁶

Badiou has once, pointedly, resumed his reading of Lacan’s position from the 1970’s such that Lacan would have endorsed the assumption that there is no knowledge about the Real of the subject and that there is thus something constitutively unknowable. However, for Badiou, Lacan also argued that there is a knowledge of the fact that there is something unknowable. This is the knowledge that there is the unconscious. The unconscious is a knowledge which cannot be experienced as knowledge but only through the form of the act, and hence through analysis. If this knowledge could *only* be experienced, it would be conceptually mystical. This is why and where the dimension of the matheme comes in for Badiou, since, in his reading, Lacan claims that there *is* knowledge of the unknowable – or in other words: of that which is utterly singular – through formalization.⁴⁷ This allows for a concept of truth to be drastically separated from the concept of meaning: “truths have no meaning.”⁴⁸ Without any question, Badiou takes Lacan’s position so seriously that he repeatedly states – and there is a slightly different emphasis in some of the different versions of this claim, which I will leave aside here – that “a philosophy is possible today, only if it is compossible with Lacan.”⁴⁹ A statement like this demands some elaboration.⁵⁰ For what is “a philosophy compossible with Lacan”?

One way of answering this is to claim that Badiou had to develop the concept of antiphilosophy into a proper philosophical concept⁵¹ and has thereby sought to follow the following dialectical guideline: “to accompany Lacan, our master, to the point that he in some sense led us to, a point that, if we are to be faithful to him, we need to go beyond.”⁵² It is the very fidelity to Lacan that allows to detect the precise point that allows, then, another step to be taken. The localization of this very point thus has a direct bearing on how one understands the philosophical concept of antiphilosophy, or, in different terms: on how one understands how Badiou reads Lacan. In Badiou’s 1987-1988 seminar – on “Truth and Subject” – one finds a very direct answer:

“it may be that, on a whole series of points, what I say about this or that in general, and about Lacan in particular, may even seem, to a Lacanian, inaccurate or distorted, and this is for two essential reasons.... I treat Lacan... from the standpoint of philosophy. The Lacanians might dispute this. They might contest even the possibility of this treatment, considering the fact that only from the viewpoint of analysis can the text of Lacan be treated. This is a position which I understand perfectly and to which I have nothing to object, under the explicit condition that those who tell me this are themselves entirely faithful to this principle, that is to say of treating the Lacanian text solely from the viewpoint of analysis and, consequently, do not legislate... over something that would abandon this principle.”⁵³

Badiou’s reading of Lacan thus raises the question of how to read an antiphilosophical text – “the put into play herein is in truth that of antiphilosophy”⁵⁴ – in the first place, especially in this particular case, since Badiou does not read Lacan analytically.⁵⁵ Does this imply an unavoidable misreading? An intended hermeneutic or even formalizing mishap? Badiou’s answer is decidedly negative and one can argue that this is for two concomitant reasons: 1. Badiou does not read Lacan(’s antiphilosophy) as an analyst or for clinical purposes and 2. this raises thus the question how to read a text when the very status of the text needs to be determined in the act of its reading. Such a *forced reading* – a reading that forces a specific status of the text through the effects of its being read – seeks to determine what a philosophical concept of antiphilosophy is or will have been.⁵⁶ It seems therefore possible to detect a comparability between some – Lacanian – reactions to Badiou’s reading of Lacan, to some – of the Kantian – reactions to Hegel’s reading of Kant. Since Hegel (for example in his depiction of Kantian morality in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) unquestionably leaves aside myriad nuances and technical complexities and hence can appear to fundamentally misrepresent Kant’s position. The Hegelian reproach to such a critique is that Hegel presents not an inattentive reading, but rather that he epitomizes (and condenses) the Kantian position such that its truth – the point where one needs to go beyond it – comes to the fore.⁵⁷ This is thus a forced reading-protocol, which is not about an adequate representation of the inner complexities but about a productive way of simplification and reduction. Which is why, in a different context, Hegel will highlight the philosophical necessity to “foreshorten its picture by abstractions”, that one must mobilize “the fact that Thought is, after all, the most trenchant epitomist.”⁵⁸

A forced reading epitomizes effectively and trenchantly. It diagonalizes, in Badiou’s terms, since it seeks to locate an impasse and to force a passage. Thus, Badiou does not present a Lacanian reading of Lacan, but one that seeks to detect a point, a point which allows for

another step to be taken. But, as I have suggested, such a localization of a point also forces the locating of Lacan within the specific conjuncture in which he allows a point to be detected, and only then potentially to make such a potential step.

2. From the 90s to Eternity

In his 1990-91 seminar on the theory of evil and the theory of love, Badiou – therein reminiscent of his 1989 *Manifesto for Philosophy* – diagnoses the contemporary state of philosophy to be defined by four problematic characteristics: 1. Philosophy is paralyzed by its own history. It is bogged down by what it has been. Metaphysics is the slightly disorientating shorthand for that very past. To overcome this paralysis, what is needed is *un pas de plus*, an additional step: another *not* – an additional minus – that “unbinds the bond that imprisons philosophy in its history.”⁵⁹

2. A task arises from this: philosophy must break with its own being historicist. This necessitates a change of its practical form, of its form of practice. Philosophy needs to become thetic. Otherwise it cannot but endlessly reevaluate its own history and ruminate its own closure and end. What is thus needed is a form of (Nietzschean, i.e. antiphilosophical) active forgetting; a forgetting even of all the diagnoses of forgetting that populate the history of philosophy and move it forward to the domain of declarations. 3. Philosophy must endorse the idea that one can define what it is and one can do so rigorously and axiomatically. Such definition is a historical invariant. This establishes a difference with those who are neither philosophers nor antiphilosophers but who pretend to be philosophers, notably the sophists. Since they also break with historicity and the grand narratives, but ultimately endorse an undoing of the very form of philosophy itself that gives way to all desires for anything true.⁶⁰

Badiou’s philosophical project in the 1990s is thus – and thereby is in line with Lacan’s comment I referred to at the beginning of this essay – an attempt to provide an answer to how to maintain and remain faithful to philosophy; how to continue under modern conditions. There is therefore a fourth conjunctural point, namely, that to undo the problematic historicist undoing and to affirm the possibility of philosophy today, one must *pass through the category of truth*. Any passage is a passing of truth for contemporary philosophy, which Badiou has announced as a “*new departure... following the dissolution of its relation of organic connection to knowledge.*” Furthermore, “this theme of truth crosses the paths of Heidegger (who was the first to subtract it from knowledge), the mathematicians (who broke with the object at the end of the last century, just as they broke with adequation), and the modern theories of the subject (which displace truth from its subjective pronouncement).”⁶¹ There is a new passage if truth is affirmed as different from knowledge, thought of without reference to the category of the object and linked to the second epoch of the doctrine of the subject, i.e. contemporary Lacanian antiphilosophy. The

task seems clear: one must reinvent the category of truth by mobilizing Heidegger, Lacanian antiphilosophy, and contemporary mathematics.

Under these auspices it is the category of truth that then also allows for an overcoming of philosophy's own paralysis resulting from its own endless self-deconstruction and its own no less endless self-historicization. Thereby, philosophy can be freed from being stuck with a problematic kind of temporality – the “absoluteness of time”⁶². And in addition, this means to “give [back] to the concept” – of truth – “its eternal dimension,” which consequently necessitates a “modern thesis, an a-theological thesis of eternity.”⁶³ This means to identify eternity in history, affirming that it makes holes in the latter. The reinvention of philosophy proposed here can be read through two interlinked lenses: it must be situated, first, within the precise conjuncture in the history of philosophy on the one hand side and on the other hand side, it can only be properly understood if at the same time it is also related not to antiphilosophy in general, but to the specific antiphilosophy of this very period. It is Lacanian antiphilosophy which allows for an undoing of the very *form* of – undoing in – philosophy in the particular conjuncture in which the Heideggerian, inner-philosophical undoing of philosophy's history has effectively and successfully taken place. This form of undoing operates in contradistinction to the extra-philosophical sophistic undoing of philosophy which one also must read in context of Heidegger's far-reaching intervention.⁶⁴

If located appropriately in the historical conjuncture of philosophy, it is exactly antiphilosophy which allows for a reconstitution of philosophy – by ending philosophy's end in the right way⁶⁵: by enabling ending – encore – what seems to have already ended and by thereby creating something new. It is this secondary negation and revision that will enable philosophy to return and reaffirm its very own conditions. This is the secondary degree of historicization. This implies that antiphilosophy's effects are registered within philosophy through a historically specific transformation of – the very form of – philosophy itself. Antiphilosophy allows for an affirmative historicity, for an affirmation of philosophy.

It is only on the basis of such an antiphilosophical transformation that an already struggling discipline had a chance to reinvent itself as what it always was (supposed to be): “a universal doctrine of the dialectic of being and event as doctrine of the subject.”⁶⁶ Antiphilosophy thereby allows us to traverse philosophy's fantasy of its own end, its fantasy of its exhaustion. A strange kind of analysis, which is at the same time what allows philosophy to go on when it seems to have reached an end and thus it seems impossible to continue. Antiphilosophy is the non-conditional way of transforming philosophy – but not by being a willing helper or physician. There thus can be a reconciliation between a position that Badiou voluntarily identified as a position of peace (philosophy) and a position emphasizing conflict (psychoanalysis),⁶⁷ since, rather than this,

there appears a productive conflict between a position that ultimately aims at reconciliation – this great Hegelian word – and another that emphasizes the irreconcilable. Reconciling reconciliation and conflict must then lead to a mode of reconciling reconciliation with the irreconcilable. To examine the peace-meal that is shared between the position of peace and that of war in piecing together war and peace, the following is not an attempt at unnecessary pacification. Rather it explores what if peace (or reconciliation) can be understood as a mode of working with war, of philosophy working with psychoanalysis – not to remain within a situation of war, but to exit it. But to modify one of the famous Lacanian adages, namely that analysis has to deliver anxiety in the right dosages, we might ask: what is the right dose of antiphilosophy (for philosophy to be reactivated, reformatted)? To answer this question, it is again crucial to give an answer to the question: what had incapacitated philosophy?

This answer will allow for a Heideggerian condition to be identified that reinscribes a poetic framing of pre-philosophical thought into philosophy, which then in effect exhausts the contemporary potentials of philosophy. It is this condition and its effects that provides the precondition for Lacan's intervention, which interrupts the Heideggerian productive neo-regressive suture with an at least twofold gesture: it emphasizes that pre-philosophical poetic thought can be read in another, non-poetic and this means: in a formal manner, as if it were a *matheme* (against Heidegger) and it thereby reinforces a split history of philosophy itself which de-sutures Heidegger's suture of philosophy by reinscribing the letter differently.

3. Nihil Bound: Heidegger

The signifier that allows us to enter Badiou's discussion of the last universally recognizable philosopher with whom "an entire epoch of thought and its concerns"⁶⁸ closes, is "nihilism." "Nihilism" describes a result of what Heidegger addresses in terms of technique, which only uses resources and knows being only as a resource. Technique puts being to work in a *service du biens*, a *service du being*, to pun badly, on the ground of a supposed *subiectum*, that is the *sujet supposé encadrer* all that is. Philosophy diagnoses that nihilism manifests in the measuring and measured technical production and administration of being as if it were an object; of a being or, more precisely, of beings in their totality, of *Seiendes im Ganzen*, and thus in their technological enframing, in a *Gestell*.⁶⁹ Thus science becomes the suppression of existence under the technical will to power,⁷⁰ which implements a deracination from being that leads to nihilistic consequences because the reign of technique only has one aim – its own reproduction. For Badiou as with Heidegger this deracination originated in Greek mathematics, wherein there is a "irreversible... unleashing of the power of the letter"⁷¹ which ruptures previous forms of

thought. But, for Badiou, this deracination is misidentified by Heidegger, since he fuses the Greek and the Galilean moment and thinks that science, mathematics, i.e. the letter is technology.⁷² For Badiou, “the matheme is not” and has nothing to do with “technical nihilism.”⁷³ Nihilism cannot be matheme-atical as the matheme is not technological.⁷⁴

But, for Heidegger, the *aletheia* came under the yoke of the *idea*, as his famous and harsh critique of Plato epitomized, which marks a forgetting of difference under the inscription of an obscuring signifier. And this is the background against which Heidegger, for Badiou, reads the history of capitalism and the history of literalization – the matheme qua part of technique⁷⁵ – as well as the history of rational argumentation as one and the same and fuses them with the history of philosophy. Nihilism for Badiou’s Heidegger has the following characteristics: it implies an obscuration of the world (vs. the bright rational light of the Greek world⁷⁶), leads to a flight of the Gods, to the destruction of the earth,⁷⁷ to the unification of the masses of human beings, and to a desacralization of being which is allowed for by an decoupling or unbinding of the letter from being itself.⁷⁸ All these claimed-to-be-nihilistic consequences manifest in a history of philosophy that can therefore be taken to be a unilateral embodiment of the oblivion of being. Whatever Badiou’s far-reaching critique of Heidegger will be,⁷⁹ he makes the following clear: Heidegger is a philosopher, because he affirmatively reasserts, even forcefully endorses, the claim that being qua being can be thought. Thereby Heidegger made ontology – which had become if not impossible at least dubious in the aftermath of Kant’s critical project – possible again.⁸⁰

But for Heidegger it is not philosophy that can do this job, since philosophy lost its soul when it lost being. This is the additional component of nihilism. For philosophy in Heidegger also diagnoses a strange exhaustion of its own capacity to diagnose nihilism. Philosophy emphasizes that there is nihilism but this diagnosis leaves everyone indifferent, and *this* precisely *is* nihilism.⁸¹ Thus can philosophy now be identified with its own history, which history is presumed to be homogenous. Different from its framing in Descartes – where philosophical articulation breaks with, and in this sense is independent from, history – through Heidegger – and for Badiou the intermediary position within the history of philosophy that enabled such a take is that of Hegel – philosophy now becomes intelligible against the background of its own history. Philosophy is no longer an illness, as in Nietzsche⁸², but becomes what Freud would have called a case.

Nihilism here becomes a case study of how there is an unavoidable incapacitation of philosophy due to its very mode of operativity, which is only properly legible from the perspective of its history. Nihilism is philosophy not only as a lost cause but also as a lost case. For it is its own history that culminated in the absolute exhaustion of all potentials of its discursive continuation.⁸³ So we are no longer looking for a cure for

philosophy. Rather, we have to diagnose its demise and execute it quickly and adequately. To have the patience of the concept then means that the doctor – diagnosing nihilism – needs to assert that the patient – the concept – is dead already and cannot be reanimated. Thinking can know all this, which is why it was ill-behaving for some time within the form of (onto-theological) philosophy. For Heidegger, there thus must be a change of the very form of practice, from philosophy to thought, from *Philosophie zu Denken*.⁸⁴

Badiou affirms that Heidegger's readings of poets are singular⁸⁵ – even though he assumes that they ultimately neglect the very form of the poem – and he contends that his “anti-bourgeois radicalism”⁸⁶ – which turns him into a feudal socialist⁸⁷ who flirts with populist forms of romanticism that end up being a reactionary – must mainly be appreciated as linked to his project of reinvigorating the thought of being qua being. And even though Badiou identifies in Heidegger a “hyper-nazi” – that is a nazi for whom Hitler's Nazism did not go far enough⁸⁸ – there is no Nazism in the assumption that thought can think being qua being. But it was Heidegger's resuscitation of ontology that made him, after the war, seek the remedy to nihilism – this is after late Heidegger's engagement – solely in an engagement with poetry. When philosophy's discourse is exhausted and incapacitated, at least in this influential case, (Heidegger's) hope lies with the poets, i.e. with another, a different form of discourse; with another form of saying “it”. Poets speak indirectly.

This also means that with Heidegger philosophy assumed that philosophy had ended. And this is at the ground of all kinds of possible suture: “[t]he modern blockage of philosophy is suture”⁸⁹, Badiou once proclaimed. A suture marks the philosophical assumption that it is not philosophy but only one of philosophy's conditions that can think (its) time.⁹⁰ But thinking time through poetry prevents thinking time – at least sometimes. And this is the result of Heidegger's proposal that the poets are the only true Safe Haven of being, which led him to believe that the form of thought that historically preceded philosophy – in his interpretation – and that he saw a way out in the subversion of any form of technologized science. The way out is the way back, since pre-philosophical (and this means pre-Socratic) thought provides the exit from philosophy's internal – technical and worsening dynamic of the – will to power and enframing. This is to say that for Badiou's Heidegger philosophy was unable to do what it was supposed to do, and so Heidegger assigned its previous task to the poets – the task to think being. In this way poetry is deemed to be able to do what philosophy cannot. This is a defining feature of the “age of poets”.⁹¹ The poets of the age of poets think un-objectively, through a “method” of disobjectivation.⁹² *Dichtend Denken*, thinking poetically, is now what replaces philosophy, and this is the consequence of the Heideggerian undoing of philosophy when it reaches its culmination.⁹³ For Heidegger, in this rendering, philosophy

was exhausted: it came to an end and therefore one had to turn back the clock. He thus unended the end of philosophy and began anew, but not with philosophy, but rather with a form of poetic thought or suturing of thought to poetic form.

Poetic thought undoes objectivity and it undoes the objective condition of thought. This does not turn it into a form of subjective expression, but rather into something in-objective.⁹⁴ It enables it to be thought that thinking can be conditioned by something that is not an object; that thinking is also not the objective ground layer, the *subiectum* of modern thought – that such ground-ing could be undone. This culminates in an attempt to again become pre-Socratic: it is an attempt to locate the disjunction of thought from any object and thereby from the technological framing of science in a poetic form of thinking and saying. It is possible to think being qua being in a form of discourse that does not objectify; Heidegger is for Badiou “the only one who has tried to pursue, to establish in philosophy the process of destituting the object and thus the idea that the category of the object is an obstacle to all thought of being.”⁹⁵ Heidegger is why the poetic form of discourse becomes crucial. Its form is that of the discursive event, and an event is not a thing. It is not even a no-thing, but some-thing that takes place, that happens. Poetic thought can register that which being is, an event, a donation – for Heidegger.⁹⁶ As Badiou claims: “The poem founds being in speech and is not an expression of it”⁹⁷ and hence we get here, in Heidegger’s understanding, a finally objectless discourse of being qua being.⁹⁸ With Heidegger’s turn, with his immense turning back of the clock – for “Heidegger fled to Greece”⁹⁹ – the poets become our pre-Socratics. And Heidegger becomes an effect of this alter-modern and alter-Platonic counter-historical undoing. Heidegger becomes our, and that is “a new”, Parmenides.¹⁰⁰ This means there is a novel beginning of thought – for and with Heidegger – and potentially also of philosophy – for Badiou. This is how to make sense of Heidegger again raising the question of how philosophy begins at all. This question is linked to the name of Parmenides. For Parmenides is “not, or not yet, philosophy”¹⁰¹, and with the novel Parmenides, Heidegger, – and this is his success – philosophy is not, or will now no longer be, philosophy.

But here everything depends on “the position of Parmenides in the Greek tradition” for an account of this leads to “more than the position of Parmenides in the Greek tradition.” Parmenides is the one who falls out of the Greek tradition. This is because, within the tradition, Parmenides thinks, for the first time, against it; he exceeds it, thinks and embodies a peculiar threat it is facing. This is to say, to mobilize a claim by Klaus Heinrich, that “the threat of non-being” is what is at stake in such an account of Parmenides.¹⁰² Thinking through such threat is instructive for philosophy – especially when it just seems to have confronted its very own non-being.

For Badiou, Parmenides has always been the name linked to the beginning of philosophy, because “he proposed an entirely novel knot between three concepts, that of being, of thought and that of non-being.”¹⁰³ Parmenides thus founds philosophy without being the first proper philosopher – this is Plato. Parmenides, rather, is the first thinker who proposes the new form of conceptual knotting - philosophy - and he does this in a way that is constitutive for any philosophy, namely in the form a rational argument – the apagogical demonstration – that breaks with the form of mythical narrative or mystical experience that dominated before.¹⁰⁴ For “philosophy begins when one breaks with experience.”¹⁰⁵ Thus with Parmenides, the father¹⁰⁶, “the master”¹⁰⁷ – and therein similar to the new Parmenides that is Heidegger – there is a “new regime of the functioning of discourse”¹⁰⁸ whose expression is poetic – it is a poem – but whose operation is not.¹⁰⁹ For, certainly, one feature of this discourse is that of “poetic saying. The other is the firmness of the consequences”¹¹⁰ that follows an “imperative of formalization”¹¹¹ that allows what is bound together to be separated, namely: being, thinking, and non-being.¹¹² Parmenides speaks thus in the form of a knotting proof, of a real demonstration. His name stands for “an event of thought.”¹¹³

Heidegger sought to undo the history of philosophy, from Plato to the 20th century, and return to this “event of thought” that he identified with an event of being. But for Badiou, Heidegger’s making-thought-presocratic-again allows as its consequence for more than just a return. It allows – potentially – for a novel Plato, if there is another (repetition of philosophy’s foundational) parricide. Can one kill – the new – Daddy – again? If, as Werner Jaeger noted in his interpretation, the Parmenidean Goddess as linked to the symbol Y, which formalizes a bifurcation that compels a decision, then Parmenides allows for a possible passage, a possible choice: kill him or do not kill him. A return to Parmenides is thus a return to a choice, to a potential novel or different commencement.¹¹⁴ But how to pass onto choosing?

4. The Permission to Pass

The first condition of passing is that one must “desuture Heidegger”¹¹⁵ and this cannot be done by means of another twist in Heidegger’s deconstruction. This can also not be done by means of poetry alone. Rather what Badiou in 1987-88 proclaimed as “the end of the age of poets”¹¹⁶ must entail a break with the poetic suturing, a break that must repeat philosophy’s first foundation. This first foundation was a rupture of the suturing of thought to poetic form by means of the matheme. The big letter was turned small.¹¹⁷ But how was this turn possible? How to end the end of philosophy in its novel-Parmenidean guise? How to begin again, properly? It is crucial to recall that what “ends something is never an end, but an event.”¹¹⁸ This is precisely why Lacan plays the crucial role that he

plays for Badiou. Since if “philosophy has been born under the condition of the matheme”, then it is precisely the emphasis on the matheme under Heideggerian conditions that allows philosophy’s birth to repeat. And this is how Lacan’s antiphilosophical act is registered. Re-mathematization.¹¹⁹ After our poetic-and-no-longer-apagogic Parmenides, Lacan allows for a repetition of the killing of the father - for a repetition of Plato. This is *un pas de plus*, another step which is a step that has already been taken. But which has never been taken in this way. This is novelty through and in the mode of repetition. Lacan – who translated Heidegger’s “Logos” text into French – enabled a renewal of contemporary philosophy by performing a torsion on the post-Heideggerian poetically sutured condition of philosophy.

Thus a modern philosophy is only possible if it is “able to withstand the challenge of Lacan”,¹²⁰ because it owes to Lacan the philosophically challenging defense and renewal of the Cartesian subject under post-Heideggerian conditions. This is what Badiou describes as a “counter current that is heroic.”¹²¹ But Lacan’s gesture also splits philosophy’s previous commencement into two. He asserted, first, that the whole history of philosophy has been Parmenidean: “the supposition that being itself thinks is what founds the philosophical tradition from Parmenides onwards.”¹²² If the philosophical tradition can be unified through the thesis that being thinks, then Parmenides is what unifies philosophy,¹²³ unifies the assumption that it is the same to think and to be.¹²⁴ As we move from Parmenides to the new Parmenides, Heidegger, being is still assumed to think. We move, with Badiou, from Parmenides through Descartes, Hegel and Nietzsche to Heidegger, and the latter is so successful in his endeavor that we seem to have not moved at all – even though we can now totalize anew. What Lacan enables Badiou to detect is that philosophy has thus far moved from Parmenides to a new Parmenides without ever properly reaching Plato. With Lacan we can thus make *un pas de plus*, another not: after Heidegger there is no philosophy but thought, but then there is antiphilosophy, and this is how we can actually start to get moving again: by moving – and thinking – what is not there, non-being. With this move we have already started leaving Parmenides behind. Psychoanalysis allows for an end of the end of philosophy - and it allows us to see in the end of philosophy a precondition for philosophy’s continuation.

Thus we can shed light on the complicated “peace treaty” between philosophy and psychoanalysis: Lacanian psychoanalysis, by being-anti, potentially allows for that which is dead to be brought back to life by negating that which is not – down with death! Lacanian psychoanalysis thereby makes it possible to conceive of an entirely new concatenation of the “fundamental knot of being, non-being and thought”¹²⁵ because Lacan can be read as changing the status of the Pre-Socratics post-Heidegger. This allows him not to oppose, “as Heidegger did, the Pre-Socratic poem to Plato’s matheme, [rather] Lacan has the powerful idea that poetry was the closest thing to the mathematization available to the Pre-Socratics.”¹²⁶

Lacan detects a trace of the matheme – and *this* is the change in the very ontology of the letter. It is with this act that Lacan makes possible a “modern Platonism”¹²⁷, a repetition of Plato. It allows for a repetition of the parricide (which Plato commits in the *Sophist*) of Parmenides, with the new Parmenides, by emphasizing the matheme. By affirming that love originates in an encounter Lacan enables it to be thought that there can be a novel thought of being that emerges eventually – without being being an event.

Badiou suggests – in *Being and Event* – that the hitherto history of philosophy has its template in Plato’s difficult, multi-hypothetical *Parmenides* dialogue; that before Heidegger the history of philosophy remained within the first half this dialogue (which is to say it debates with great refinement the intricacies of the assumption that the One is), and that it is through Lacanian antiphilosophy that one can now pass on to the dialogue’s second half. After Lacan we move from the assumption that the One *is*, to an account of ‘there is one’ - of *il y a de l’un* - which is, effectively, the taking of another step - the *un pas de plus* - toward what will be called a “Platonism of the multiple.”¹²⁸ Lacan, therefore, is exactly the thinker who “completes contemporary antiphilosophy.”¹²⁹ He allows to totalize antiphilosophy such that we understand, for the first time fully, what it is. This is not because Lacan formulated the most antiphilosophical of all antiphilosophies, rather because he repeatedly demonstrated that psychoanalysis is essentially incomplete and incompleting; that analysis is also it incompletes philosophy because it forces a rearticulation of the philosophical concept of the subject.¹³⁰ If philosophy can never get rid of the sophists, but it can “reduce them to silence”¹³¹, what does its reaction to antiphilosophy needs to be (especially when it completed its incompleting)? With Lacanian psychoanalysis it becomes clear that philosophy, rather than to listen to the sophists, has to listen to antiphilosophers.¹³² Philosophy has to learn to listen to those who are the professionals (not of speaking but) of listening themselves.

With Lacan¹³³ we “are... the contemporaries of a second epoch of the doctrine of the subject. It is no longer the founding subject.... The contemporary subject is void, cleaved, a-substantial, and ir-reflexive.”¹³⁴ Lacanian antiphilosophy brings a historicization of the conception of the subject to philosophy – to a concept which in Badiou finds its place cleaved between the undecideability of the event and the indiscernability of truth. It could only find his place, as I argued, because antiphilosophy forced philosophy to think subjectivity anew and thereby allowed for a renewal of philosophy in general. This force of transformation is different from the mode in which, in Badiou, the conditions force philosophy to think truth anew, because the conditions demand philosophy to formalize a contemporary space of compossibility (for the truths established in them), whereas the impact of antiphilosophy on philosophy forces to conceive of the being of non-being differently. It concerns the taking place of the “pure existence which determines the being of the subject.”¹³⁵

Thereby it is antiphilosophy that enables us to think anew of “the knot of being, subject and truth.”¹³⁶ Lacanian antiphilosophy performs a torsion that leads to a renewal of philosophy. Why? Because it allows to think anew that which is not, i.e. in this historically specific space: philosophy.

5. Two-Step

After and with Heidegger philosophy admitted its own incapacity. Lacan’s torsion elevated this incapacity to a point of impossibility, where it becomes clear how to end the end of philosophy by traversing this end and thereby establishing the coordinates for philosophy’s renewed continuation; it becomes possible to detect the point one needs to change it. For Heidegger metaphysics forgot being in terms of physis, for Lacan “metaphysics is the possibility to think non-physics”¹³⁷, of that which is neither one nor being. This has far-reaching consequences, one of which is that it allows to conceive of being qua being – now that we are in the second half of Plato’s Parmenidean dialogue – in the form of multiples of nothing, which is why to conceive of “pure multiplicity” is “Lacanian.”¹³⁸ The Heideggerian diagnosis and reinstatement of the incapacitation of philosophy was elevated to a point of impossibility, notably to think through what seemed to be impossible, that the inconsistent multiple (derivable from the meaningless name of being) is what there is. It made it possible to conceive of the fact that there is no being unless it is named, and that the meaningless name of being cannot but be the result of an event that took place in the discourse on being, which therefore can be thought to be situated outside of philosophy in the practice of formalization that operates with the *matheme*. It is only at this point that we are in a position where we can think that there is no there is, and that the only reason that there is any there is must be because something that happened has been named. Such creative rethinking of what is not revitalized the “plasticity of philosophy.”¹³⁹

That for Badiou, Lacan’s only imperative is “dissolve”¹⁴⁰, to dissipate, to disband, to unbind, here becomes plausible. He unbinds the post-Heideggerian condition by interrupting it, an interruption which works by 1. breaking the Heideggerian suture between poetic thought and philosophy and thereby also breaks 2. the identification of poetry and ontology, which in turn enables 3. to identify ontology with mathematics. But the identification of mathematics and ontology is a meta-ontological thesis that stands itself under the condition 1. of the detachment of the letter from any objective dimension (i.e. under the condition of poetry), and 2. under the condition that ontology – the science of being qua being since Aristotle – is not a science of some given thing, but rather the science of something that can only be approached from the perspective of an encounter (which for Badiou is Lacan’s definition of love). The account of being that ontology as mathematics gives is a result of an event (in the discourse on being). Philosophy, as meta-ontology, then articulates what

this means by also mobilizing the *matheme*, as that which formalizes the impasse of formalization in ontology. Meta-ontologically the *matheme* therefore becomes the *matheme* of the event.

This is a philosophical working through of an antiphilosophical proto-evental or para-evental transformation of philosophy. This is why Badiou can state that philosophy and psychoanalysis share what he calls two common borders: those of the *matheme* and of love. The *matheme* is the mode in which the letter is unbound from reference and sense: it allows transmission and for a knowledge of a truth that cannot be known, precisely because it does not transmit any content and there is nothing to be known in it.¹⁴¹ For Badiou, then antiphilosophers are therefore “very useful for philosophy” and this not only because they articulate contemporary objections (this why they share something with the sophists), but because “we must learn from them about the form of universality.”¹⁴² Even though psychoanalysis is not primarily about education, philosophy is forced to learn from it, from what it passes on.¹⁴³ But how does philosophy learn? There are a number of answers that Badiou gives, all of which are important for the peace-treaty picture I am drawing here. When Badiou states that that the Parmenidean form of presocratic poetry (especially because it is co-originating with mathematics as demonstrative discipline) can be read in two ways - namely as poetry or as a poetic form of formalization, i.e. as proto-*matheme* - this reading splits the Parmenidean discourse into a hardly decipherable two. It indicates that its amphibological undecidability is an indication of the fact that philosophy needs to think undecidability – identify in it a choice – as this is how it can relate to the event of thought that was Parmenides. It is an event of thought that is neither conditional nor philosophical but establishes both in a form yet to become clearly worked out.

With Badiou’s Lacan we have a poetic-Heideggerian Parmenides and one that is proto-mathematical. But Lacan also split the pre-philosophical condition into again, into another two, because against Parmenides’ ontology of the one, he endorses what Badiou calls the “primacy of discord”¹⁴⁴ with which he identifies the position of Heraclitus. And it is the latter who allows us to think the “non-relation’s chronological priority over relation.”¹⁴⁵

Lacan completes antiphilosophy by traversing philosophy’s fantasy of its own end, by ending its end, by radically splitting – and displacing – its beginning: the passage from Parmenides to Heraclitus. Thus can Badiou affirmatively cite Lacan’s claim from Seminar XX that “Parmenides was wrong and Heraclitus was right.”¹⁴⁶ Badiou’s Lacan completes antiphilosophy because he is enables us to dialectize not only the history of philosophy but its extimate link to (the history of) antiphilosophy. Its original formula is: Parmenides vs Heraclitus. It is what allows us “to formalize the internal dialectics of antiphilosophy.”¹⁴⁷ Another step in the dialectic of end and beginning – a two-step.

6. To End: Badiou's Passage

Badiou repeatedly ends many of his texts on psychoanalytic antiphilosophy with a call for courage, inter alia the courage “to accomplish one more step.”¹⁴⁸ This is because Heidegger actually provided the condition of nihilism with its most radical expression in philosophy by ending philosophy – Heidegger made philosophy courageously anxious – and thereby shook up the foundations of philosophy and thought only to discover a more profound, namely poetic, foundation. Lacan radicalized this foundation by unbinding and voiding it again, by aiding at desturing Heidegger. The subjective – and affective – name of such shaking, voiding, and unbinding is anxiety.¹⁴⁹ But Lacan pointed to more than just anxiety, notably when he stated in 1973 that “love can only actualize what, in a sort of poetic flight, in order to make myself understood I called courage.”¹⁵⁰ In my reading, Badiou's philosophy follows this Lacanian dictate and directive and radicalizes it. It attempts to take another subtractive step, at adding another minus, *un pas de plus*¹⁵¹, by finding the courage to continue after what ended the end (of philosophy) itself ended. Furthermore, in this argumentative framework, what notably also comes to the fore is the (mytheme-atic) history of antiphilosophy itself. Badiou once stated that the late Lacan resembled Oedipus at Colonus, that is an old man who dies and disappears, but who does this so slowly that he becomes increasingly erratic while fading away.¹⁵² Could this not also be more than just an individual destiny? Can there, in other words, not also be an exhaustion of antiphilosophy? How one answers these questions that concern the proper historicity of antiphilosophy, has consequences for the very status of antiphilosophy.

However this may be, philosophy, as Badiou has demonstrated, needs courage to face anxiety (and discord) – it needs courage to face antiphilosophy – and this allows another step to be taken, allows for one *not* more. Antiphilosophy, thus, is the cause of an anxiety specific to philosophy, and it is exactly by producing such anxiety that it serves as guide to a novel courageous reconciliation.¹⁵³ The next step to be taken will have been the step to a novel parricide. From (a new) Parmenides – through (a new) Heraclitus – to (a new) Plato. This passage will have been universally recognized. It will have been Badiou's passage – the passage of our Plato.

1 Badiou 2005, p. 122.
 2 Goethe 1913, p. 103f.
 3 Badiou 2011, p. 11.
 4 Lacan 1988, pp. 198f.
 5 Ibid.
 6 Badiou 2017a, p. 210.
 7 Badiou 1997, p. 46. Badiou therefore claims that psychoanalysis “almost... prepares for a modern Platonism.” Ibid., p. 52. Translations here and in the following are all my own, F.R..
 8 Badiou 2017a, p. 202. The difference between the two, as Badiou will not tire repeating, concerns the localization of the void. Psychoanalysis localizes it in the subject, philosophy in being. Cf. for example: *ibid.*, p. 202f. This marks also a practical difference that concerns the status of the “act”, for it either opens up – through its universality – to being qua being or to the subject’s interlinkage of being and non-being. Cf. again: *ibid.*, p. 205. Badiou will claim that “in its being the subject is nothing other than a truth grasped in its pure point” and a truth “provides an access to being that is ... not known.” *Ibid.*, p. 209.
 9 It is not by accident, that many of Badiou’s texts on psychoanalysis end with a claim to courage. I will return to this below.
 10 Badiou 2015a, p. 164,
 11 Badiou 1993-1994.
 12 “Philosophy is in crisis, this much is evident.” Badiou 2022, p. 32.
 13 Badiou has recently argued that philosophy must always traverse such a nihilism and make the move from 0 not only to 1, but, ultimately, to the infinite. He compared this very move to a move from nihilism to an affirmation that he then identified with a non-theological form of “absolute knowing.” Cf. Badiou 2023a, pp. 124-131.
 14 Grosrichard 2012, p. 224.
 15 Deleuze 2002, p. 8.
 16 Žižek 1993, p. 3f. This analysis is particular interesting as Badiou himself suggested that it is no one else but Kant who gave “a philosophical form to antiphilosophy itself. To show philosophically that the philosophical pretension can only stir up air.” Badiou 1994, p. 24. Brought together, we can assume that it is precisely a neo-Kantian turn post-Hegel which creates the conditions in which Lacanian antiphilosophy intervenes – for Kant “proposes to ruin the dogmatic edifices of metaphysics [and] proposes a philosophy at the limits of antiphilosophy.” Badiou 2023b, p. 68. Soler, different from Žižek, suggests that Lacan in his gesture against philosophy is in line with the ideological developments of his time (and does not oppose them), cf. Soler 2006. Regnault claims that the “anti” does not mark a position that would contradict philosophy. Cf. Regnault 1997, p. 73. Badiou himself subsumes Lacan at one point under the general tendency to oppose “the Plato symptom” that has been defining for

the late 19th and entire 20th century. Cf. Badiou 2017c, p. 229. But he also recognizes that Lacan proclaimed at one point that already Plato was Lacanian. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 236.

17 This reading is obviously complicated by Lacan’s explicit – 1973 – question whether, different from “a philosophy that culminates in Hegel’s discourse” and which Lacan then identifies with “the idea of historical progression”, “the formalization of mathematical logic, which is based on writing serves us in the analytic process....?” Cf. Lacan 1988, p. 93.

18 Badiou 2003a, p. 31ff. For Badiou this leads to a “milieu”, which emphasizes “anthropology, language-empiricism and skepticism against any possible ontology.” Badiou 2015a, p. 42. It is against this background that Bruno Bosteels is justified to suggest that “today the dominant philosophical attitude is in fact thoroughly antiphilosophical in nature, even if the label itself is not always used or accepted.” Bosteels 2008, p. 161.

19 Badiou 2007, p. 1.

20 This marks a particularly tricky rendering of the (non-)relationship of psychoanalysis and philosophy – a kind of impasse and thus an indication of a possible passage –, since thus far, at least for Badiou, “neither has psychoanalysis interrupted philosophy nor has philosophy been able to deconstruct psychoanalysis.” Badiou 2017a, p. 206. The efficacy of either vis-à-vis the other was thus starkly limited. Below I suggest a peace treaty of how an interruption allows for a deconstruction.

21 Badiou 2022, p. 28.

22 It is, as Badiou once stated, “an apparatus of duplicity” – a designation which describes “an operation” – that allows for an act in the form of thought such that psychoanalysis can “make holes in philosophy.” Badiou 2017c, p. 246.

23 Badiou 2006, p. 7.

24 Badiou 1991, p. 133.

25 In a pointed formulation this can be reformulated by stating that “the differend between philosophy and antiphilosophy can be resumed in a simplified manner such that antiphilosophy discards truth because it is senseless, while philosophy defends truth because it is senseless.” Weise 2025, p. 67.

26 Lacan claimed that Kierkegaard was guided by a “paranormal anxiety” and thereby sought – against Hegel – that anxiety allows for an experience of the limit of the concept, as it is itself a limit-concept. Cf. Lacan 2014, p. 18 and see also: p. 533. For Badiou, this is an indication that Lacan is an antiphilosopher because in “antiphilosophy it is never on the side of reason that one has to search for the true.” Badiou 2023b, p. 68.

27 Badiou 2019a, p. 67.

28 This is the reason as to why Badiou in other contexts has suggested that such

a singularization linked to the concept of experience – think again of Paul’s antiphilosophical foundation of universalism with regard to which Badiou suggested that “the subjective position figure[s] as decisive factor in discourse” (Badiou 2003c, p. 17) – comes close to affirming that truth is ultimately subjective (and hence not universally accessible). For this especially cf. *ibid.*, pp. 27f. The antiphilosophical project in this case is thus “to redefine ‘truth’ itself” (Bosteels 2008, p. 171). But Lacan has a specific place in this category as he does not “purely oppose sense to truth”, “as is the case for many other antiphilosophers.” Badiou 2023b, p. 64. Adrian Johnston has, not only for this reason, suggested that Lacan is rather a “paraphilosopher whose interweavings of psychoanalytic and the philosophical” is genuinely creative and path-opening. Johnston 2014, p. 250.

29 Badiou 2003c, p. 31. This formal classification makes it certainly not always easy to place thinkers like Marx or Freud within the category of antiphilosophy, even though both – for slightly different reasons – are classified as antiphilosophers. One rendering of the immanent systematic incompleteness of Lacan’s oeuvre can be found in: Milner 2021, pp. 102ff.

30 Badiou 1992, p. 84.

31 I am saying “function” here in the same way in which Badiou has used the term in the following self-description: “For today’s French Marxists, the function of Lacan is the function that Hegel served for the German revolutionaries of the 1840s.” Badiou 2009a, p. 4. This also means that I will not explore Badiou’s disagreement with Lacan and its specific points, but only how the antiphilosophical renewal of philosophy can be conceived of.

32 A highly important – even though critical – rendering of Badiou’s rendering of Lacan – in Badiouian spirit – can be found in: Chiesa 2024. The long-standing discussion with my friend Lorenzo Chiesa and our collective and systematic close-re-reading Badiou’s *Being and Event* project has had many direct repercussions on my attempt to bring together conceptually Badiou and Hegel (after Badiou’s critique of Hegel).

33 Chiesa 2024, p. 2.

34 Bosteels 2008, p. 188. Also instructive for this context with a focus on Lacan: Soler 2006.

35 Bosteels 2008, p. 161.

36 Chiesa 2024, p. 3. This dimension is “in its element in Christianity.” Badiou 1994, p. 49.

37 Badiou 1991b, p. 25.

38 Badiou 2007, p. 3.

39 Badiou 1991b, p. 25. Chiesa adds to this that Lacan’s position for Badiou is also not defined by an animosity vis-à-vis science and the critique of philosophy does not aim at an outright rejection, but rather an emphasizing “that philosophy is and

has always been inherently *split*.” Chiesa 2024, p. 5.

40 Badiou clearly emphasizes that the antiphilosophical proximity to or wrestling with Christianity, say in Paul, Pascal, Rousseau, Kierkegaard or Wittgenstein, is unique in Lacan’s case. Since Lacan is “the only true rationalist of the group.” Cf. Badiou 1994, p. 19.

41 Badiou 1994, p. 23. The obvious example regarding Lacan’s relation to philosophy – in Badiou’s rendering – is its neglect of enjoyment and its negligence toward the Thing to which it is attached (for this also cf. Balmés 1999). The antiphilosophical names are Heraclitus and Paul, Pascal, Rousseau and Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein and Lacan. Sometimes Badiou adds Freud, Marx and Foucault to this list.

42 Such a line of argumentation can, for example, be found in Lacan 2013.

43 As Badiou puts it: “Lacan’s basic claim is that as philosophy is an instance of the master’s discourse, what opposes it is the ethics of the discourse of the analyst.” Badiou 2017c, p. 228.

44 Cf. Lacan 2001, p. 314. As I am not focusing on Lacan’s own, vacillating use of the term “antiphilosophy” here – as I am mainly interested in what this concept does within Badiou’s philosophy – I, again, refer the reader to Chiesa 2024.

45 That this is linked, in psychoanalysis, to the discovery of the unconscious is apparent.

46 Badiou 2003c, p. 58.

47 More precisely it is not only formalization but also an affect – anxiety – that in Badiou’s reading of Lacan is the bearer of truth (cf. Badiou 2023b, p. 68). For the general line of this argument, cf. for example: Badiou 2010. This is why Badiou claims that “Lacan’s thesis is that the Real is external to the antinomy of knowing and not-knowing .” Badiou 2017e, p. 58. For reasons indicated, I here leave aside the complexities of Badiou’s account of the Real as *ab-sens*.

48 Badiou 2009a, p. 67. This is directly linked to Badiou’s claim that from psychoanalysis philosophy can learn that “every truth emerges from having found a pass in the impasse....” Badiou 2017a, p. 206.

49 Badiou 1992, p. 84.

50 This is, in one of Badiou’s articulations, a particularly vexing task as Lacan’s position itself divides into “two paths that are undoubtedly incompatible”, namely into an endorsement of logical intuitionism, which negates actual infinity, and into an endorsement of Cantorian set theory, which seeks to think through it. Badiou 2017b, p. 214. The charge then is repeated, in more drastic terms (as “ultimately, Lacan remained pre-Cantorian” (*ibid.*, p. 219)) and rendered such that Lacan’s is ultimately a finitizing structuralism that places actual infinity as the inaccessible distance that separates 1 and 2. But, as Badiou claimed once earlier on, it is as if Lacan sides

with one position, “but points” at another and this other is”, which is where we want to get.” Badiou 2009b, p. 161. However, from 1992 till today Badiou defends the claim that “the Lacanian doctrine of the subject is essentially finite....” Badiou 2017b, p. 225.

51 That is a concept that is, for example, different from the philosophical concept of religion (which is constituted by the equivalating of meaning and truth) and from the concept of sophistry (to which I will return).

52 Badiou 2017b, p. 227. He states at one point that he made “antiphilosophy one of my concepts.” Badiou 2025, p. 262.

53 Badiou 2017f, p. 139f.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

55 Badiou stated in 1991: “Neither am I nor have I been Lacanian or Anti-Lacanian.” Badiou 2011b, p. 123.

56 One of the crucial questions is if it is an anti-philosophical philosophy (as suggested above) or a truth procedure (cf. *ibid.*, p. 142) or as Lacan worried at some point, ultimately, a renewed form of religion. Another way of approaching this question would be to examine in what precise way psychoanalysis necessitates a concept of the idea (or of the absolute). *Inter alia* in 1992, Badiou suggests that Lacan’s thought represents an event for the condition of love. Cf. Badiou 2011c, p. 135.

57 To be clear, with this comparison I am not suggesting that Lacan is *per se* Kantian for Badiou. As the latter stated clearly: “Lacan dodges the trap of criticism and is in no way a Kantian. The feat he accomplishes is to propose neither that the real is unknowable nor that it is knowable.” Badiou 2017e, p. 58.

58 Hegel 1991, p. 19.

59 Badiou 2018, p. 15.

60 However, Badiou also claims that Lacan at some point appears proximate to a sophist – a position that afterwards Barbara Cassin championed – because a sophist is “strictly indistinguishable from the philosopher” if not by his or her harsh negations of philosophy and assumption of a predominance of *lalangue*. In this formulation it sounds as if the antiphilosopher in its most elevated manner learns from the sophist and makes himself indistinguishable from the philosopher, without being a sophist. Cf. Badiou 1991a, p. 136. A game of hide-and-seek in minimal differences.

61 Badiou 2007, p. 3.

62 Badiou 2018, p. 20.

63 *Ibid.*

64 The reason for this is because “the imaginary of the sophist is that there is an omnipotence of language: this is the idea that language is unbound from the real and that one does not need to care for the real.” The sophist is here thus different from the antiphilosopher as the latter, “pastes the real into the symbolic: he

believes there to be a radical deficiency of the symbolic which is, in his view, more or less imaginary.” Badiou 2025, p. 292.

65 To end the end, is Badiou’s early version of what he later will articulate in the slogan “down with death!”.

66 Badiou 2016, p. 27.

67 Badiou 1989.

68 *Ibid.*

69 Heidegger 1977, p. 20.

70 Badiou 2017d, p. 121.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

74 That psychoanalysis plays a specific role in “contemporary nihilism” that stands “under the emblem of enjoyment”, Badiou elaborates in p. 54ff.

75 Badiou 2017d, p. 37.

76 Badiou 2015b, p. 52f.

77 For Badiou this indicates the German character of ecology, cf. *ibid.*

78 This desacralization could also – and ought to be rather – read as subtraction, as Badiou notes, cf. *ibid.*, 54. Desacralization then becomes a proper condition for a modern understanding of the infinite. Cf. Badiou 1992, p. 56f.

79 This critique is multilayered and has to do with the suturing of philosophy to poetry, with the interpretation of Parmenides, with the status of the subject, with the assumption that being is fundamentally a question without answer and with the status – and the understanding – of poetry.

80 Cf. Badiou 2019b, p. 142.

81 For a longer account, cf. Ruda 2023.

82 Cf. Heidegger 1991.

83 For this, cf. Badiou, 2016, p. 46f.

84 Cf. Badiou 2019b, p. 151.

85 Cf. Badiou 2017d, p. 54.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

87 Badiou 1992, p. 52.

88 Badiou 2017d, p. 243f.

89 Badiou 1992, p. 61.

90 Badiou 2015, p. 132.

91 Badiou 1992, pp. 69ff. It is crucial that this term is “a *philosophical* category” and not a poetic one. Cf. Badiou 2014b, p. 4. It is what “organizes a *disorientation* in thought.” *Ibid.*, p. 18.

92 Badiou 1992, p. 76. This is crucial, since the forgetting of being took for Heidegger very frequently the form of philosophy conceiving of being in terms of the highest being (i.e. as an object).

93 Pippin 2022.

94 Badiou 2017d, p. 197.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

96 Or in Badiou’s rendering: “the poem, being a free donation, is free donation of this gift that is being itself.” *Ibid.*, p. 120.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

98 There is a dialectical twist here latent in

Badiou's account. For if the poetic form enables us to think that being qua being needs to be linked to a conception of eventual donation (of the event), this can be read in two ways: either being's givenness is itself eventual or our discursive account of being qua being – whatever it might be – is the result of an event, which is not an event of being. The latter is Badiou's position.

99 Badiou 2014b, p. 241.

100 Badiou 2015b, p. 221. Badiou also describes this as "the reactivation of the Pre-Socratics as the forgotten source from which our destiny took flight." Badiou 2006, p. 8.

101 Badiou 2014b, p. 36.

102 Both citations are from: Heinrich 1982, p. 84.

103 Badiou 2014a, p. 9.

104 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 201ff.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 169.

106 Only he, and therein Badiou follows Plato's rendering, appears "in the figure of foundational father." *Ibid.*, p. 138.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 42f.

109 Badiou therefore argues that Heidegger (as much as Nietzsche) are inadequate readers of Parmenides – even though Heidegger's return to Parmenides created part of the condition for a renewal of philosophy. But Heidegger, problematically for Badiou, reads Parmenides in terms of pure narrative, pure fable. Whereas Badiou sees in Parmenides a beginning of philosophy but not yet in the form of philosophy, as there is for example no "pure ontology" (*ibid.*, p. 56) in him, but one dressed up in mythological and cosmological clothes. However, there is the clear attempt made to break with previous mythical and narrative structures.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 175. Badiou calls this a "pure three".

Cf. *ibid.*, p. 178.

112 Badiou assigns Parmenides therefore the "audacity to conclude." Cf. *ibid.*, p. 234.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 224. That this even has something to do with the co-invention and co-conditioning of mathematics and philosophy Badiou derives from Szabó 1978.

114 Cf. for this Jaeger 1947, p. 104.

115 Badiou 2017d, p. 53. It is here certainly not trivial that Badiou mobilizes a claim from Lacan's Seminar XX where the latter speaks of the "philosophical tradition starting from Parmenides" and thereby identifies Parmenides – and not Plato – as the founder of a tradition (of philosophy), which is a tradition to which Heraclitus then opposes himself (cf. Lacan 1988, p. 114). This turns Heraclitus into the first antiphilosopher, as part of the genealogy of psychoanalysis. This is a gesture that Lacan will repeat, in a different form, vis-à-vis Socrates (the analyst) and Plato (the master). Badiou 2006, p. 15f. Elsewhere, Badiou openly embraces this

claim and suggests that "Heraclitus... is as much the antiphilosopher to Parmenides as Pascal is to Descartes." Badiou 1994, p. 14.

116 Badiou 2017d, p. 34.

117 Badiou claims that mathematics thinks in small letter, the poem in capitals. Cf. *ibid.*, 23.

And maybe we could say we need new small letters for a new un-naming.

118 Badiou 2017d, p. 39.

119 The *matheme* then sits in Badiou where he thinks for Plato the idea sits. It formalizes the impasse of formalization. This even holds for the meta-ontological *matheme* of the event that formalizes the impasses of formalization of mathematics as ontology.

120 Badiou 1997, p. 46.

121 Badiou 2017d, p. 183

122 Badiou 2003b, p. 66

123 As a sidenote, it is no one else than Hegel who stands as clear exception to this thesis.

For he famously stated that "there is not one proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my *Logic*", emphasizing a clearly Heraclitean streak in modern philosophy. Hegel 1995, p. 278.

124 I here leave aside Badiou's quite articulate reproach to this reproach – which maybe unsurprisingly – shows that Lacan will end up endorsing, against his own declaration, a position that in this sense is also Parmenidean – or philosophical. This reconstruction is for another place and time.

125 Badiou 2019b, p. 106.

126 Badiou 2006, p. 9. . Even though, for Badiou, he shares with Heidegger that "something has been forgotten or lost between the Pre-Socratics and Plato." *Ibid.*, p. 12. For it is in this passage that changes how difference is thought: Badiou's line is that the Pre-Socratics differentiate identity, while Plato will identify difference (through the concept of the idea). Cf. *ibid.* The leads Badiou – and this is only possible under Heideggerian conditions – to presume that "the Pre-Socratics... from part of the polemical genealogy of psychoanalysis." Cf. *ibid.*, p. 13.

127 Badiou 1997, p. 52.

128 Badiou 1992, p. 103.

129 Badiou 2013, p. 12 and p. 82.

130 The discussion about the consequences of this reading for the place of Marxism in Badiou will deserve an independent examination. What concerns Marx (if we count him) as antiphilosopher, it is important to note that together with Kierkegaard, he is one of two antiphilosophers that oppose Hegel – and most of the philosophers in the history of philosophy seem to predominantly have one antiphilosopher in Badiou's account.

131 This is the title of a section of Badiou's hypertranslation of Plato's *Republic*. Cf.

132 Here it is also crucial that philosophy can side with the antiphilosophers when it is

about “defending the real against the sophists, who think that there is an omnipotence of the symbolic... but when the philosopher also defends the symbolic against the antiphilosopher, the sophist can become” an ally. Cf. Badiou 2025, p. 293f.

133 And to some extent with Lenin, Marx and Freud, too.

134 Badiou 2007, p. 3.

135 Ibid., 105.

136 Badiou 2017d, p. 28.

137 Ibid., 72.

138 Ibid., 70.

139 Badiou 1991a, p. 148.

140 Badiou 2013, p. 155.

141 The whole paradox of the unconscious for Badiou lies in this formulation. It is, in other words, a subtractive knowledge of truth.

142 Badiou 2019b, p. 159.

143 As Badiou once stated: “*Dianoia* is the thought that passes through, the thought that is the traversing of the thinkable.” Badiou 2014b, p. 33.

144 Badiou 2006, p. 10.

145 Ibid. Badiou goes as far as to claim that in Heraclitus for Lacan we find an anticipation of the death drive or what Lacan refers to as “negative libido”.

146 Badiou 2006, p. 15.

147 Ibid., 16.

148 Badiou 2017a, p. 210. This is the case in Badiou 2017c, Badiou 1997, Badiou 2003b.

149 This holds for Heidegger, Lacan and Badiou – even though their accounts differ. Obviously, this concept demands a long elaboration on its own. In my “Courage and Event” – a book I aim to complete within this year – crucial elements of such elaboration will be presented.

150 Lacan 1999, p. 144.

151 Badiou 1991a, p. 136.

152 Badiou 2014c, p. 53f. Badiou there states: “However, the death of Lacan was cloaked in a singular aura because it echoed his own work. His death is modelled after his late thought, which was placed under the sign of, precisely, Oedipus at Colonus, this figure of an old man who dies and leaves to all the world the insoluble enigma of his death. Lacan, if I may say so, succeeded in pulling this off: the muteness of his last years and his death form an integral part of his enigmatic legacy.”

153 Badiou for example claims that “antiphilosophy puts philosophy on guard. It shows the ruses of sense and the dogmatic danger of truth. It teaches us that the rupture with religion is never definitive. That one must take up the task again. The truth must, once again, be secularized.” (London: Verso 2001), p. 65.

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