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4-10-2008

Badiou qua Badiou, or vanity of void ontology

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Abstract

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Why did I start reading it?

Rapid diffusion of digital information technology amounts to increased interconnectivity. In practical terms, you are using a computer which performs as a node in a network. You can thereby send and receive information.

As more and more people participate, informational variety grows to such an extent that only self-control can no longer secure proper use. Enter infrastructure.

Infrastructure for whatever area of social exchange is never just material. Especially some general rules are always required, too; behavioral limits are imposed in order to promote variety where it is held to matter (more).

Take traffic as an example. Traffic rules such as red-means-stop/green-means-go and keep to the right, respectively to the left should have a favorable impact on the number and severity of accidents. So, roads are less cluttered than they would be without such rules and therefore on the balance physical mobility improves.

Likewise, information 'traffic' on an information network should proceed in an orderly fashion. There is a vital difference, though. An information network does not simply provide interconnection.

As information at one node is made instantly available to other nodes, all such nodes must be effectively included in the network. For physical transport, the house that you leave from with your car or bicycle, and the work place you arrive at, do not belong to the transport network or infrastructure. But when information is potentially used elsewhere, control from infrastructure must necessarily also pertain to ordering similarities and differences in its meaning.

For example, two nodes contain information for which the local labels coincide. Say, information about houses is registered at both node A and node B. However, is the concept of a house as applied at A exactly the same as B's house concept? There are likely significant differences. What a real estate agent perceives as a house, effectively meaning which properties are relevant, departs from what the town's Fire Department wants to know about it. But then again, despite essential differences, several other attributes might overlap (owner, location …).

The answer for controlling information variety lies in making context explicit. According to the simplified example, running a real estate agency would constitute one context, and running a fire department another context. For any informational overlap, yet a third context should be established; in this case, running a cadastre involves keeping record for each house of location, ownership, etcetera.

There's of course more to multicontextual information modeling for which I developed Metapattern as a formal method (Wisse, 2001). Here, I want just to explain what first caught my attention in Alain Badiou's (b. 1937) work. Why was my interest raised?

On one my regular browsing trips visiting the usual bookshops, I saw a book by an author so far unknown to me. Of course I couldn't help seeing more such books there …, anyway, I took Alain Badiou's *Theoretical Writings* (Badiou, 2004) from the shelf to subsequently notice Badiou regularly employs terms such as situation and multiple. And he aims at ontology, say at fundamental exposition. Even my minimal explanation so far of my own preoccupation with information variety has amply suggested that it is all about multiplicity, and how to control it. I believed I could perhaps gain additional insight from looking at Badiou's work, too. As it happened, his professed main publication had recently appeared in an English translation (Badiou, 2006). As I thought I had better do it right and go for his major ontological exposition, I started reading *Being end Event*.

Did I actually read it?

I find myself that at least I made a serious effort. Yes, up to two-thirds of *Being and Event* I succeeded in looking at one sentence after the other. No, I didn't manage to read every single sentence of the remainder of the book.

A reviewer's options

Putting it mildly, there are many books that I won't be able to understand. An author may treat something I have no sufficient knowledge of or, in fact more often than not, no knowledge at all. Or I don't even master the language in which a book is written; as a point in case, my command of French has long since deteriorated to a level where I better not open a copy of Badiou's originally published book *L'être et l'événement* (1988), let alone try to actually read it.

I shouldn't have difficulties with English, though. Indeed, with *Being and Event* translator Oliver Feltham seemed to have done a grammatically sound job. The sentences are formed according to rules that I'm familiar with, too. Nevertheless I cannot, simply cannot, recognize what Badiou might be telling me.

A reader doesn't have to understand what (s)he reads … to react. For react (s)he invariably does. What are the options when a reader finds a text by and large utterly incomprehensible? I suggest three major alternatives.

First of all, a reader may admire the author for obscurity. Any failure at understanding he happily attributes to himself, only. Under such circumstances the admiration of the reader for the author grows in inverse proportion with clarity. Would the author express himself clearly, i.e. unambiguously, he would no longer be admired. For the reader needs an object for his admiration and finds it with the enigmatic author. And taking advantage of such asymmetry, an author may actually install obscurity to proselytize, that is, gain uncritical devotees.

Secondly, a reader can withhold judgment. In that case, he doesn't hold it against himself that he misses the message, neither does he find fault with the author for not being clear. As I said, the interests of author and reader may be incommensurable.

Thirdly, a reader may most of all admire himself. Then, what he doesn't understand is dismissed as nonsense, period.

It might appear a fourth attitude exists, that is, when the reader sets out his critical arguments. He proves the author wrong, with a result similar to the third alternative where the text is declared nonsense outright.

No, I'm afraid there is actually no such fourth alternative available to me, not as reader of *Being and Event*. I repeat that I find it *utterly* incomprehensible. So, frankly, I wouldn't know where to begin developing a solid critical argument. How Badiou weaves a conceptual configuration is alien to me.

Then why don't I just settle for the middle alternative and forget about it? For Badiou might argue, should I declare his book nonsense, that apparently I miss the background for a productive reading. And I am certainly not prone to admiring what, and consequently who, mystifies me.

Ignoring *Being and Event* is a choice I'm resisting. I feel that I *should* be able to follow any author on an exposition of grounding concepts for existential variety. And I certainly don't experience, the first alternative I mentioned, any admiration for how Badiou goes about, well, wasting my time.

Wait a minute! Badiou never requested me to read his book. So it's really me who was wasting time. Yes, I admit that I continued reading closely, and later glossing over pages. I confess to harboring hope, ever diminishing, but still, of finally recognizing some corroboration of being witness to nonsense.

Does the absence of whatever hold for descent criticism give me the right to choose the third alternative, i.e. dismissal without arguments? Is it not that I feel frustrated, really? Or should I, after all, admit that I'm evidently unrealistic with my assumption; contrary to what I believed earlier, does a book such as *Being and Event* lie far beyond my capacity to understand? Should I finally realize I'm ignorant?

Practical benefits

Of course I'm entitled to an opinion. Everybody is. When I cannot be fair in judgment, at least I don't want to be too unfair. I did my best to find practically useful advice, if only some remote inspiration, for dealing with information variety at a correspondingly infrastructural scale. No, I couldn't recognize any. What am I being told, for example with (Badiou, 2006, p 192; with the exception of two larger selections, all further quotations from *Being and Event* are referred to by page number, only):

Poetry is the stellar assumption of that pure undecidable, against a background of nothingness[.]

Yes, it might by my own shortcoming, i.e. being unable to follow what others may even off-handedly reproduce as what they consider Badiou's extremely lucid axiomatization and subsequent reasoning. However, I myself wouldn't know even how to start acquiring the background required for such a positive evaluation.

What Badiou with *Being and Event* reminds me of is a small child with a string. For some reason or other, the string has entered being wound up in a knot. The child's frantic efforts to untie the knot only … make the knot get bigger and more complicated until it is practically impossible to straighten out. The only practical thing left to do is throwing the whole piece of tangled string away, and get a different string.

The practical benefit is that no more time is lost. I cannot lose sight of the vital need for, metaphorically speaking, a proper string that can be put to practical use.

What makes me suspicious of Badiou's project is that he doesn't address a social need. I have the impression of self-entanglement; he has tied himself up.

Sample text part, first selection

Why, then, do I still bother? What the extreme inaccessibility of *Being and Event* helps me to discuss is the dilemma of responsibility.

Now, that's an intriguing thought. Could Badiou have designed and thus anticipated his book's impossible reception at the detailed level of sentence after sentence? Does his obscurity serve a positive purpose, after all? If so, does my turning misgivings into the general question of responsibility precisely what he wants to promote? And did he succeed?

No, he probably had different aims. As I feel unable to convincingly argue about what Badiou might have wanted to accomplish, I'll let him write for himself. Yes, there's a fair bit of manipulation on my part involved.

From *Being and Event* I've selected two text parts, each fifteen sentences long. As I myself from reading Badiou's book find lacking any criteria for selection, I've resorted to a random procedure. At *www.random.org* an option is provided for generating random integer numbers. I've generated pairs of numbers for page, respectively line. So, the pair {10, 30} leads to line 30 on page 10. Here are the subsequent fifteen sentences:

> It is the philosophico-mathematical nexus—legible even in Parmenides' poem in its usage of apagogic reasoning—which makes Greece the original site of philosophy, and which defines, until Kant, the 'classic' domain of its objects. At base, affirming that mathematics accomplishes ontology unsettles philosophers because this thesis absolutely discharges them of what remained the centre of gravity of their discourse, the ultimate refuge of their identity. Indeed, mathematics today has no need of philosophy, and thus one can say that the discourse on being continues 'all by itself'. Moreover, it is characteristic that this 'today' is

determined by the creation of set theory, of mathematized logic, and then by the theory of categories and of *topoi*. These efforts, both reflexive and intra-mathematical, sufficiently assure mathematics of its being—although still quite blindly—to henceforth provide for its advance. The danger is that, if philosophers are a little chagrined to learn that ontology has had the form of a separate discipline since the Greeks, the mathematicians are in no way overjoyed. I have met with the scepticism and indeed with amused distrust on the part of mathematicians faced with this type of revelation concerning their discipline. This is not affronting, not least because I plan on establishing in this very book the following: that it is of the essence of ontology to be carried out in the reflexive foreclosure of its identity. For someone who actually *knows* that it is from being qua being that the truth of mathematics proceeds, doing mathematics—and especially inventive mathematics—demands that this knowledge be at no point represented. Its representation, placing being in the general position of an object, would immediately corrupt the necessity, for any ontological operation, of de-objectification. Hence, of course, the attitude of those the Americans call *working mathematicians*: they always find general considerations about their discipline vain and obsolete. They only trust whomever works hand in hand with them grinding away at the latest mathematical problem. But this trust—which is the practico-ontological subjectivity itself—is in principle unproductive when it comes to any rigorous description of the generic essence of their operations. It is entirely devoted to particular innovations. Empirically, the mathematician always suspects the philosopher of not knowing enough about mathematics to have earned the right to speak.

If not much, of course I do understand something. It seems Badiou complains about not being taking seriously by established mathematicians. I would say that the veil drops from his megalomania where he insists that he "actually *knows*" about mathematics' true, that is, ontological destiny. Through his "revelation," he is delivering mathematics. It sounds rather peculiar.

And is there really anyone who claims to understand "that it is of the essence of ontology to be carried out in the reflexive foreclosure of its identity"? As I said, I haven't consulted the French original but I cannot help feeling worried about the translator. How is it possible to keep sane when translating, except as a strictly mechanical exercise, muddled sentence after muddled sentence?

If ontology's identity is indeed foreclosed, which I understand as it being immediately proclaimed out the conceptual framework in question, how can Badiou possibly devote a whole book to establishing foreclosure? Isn't the whole point of foreclosure that its establishment is immediate, rather than developed at length? And not just foreclosure, but even reflexive foreclosure. Why doesn't Badiou simply state his assumptions, and get it over with? For it sounds as if with the book he takes pains to prove … what cannot be proven in the first place. Is it any wonder I got lost?

Sample text part, second selection

The second selection from *Being and Event,* another fifteen sentences long and for the moment please don't mind the numbers I've added in square brackets (I'll explain below), is:

> Historicity is thus presentation at the punctual limits of its being.[177, 25] In other words: intervention does not draw the force of a disorder, or a deregulation of structure, from its being.[231, 27] Nature is thus not objectivity nor the given, but rather the gift, the gesture of opening up which unfolds its own limit as that in which it resides without limitation.[123, 27] There is no more an angelic herald of the event than there is a hero.[211,2] By way of consequence, the conclusion of this prodigious text—the densest text there is on the limpid seriousness of a conceptual drama—is a maxim, of which I gave another version in my *Théorie du subject*.[196, 34] Let's turn to the account of the proof.[308, 11] Intervention is therefore a precisely calibrated subjective operation.[218, 25] The facility of physical refutation—in the modern sense—is barred to us, and consequently we have to discover the ontological weak point of the apparatus inside which Aristotle causes the void to absolutely in-exist.[72, 16] It is a *singular* science.[6, 10] This matter was never completely cleared up: some refined their critique at the price of a sectarian and restricted vision of mathematics; and others came to an agreement in order to save the essentials and continue under the rule of 'proof' by beneficial consequences.[223, 36] One can therefore say: such a statement of the subject-language will have been veridical if the truth is such and such. 400, 32] My own intervention in this conjuncture consists in drawing a diagonal through it: the trajectory of thought that I attempt here passes three sutured points, one in each of the three places designated by the above statements.[2, 24] Our strategy (and Cohen's invention literally consists of this movement) will thus be the following: we shall install ourselves in a multiple which is fixed once and for all, a multiple which is very rich in properties (it 'reflects' a significant part of general ontology) yet very poor in quantity (it is denumerable).[356, 9] The variables for individuals (for us, multiples or sets) are the Greek letters α, β, γ, δ, π and, sometimes, λ.[49, 31] The act of nomination of the event is what constitutes it, not as real—we will always posit that this multiple has occurred—but as susceptible to a decision concerning its belonging to the situation.[203, 15]

At first sight, this sample is even more baffling than what the previous section presents. Upon closer inspection, though, I would say that there are just more sentences that escape practically oriented interpretation. But isn't one incomprehensible sentence at a critical point in an argument already enough to destroy a constructively critical reader's trust?

Please read, and reread, this second sample, trying to discover some consistency. Then, indeed, some concepts reappear such as "intervention." Are their appearances somehow meaningfully connected?

I've also selected this second text sample using random numbers from appropriate ranges for page and line. Before I explain my procedure, let me emphasize that I find this particular sample sufficiently representative, too. It is only by a small degree less of more obscure than anything else from *Being and Event*. That is especially remarkable considering how I arrived at this second sample.

In a procedure inspired by composer John Cage, it differs from the first in that first of all I've randomly selected *single* sentences, i.e. separately. I've subsequently just serialized them according to the order in which the random numbers 'fell.'

Allowing for the book's layout I had to make some adjustments. A sentence might not start on the indicated line (I moved down to the first line where a new sentence started) and/or no such line was present on the indicated page (I moved the next first page with such a line filled, if need be moving down lines for a newly started sentence). I guess by now it's already clear that the actual number pair for relocating the sentences presented in the second text sample are stated in square brackets following each sentence.

What I am trying to demonstrate with these two selections is that it practically doesn't matter, not from my perspective, anyway, how Badiou's text is approached. Variety turns out as a suggestion, only. It seems the whole book's movement is indeed toward ultimate elimination of differences.

When I am somehow right with this overall evaluation, it would be quite fair to say that I've developed an antithesis. What Metapattern respects, with a subjective situationism modeled by a semiotic ennead as grounding,(Wisse, 2002) is not just the rule of individual differences, but that even of every individual 'object' behaving differently according to relevant situations.

No comparison

Due to essentially different assumptions made by Badiou and myself, it is useless to even attempt rigorously comparing separate concepts. However, I'd like to consider some of Badiou's statements as an invitation for making some comments.

It still looked promising when Badiou announced (p 4):

> The categories […] constitute the general order of a thought which is such that it can be *practised* across the entirety of the contemporary system of reference. […] They attempt to organize an abstract vision of the requirements of the epoch.

Yet, did I miss where he unfolds such requirements? For Badiou, it probably is too low-level to take a most practical interest in the contemporary development of what is known as the information society, recognizing equally practical requirements for infrastructure controlling and guiding information variety. But then, precisely such developments may change the political arena.

In fact, what meager illustrations Badiou supplies, he takes them from — what he considers as — politics. I can only hope that I completely misunderstand him when he brings the concept of the power set into play.

As I read it, he lets a situation correspond to a set. According to regular set theory, the elements of a set can enter into different configurations, i.e. subsets, or parts as Badiou also calls them. Including the so-called empty set and the original set itself, all such configurations taken together constitute yet

another set. As this set-of-elemental-configurations is directly derived from *some* particular set, it is called *its* power set. And it is a *power* set, because the number of its elements is an algorithmic function of the number of elements of the originating set. When the originating set holds n elements, the power set holds two to the power of n elements (2^n). There's really nothing else behind labeling such a derived set a *power* set.

Badiou contrasts a situation with its state. I get the distinct impression that he lets the state reside in the power set. For him it only appears as a small step to change state into State, for example (p 105)

> the formal idea that the State […] deals with collective subsets and not with individuals remains essential.

As "an abstract vision of the requirements of the epoch" it is difficult to take seriously, even without the metaphorically absurd legitimacy sought in set theory. What is explained by (p 275):

> [T]he power of the state—in terms of pure quantity—is superior to that of the situation. [… The state] dominates [the situation].

Of course it escapes me what "pure quantity" is. I've never heard of impure quantity. So, I'll just stick to quantity, proper. Yes, the power set always holds more elements than the set it originates from. There is no exception, not even from the empty set. The absence of any element appears numerically as zero in computing 2^n. When absence is counted as 0, the number of elements of the power set of the empty set 2^0, that is, 1. So, yes, more elements for power sets when comparing them to their, say, originating sets. It is a straightforward numerical order. I therefore find it far-fetched, ludicrous, actually, to call a power set "superior." I cannot discover any realistic sense in which the power set "dominates" its originating set. If anything, it should be the reverse for without a set in the first place there is no power set.

I might be completely mistaken, but from what I can faintly make out it seems that the classification of empty set, set/situation, and power set/state comprises Badiou's main concepts. The empty set, called the void by Badiou, seems to function as the existential fountainhead (p 59):

> [T]he void […] is the first multiple, the very being from which any multiple presentation, when presented, is woven and numbered.

Or, in other words (p 6),

> despite the prodigious variety of mathematical 'objects' and 'structures', they can *all* be designated as pure multiplicities built, in a regulated manner, on the basis of the void-set alone.

Subsequently, much appears to hinge on (p 82)

> the conceptual importance of the distinction between belonging and inclusion.

But how important can it be? For Badiou also states that (p 83)

> inclusion can be defined on the basis of belonging alone.

I got the impression that subsets, or parts, are for Badiou the stuff of inclusion. Such configurations find separate expression, as elements in their own right, in the set's power set. So, belonging elements correspond to a set, or situation. And included parts correspond to the power set involved, or state.

Then Badiou apparently sees an existential development with increasing fullness, or how should I call it, from empty set (void), via set (situation), culminating in the power set (state) (p 298):

> The idea is to constitute the void as the 'first' level of being and to pass to the following level by 'extracting' from the previous level all the constructible parts

whereby (p 299)

> each level of the constructible hierarchy […] normalize[s] a 'distance' from the void, therefore, an increasing complexity.

Again, I could be wrong with such an interpretation. But then, that seems impossible to tell, either. My interpretation leads me to suggest, quite apart from positing the so-called void as the source of existential fertility, that Badiou argues his case from the ill-conceived distinction between element and subset. He stands set theory on its head. Of course, that might be extremely productive. But I would say that it's no longer set theory as commonly practiced. A first principle of normal set theory is identification of elements. The possibility of no-element is merely a so-called boundary condition; it serves to keep the formal operations according to the theory consistent.

Badiou shifts the boundary condition to where it becomes his first principle (p 31):

> My entire discourse originates in an axiomatic decision; that of the non-being of the one.

At a single stroke, he also extends the reach. His newly designed set theory addresses "being qua being," which is of course a contradiction in terms from the pragmatic semiotics that I favor. Instead of "constitut[ing] a general order […] across the entirety of the contemporary system of reference," Badiou starts from mixing categories (p 32):

> It is […] clearly the pure name of the one which is subsumed here as the minimal being of the non-being-one.

No argument can recover from such a tangled assumption. An axiomatic system must be equipped for requisite variety; reduction to a single point — non-point, Badiou would probably write — is counterproductive.

Take the sentence (p 33),

> in absence of any being of the one, the multiple in-consists in the presentation of a multiple of multiples without any foundational stopping point.

With Justus Buchler (1914-1991), who writes about natural complexes as multiples,(Buchler, 1990) I agree that any element should also be treated as a multiple, and so on. In Badiou's words (p 44),

> what belongs to a multiple is always a multiple; and that being an 'element' is not a status of being, an intrinsic quality, but the simple relation, to-be-element-of, through which a multiplicity can be presented by another multiplicity.

So, "any foundational stopping point" remains indeed absent. But how does that inevitable limit of "presentation" make it the ground (sic!) for "the multiple [to] in-consist"? Wouldn't the "absence of any being of the one," whatever it might mean, argue in favor of the multiple to in-exist?

Why not accept a limit to human capacities? The admission "I don't know" doesn't imply "nothing" as ontology's primary axiom. Within man's inalienable bounds, why not aim at positive structure, admittedly always provisionary, when some conceptual foundation is assumed? Why continuously hint at questions, but for ever shy away from the responsibility of committed answers?

If there's a consistent pattern that I might recognize in *Being and Event*, it is that Badiou denies any responsibility for the cake, yet wants to eat it all (p 86):

> [T]he void, to which nothing belongs, is by this very fact included in everything.

So?

It is tiresome to read about "this double function," (p 205) "a double border effect," (p 207) "a double connection" (p 208) and "there appears to be a circle" (p 208) while being denied any structural explanation. At least I find that a statement such as (p 208)

> [t]he event occurs for the state as the being of an enigma

or (p 216)

> [t]he miracle is the symbol of an interruption of the law in which the interventional capacity is announced

doesn't qualify.

It depends on the actor's purpose what constitutes a set. A set doesn't exist independently from such essentially embodied purpose. That's precisely what my theory of subjective situationism argues. It assumes that a situation is what determines specific behavior of an object. So, the object is only an element of a situation as far as such corresponding behavior goes. For different behavior, it is an element of another situation, and so on. Any difference between belonging and inclusion dissolves. There is only positively determined pertaining of an object's behavior to a situation. Call it an element, call it a subset, call it belonging or inclusion, whatever. No void, no mystery.

Badiou, on the other hand, overlooks the significance of situationally directed differentiation (p 328):

> As a general rule, a multiple (and its sub-multiples) fall under numerous determinants. These determinants are often analytically contradictory, but this is of little importance.

Indeed, what he finds "of little importance" helps to positively ground the concept of situation.

I find it beyond the scope of these comments to explain further how I view situation as a structural element of the semiotic ennead as a metamodel, or irreducible axiomatic system. But I'd like to comment that it provides me with a perspective from which it strikes me as downright odd how un-managed Badiou treats situation. It could well be the term he uses most in *Being and Event*. For that, it remains remarkably unspecified. I hardly feel informed by (p 27)

> *ontology is a situation*[,]

or

> the ontological situation [is] *the presentation of the presentation*.

And I am already losing confidence fast when reading that (p 28)

> ontology can be solely *the theory of inconsistent multiplicities as such*.

What I was hoping for is finding guidance for improving consistency, not an essentially nihilistic admonition for giving up on supporting sanity in information variety. Upon closer inspection, limiting concepts abound in *Being and Event*. I disagree strongly with, for example how Badiou considers language, knowledge, and event. If Badiou believes that (p 328)

> [k]nowledge is realized as an encyclopaedia[,]

I suppose his myopic orientation has regretfully caused him to miss relevant developments in evolutionary psychology, etcetera. Undeterred, he derives that (p 329)

> the event does not fall under any encyclopaedic determinant.

It should not be difficult by now to predict the direction of Badiou's solution for classifying event, that is, (p 179),

> [t]he site is only ever a *condition of being* for the event[,]

where (p 175)

> the site is not part of the situation.

And nowhere does Badiou elaborate on structure. According to set theory, at least, my interpretation, a set only acts as, say, a container for elements. The general concept of set doesn't specify relationships among its elements. The move from a set approach to a system approach introduces such structure. Then, metastructure is a generalization from a system's perspective. So, structure and metastructure don't make any sense at the level of sets, power sets included. Is Badiou's problem that system theory is no mathematics, and therefore not eligible for ontology? Once again I don't have a clue, this time when Badiou argues that (p 84)

> the *gap* between structure and metastructure, between element and subset, between belonging and inclusion, is a permanent question for thought, an intellectual provocation of being.

Whatever the question, Badiou doesn't succeed in helping me recognizing an answer.

Return to responsibility, or why did I review it?

When reading Badiou's *Being and Event* was disappointing as judged against my initial expectation, what (other) conclusions might be useful?

It is not that the book is just irrelevant. Struggling with alternative reactions, after all I actually find that it is worse than useless. My complaint is that what I've struggled to recognize is only consistent as an expression of a generally irresponsible attitude. That could very well be dangerous. Should I pass on as Badiou's advice that (p 337)

> the faithful procedure is random, and in no way predetermined by knowledge.

No, I won't. What orientation at community does Badiou provide? Why write a book in the first place, when (p 376)

> [t]he striking paradox of our undertaking is that we are going to try to *name* the very thing which is impossible to *discern*. We are searching for a language for the unnameable. It will have to name the latter without naming it[.]

Yes, irresponsible nonsense. Badiou's motive of self-aggrandizement wouldn't surprise me (p 329):

> A fidelity […] is not a matter of knowledge. It is not the work of an expert: it is the work of a militant.

Again, rubbish. Rather than dismiss it, I propose that *Being and Event* be taken up as a compelling warning for the rest of us. For social responsibility must always be actively promoted.

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