

## HEGEL UNSUTURED: AN ADDENDUM TO BADIOU

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... there is in all this what is called a bone. Though it is precisely what is suggested here, namely, that it is structural of the subject, it constitutes in it essentially that margin that all thought has avoided, skipped over, circumvented, or blocked whenever it seems to succeed in being sustained by a circle, whether that circle be dialectical or mathematical.

Jacques Lacan "The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire"

Never known for his reserved statements, it was Lacan who stated, in his tenth seminar, that "if there is anyone, I think, who does not mistake what the *Phenomenology of Spirit* brings us, it is myself."<sup>1</sup> This should hardly be surprising: Lacan was a man of his times and, if we are to believe Borch-Jacobsen, no less under the scrutiny of Alexandre Kojève than any of his contemporaries. Yet Lacan does not, from the moment he claims to be *the* authority on Hegel, cease to underline the differences between Hegel and himself.

This again should hardly surprise: almost every other French intellectual of the period has sought, in some manner or another, to surpass the deadlocks of the dialectic. Lacan should come as no exception. But his tactics are not as predictable as one may think. Typically, the overturning of Hegelianism seeks to undercut the unity of the sublated whole - Hegel's critics never stop pointing towards the difference, or remaining end product of otherness, which are refused in the Hegelian system. Examples abound: the Derridian *supplément*, Lyotard's *différend*, the Deleuzian *fold*. One could assume as much from Lacan - is *objet a* (that "remainder of the other") not the same as the element which disrupts a negative economy? Is it not, strictly speaking, the correlate to Derrida's *supplément*? The answer, unfortunately, is both yes and no.

What Lacan distinctly opposes is the classical, even "moralistic" dimension of the Hegelian infinity: the recurring circle completely closed in upon itself, the repetitive enfolding of the infinity in the One - the point, in short, at which the infinite ceases to be the other of the finite as One. Lacan will have little of Hegel's unity of the one and the multiple. For it does not suffice to say that the recurrence of the One - its ability to become "its own other" by becoming another One (which is nothing other than the ability of the One to sublimate infinity) - exhausts the function of the Other. And so it would seem that Lacan would be quite at home with other criticisms of Hegel in his efforts to uphold

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the Other against this sublation of infinity.

If I may be forgiven for stating the obvious, Lacan makes it clear that the repetition of the One cannot exhaust the other without generating a new other in turn. Is this not what Freud teaches in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*? For the sake of clarity, let's assume that the entirety of my conscious life is governed by the pleasure principle. Every attempt I make to recover an earlier state - every time I "fill in" what I am missing through the sequential recurrence of signifying elements - demands that I repeat myself. In repeating myself, I am pushed forward, towards somewhere far away from the earlier state I incessantly attempt to regain. Repetition replaces the first object (the lack I fill in with various names and numbers) with a second object, the void I circumscribe when I leap from the future (from which I am guided by repetition) towards the past (in which I am guaranteed the possibility of repeating again). There are, of course, many ways in which I can apprehend *objet a*, but few are ever so tangible as this. The fact that there can be no substantial "beyond" to the pleasure principle (the fact that this beyond can only ever be supposed outside the pleasure my ego confines me to) can be attributed to the bad timing inherent in the pleasure principle. To go backwards towards an earlier state of affairs, I must make a step forwards. I repeat by necessity, creating my object anew.

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Consequently, what Lacan surely means when he upholds the "function of the other" in a repetitive system is this very inclusion of a heteronomous element (the "interval," if you will) which any system aiming at continuity must invariably include. But this object does not disrupt the consistency of a perfectly closed system; by including a heteronomous element within pleasure, it is what provides that system with consistency itself. We can witness the distinctiveness of Lacan's reproach to Hegel. As Jacques-Alain Miller repeatedly states, the *objet a* is not simply a product of otherness. It is a *logical* object, that which sustains a system in the absence of the Other. It replaces the once full presence of the Other (the place from which meaning can be guaranteed) with the Other's *function* - that which repetition strives towards.<sup>2</sup> And it is towards this that Lacan gestures when differing from Hegel.

If it were all this simple, there would be no point to the present discussion. There are two purposes for writing this paper. One, obviously, is to sort out, at a very elementary stage, certain differences between Lacan and Hegel. This is no easy task given the variety of viewpoints on the matter. Some will say that Lacan is "bad philosophy" - *period*; there is no point in discussing him alongside Hegel. Others will read Lacan in line with contemporary, "post-structuralist," critiques of Hegel, critiques which, as I have alluded to above, for the most part, undercut the unity of Hegel's absolute through the intervention of otherness, or difference, into Hegel's system. Finally, there are those, most notably Slavoj Žižek, who will attempt to "rescue" Hegel from his critics by proclaiming him a Lacanian. If no one reading seems sufficient (although I admit a partiality to the final interpretation), it is most likely the case that any of the above agendas (saving Hegel, saving Lacan, critiquing both) overrides the difficulty - one could even say *impossibility* - of taking either Hegel or

Lacan at their word.

Quite simply, it seems that distinctions need to be made, and if it is my intent to do so here, it will be for the purposes of delimiting the above example of Hegelian infinity that Lacan takes issue with. Hence, my second purpose: what I propose is not solely a reading of Hegel *avec Lacan*, but to explicate Alain Badiou's (Lacanian) critique of Hegel. Badiou's is not a simple thesis - but it does, to be sure, disclose Lacanian principles. What Badiou objects to in Hegel is the rejection of the mathematical in favor of the essential finitude of self-consciousness. Rather than viewing the mathematical as an independent foundation of truth from which various other discourses are derived (as in Plato, Descartes, or Leibniz), Hegel views the philosopher's task as being one in which the mathematical (the infinite) is placed in a subordinate relation to subjective reflection. Well, it seems clear enough where a Lacanian could differ; when acknowledging Lacan's use of cybernetics in the fifties, it is obvious that the unconscious process of counting always exceeds what the conscious subject can think at any one point. A symbolic or mathematical foundation of existence cannot be sufficiently absorbed by the essential finitude of subjective self-reflection. But to effect such an absorption seems to be Hegel's intent. This, crudely put, would be a starting point for understanding Badiou: for the latter, the mathematical imposes a structure which cannot be globally enveloped by a conscious subject.

This is only a very preliminary reading of Badiou, a reading which will be far from exhaustive. Let it suffice to say that whereas Hegel (in his efforts to subordinate the infinite to the status of the repetitive One) seeks to establish the subject as a *global* site of truth, Badiou's subject is always a local *part* of a logical structure in which truth *is* present. This subject is an indispensable part of this system, and, to be sure, there is no philosophy without a subject. But this subject is always only a *finite* subject. There are four axioms, derived from Badiou,<sup>3</sup> which can be briefly given:

- a. *Any finite formula expresses a subject.* The subject is not a transcendental agency of a perceiving consciousness, but a point expressed by a finite number or signifier.
- b. *The Subject is the local status of truth.* The subject is a point in a chain of knowledge (in Lacanian terms:  $S_2 \dots S_3 \dots S_4 \dots$ ) which is located somewhere between an event that has been presupposed (the "supernumerary

name" which inaugurates the procession of signifying elements:  $S_1 \dots$ ) and the point towards which that chain is directed ("signification"). The subject is caught in the chain at any one of these points. It is a part of the *situation* that the supernumerary name of the event constitutes.

- c. *Truth is constituted by a hole in knowledge.* Truth is not qualified through an intelligible intuition. A truth is indiscernible within knowledge; it is the unnamed towards which the signifying elements which comprise knowledge as such are directed, but never reach.
- d. *The subject is not this void.* The void is inhuman and a-subjective. Truth is realized through the multiplicity of elements that the void generates of which the subject is a part. The subject is, in effect, a finite part which is caught between an event and its truth. It is the local status of this situation as truth. Ultimately, saying that the subject is a local status of truth is very different from defining the subject as the hole in knowledge which is truth.

This final point may come as a surprise - do we not usually conceive the subject as the void which is represented by a signifier? Is this not how a subject is "sutured" into a symbolic; that is, as a void that is *named*? This is usually how suture is understood: the element which is sutured is the void of the subject. Badiou suggests something different, something, in fact, which comes much closer to the actual definition of suture in psychoanalysis. What is *sutured*, strictly speaking, is not the subject to the discursive chain, but the relation between the Symbolic as knowledge (or, to use Badiou's terms, *situation*) and being (the Real). It would hardly seem necessary review the entirety of the original theory of suture that Jacques-Alain Miller wrote thirty years ago if his thesis had been sufficiently understood.<sup>4</sup> Since the case is otherwise, an exegesis will prove necessary. To expound both Badiou and his reading of Hegel requires that the reader devote his or her attention to the relation between the One and the multiple.

Ordinarily, suture is read as an Imaginary process through which a subject is included in a given system while disavowing, or annulling, Symbolic difference. But in Miller's argument, the point is this: for a symbolic system to become a closed economy, it must account for the element it excludes (the subject). The agent of suturing is that which puts the Symbolic in communication with the Real, it installs "something" in the place where the subject is absent. And were it not for the inclusion of this "something" (an absence which is not nothing) within a given set (or symbolic system), distinctions between its elements could not even be drawn, since these distinctions cannot be empirically determined. This was a primary necessity for Frege's mathematics: the exclusion of an empirical thing (its substitution by a number) was necessary to sustain a logical system. Yet this substitution could not occur without marking the fact that the subject has already been excluded. But if distinctions are no longer drawn between actually existing things, then there must, in that system, be some other means of differentiating its elements.

The answer appears to be easy enough: what is sutured is the lacking subject to its signifier or representative. We could imagine that a subject is sutured when it is named as an individual. Were this not possible, something would be missing from the set - there would simply be a series of empty numbers. If the reader takes further notice, however, he or she will realize that it would be contradictory to say that the subject is what *completes* the set, what provides for the missing element, since it is precisely Frege's point that the subject be excluded. The goal is something other than a merely Symbolic re-writing of the subject; for Frege, it is the formal structure of the set that interests him. The missing element, in other words, must be *logical*, not subjective.

In any event, when turning to the original problem that Miller presents, it is admittedly true that one is dealing with the inclusion of a subject within a given set. For Miller or Frege, there are two relations formed between the subject and the set: there is the relation between the subject and its given concept (*subsumption*) and there is also the relation between the subject and the number which comes to represent it in the set (*assignation*). Given a hypothetical set consisting of the "members of F," neither the concept ("member of F") of the set nor the elements (counted terms) which comprise it, comes first. The perfect logic of the system demands that the concept exist exclusively through the inclusion of the members which it subsumes. Yet these members, as objects, *are* only insofar as they fall under the given concept (that is, so long as they are no longer *things*). The paradox, or "performativity," of the set necessitates that neither assignation nor subsumption is primary: a subject is subsumed at the same time that it is assigned a number. To be included, the subject must be *counted*. So it is clear that if a thing is counted as a number, it is no longer equal *to itself* but to the number which assigns its place in the set. When counted, one does not emerge as a "member of F," but as *equal to the concept* "member of F." One is included through being equal to its representative, to the number which stands in for the self.

But a volatile loss of truth is invoked by the very principle of exclusion which founds a logical system. The subject's emergence in a set means that it is counted *as one*, and this one (1) is what becomes repeatably representative for all members in the set. We can see clearly where the potential loss of truth occurs: how is it that one thing can be distinguished from another if they are *both* counted as one, if they can no longer be empirically differentiated as things? How is counting even possible if the distinction between "one" and "two" is no longer evident? Let me begin again: to be truly distinct, any one element

must be equal to itself. One is "one" insofar as it is equal to itself: it cannot be exchanged for "two" without a loss of truth. And in order for this to be true, the number needs a "substance" of sorts, it needs a self to be equal to. But this self cannot be an empirical thing. This, in fact, is the very problem.

Something, Miller adds, must be added to the set in order to make counting possible, in order to close the set, to make each element equal to itself. This "something" is the inclusion of that which is *not equal to itself* - conceptually, zero, the empty set. We arrive at the empty set when we conceive of a set having *no members*, that is, of a set whose members are *not* equal to themselves. This follows (as we shall see with regards to Hegel) when we conceive of the possibility of an *empty set*: of a set which contains no elements, yet *has a property nonetheless*. Let  $\omega$  represent an infinite set of which  $x$  is a member precisely when it is not equal to itself. The empty set can be written thus:

$$\emptyset = \{x \in \omega: x \neq x\}$$

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Our first set ("members of F") is "sutured" through the inclusion of this other set as its member. Given this reading, our first impulse would be to inscribe the empty set between the numbers in the set, as if it is that which emerges *between* 1 and 2 (e.g.  $1 = 1$ ,  $(1 \neq 2)$ ,  $2 = 2$ ). We could, in this instance, call the empty set the interval which emerges between the successive counting of elements. This is not the point for Miller: the empty set is not generated *by*, or even *between*, repetitions - it is what allows for repetition itself. There would not even be the possibility of getting from zero to one unless there were some means of counting the zero first. To get from zero to one, the set must start with nothing, the empty set  $\emptyset$ . In order to reach one, *another* empty set must be counted in addition to this - the first empty set becomes counted as one  $\{\emptyset\}$ . What sutures the set is *not* an "other" to its members: insofar as its members are founded upon the absence of the subject, they can only be equal to something else. This element which is not equal to itself is what allows the set's members to be exchanged for other elements without a loss of truth. Ergo: not being equal to itself, it can always equal another. Consequently, the difference between  $\emptyset$  and  $\{\emptyset\}$  is the difference between zero and one - one is the *set of the empty set*. It is even more difficult to get to two: one must add another set on top of this, the set of the set of the empty set. By the time 2 is reached, three sets have already been counted. As for 3:

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &= \emptyset \\ 1 &= \{\emptyset\} = \{0\} \\ 2 &= \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\} = \{0, 1\} \\ 3 &= \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}, \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}\} = \{0, 1, 2\} \end{aligned}$$

Getting to four is still more arduous since 1 is the counting, in fact, of a *nothing* which must

come first. One is not primary, it is preceded by what engenders lack in the set - it accounts for the inclusive element which does not belong (the missing subject). Or, as the *counting of one* (to use Badiou's terms), the subject *as one* must seek to find its other half in the empty set which it is counted *as*.<sup>5</sup> This, in a sense, is why Lacan's subject (\$) cannot be written without an *objet a*.

Now, where, in Hegel, does one encounter the need to produce, or include, an external object to render conceptual closure? Does the dialectic not in fact depend on the exact opposite - the exclusion of externality? Our "answer" is unclear. Perhaps this is not the question to be asked; it is well enough to suggest that Hegel excludes the Other, but this claim is not so easily made when considering that the other, in Hegel, is not really excluded as much as it is revealed in its nullity. The Hegelian knows very well that this nullity has a generative function nonetheless. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel begins with the most basic of his categories which, of course, are being and nothing. The immediate goal is to unite the two in the "moment" of being's emergence out of nothing, but matters are confounded once Hegel speaks of *determinate* being - a being which is distinguished from mere being (where non-being is taken up in a simple unity with being). As determinate, as *something*, a posited being no longer simply has non-being as its other, it must also relate to another being, determine itself as the negative of that something. To this other being, it is equally an other. The former unity of the becoming of being had being and becoming as its moments: here, dialectical thought must grapple with *something* and *other* ("something else"). Each "something" is equally its other: "there is no determinate being which is determined only as such, which is not outside a determinate being and therefore is not itself an other."<sup>6</sup> Yet beyond this vicious circle of each being other to its other, Hegel states that a determinate being is an other to itself on its own account: "The other simply by itself is the other in its own self, hence the other of itself and so the other of the other - it is, therefore, that which is absolutely dissimilar within itself, that which negates itself, alters itself."<sup>7</sup> Not being a substantial other, this other is a being's own non-being.

Hegel here seems intent to unite being with non-being - to sublimate otherness into a unity of self and other. In other words, the "dissimilarity" mentioned above apparently introduces a positive otherness into Hegel's system. Being would not be equal to itself since it must share equivalence with its other as well. Difference, it would seem, is not yet eradicated from Hegel's system. But Hegel insists that the dissimilarity of being with itself does not result from

the immanence of otherness, but from the *lack of consistency* in the other's being. One could state this logic otherwise: being is not equal to itself because it is not *not-equal* to its other - it cannot posit, or distinguish itself from, its other. This would be the true logic of the empty set: if zero was equal to nothing, it would no longer function as the empty set, for that nothing, as equal, would then have to be marked *as something*. To be truly unequal to itself, the empty set must have no equal. For Hegelian non-being then, something becomes dissimilar to itself when its other does not possess being:

Hence, being-in-itself is, first, a negative relation to the negative determinate being, it has the otherness outside it and is opposed to it; insofar as something is in itself it is withdrawn from otherness and being-for-other. But secondly it has also present in its own being itself, for it is itself the non-being of the being for other.<sup>8</sup>

This can be better understood when we consider Hegel's critique of the Kantian thing-in-itself. We believe we are saying something profound when we speak of it, when we refer to something outside the imperfections in human consciousness. But to refer to something in itself is to refer to something *apart from* that reference; as divorced from all being-for-another, it is stripped of determination, which of course means that it *is* nothing - that it is impossible to know what it is. Hegel then suggests that by this very realization, we know quite well what a thing-in-itself is: a truthless abstraction. But, in *truth*, for Hegel, the thing is knowable in the Notion where its determinate content is united with the *lack of being in its other* (i.e. its *positing*, which is purely empty being). The limit which separates being in-itself from being for-another is superseded once the split itself becomes internally constitutive *for* the Notion. What a thing is "in-itself" can only be externally determined through a being's own reflection upon its positing. So while Hegel may refuse the limit which separates human consciousness from the thing-in-itself, he reaffirms it in the formation of the Notion, where the sensible conditions which affirm the content of a being are supplemented by the "sensuously unfulfilled," *internal* limitations of the remaining void of determination.<sup>9</sup>

It could be assumed that at this moment in the *Logic*, a sublation of sorts has occurred: that this determined being, in revealing the "other" for the nothing that it is, has become realized, or determinate, in itself as Notion. But there is more. What has actually transpired is that this being, in reflecting inwards on itself, has moved beyond being determined through an external limit; it now contains an internal *limitation*. That is, this being is now a *finite* being. Two consequences follow:

1. Limitation defines what something *is*, as opposed to the limit which determines what that being *is not*. Thus, for Hegel, this limitation is no longer separated from a finite being's being; as a term, limitation paradoxically suggests that any being is something other than the limit - that

a being could "be" more than what it is were it not for its limitation. This "more" is brought to bear upon a finite being in the form of the *ought*. Something, in itself, *ought* to be more than what it is. "The ought as such contains the limitation and the limitation contains the ought."<sup>10</sup> Part of its being, what it ought to be, inheres elsewhere. Yet this elsewhere, while being opposed to the limitation, is implanted *by* that limitation.

2. Through its limitation, the determinate being encounters its *ought*. There is a vicious circle between the two: beyond the limitation is the *ought*, yet this *ought* is expressed by the limitation. "Limitation is determined as the negative of the ought and the *ought* is likewise the negative of the limitation."<sup>11</sup> There is thus a double negation at work when a finite being goes beyond itself: the *ought*, once realized, is now what the being is, yet the limitation remains nonetheless. A first negation is necessary, where the finite becomes determinate, and a second negation of this determination, where the finite becomes another finite (hence, Hegel's famous "negation of negation"). Herein lies the first emergence of the infinite: it depends on the negation of the finite. The infinite is the beyond of the finite. Of course, this is where Hegel's reader encounters the "bad infinity," where the infinite is revealed as the empty beyond of a finite being:

In this void beyond the finite, what arises? What is the positive element in it? Owing to the inseparability of the infinite and the finite - or because this infinite remaining aloof on its own side is itself limited - there arises a limit, the infinite has vanished and its other, the finite, has entered. But this entrance of the finite appears as happening external to the infinite, and the new limit as something that does not arise from the infinite itself but is likewise found as given. And so we are faced with a relapse into the previous determination which has been sublated in vain.<sup>12</sup>

The infinite has no other determination than to be the empty negation of the finite. Yet when the finite being transcends its limitation, it finds that it has become another finite in turn. This would constitute infinity in the second stage, where it becomes the alternate term between two successive finites. Hegel's reader is faced with the dimension of the "tedious repetition of bad infinity." The empty infinite, {...}, becomes nothing less than the void of determination, the empty limit of the finite. Hegel does however realize a third

moment of the infinite, when it is no longer pushed forwards from the one, but is realized within the infinite generation of the one *with itself*. Infinity would be the realization of the infinite return of the one to another one. Reflection is required - and it does of course come into play in the *Logic*. But the reader should ask, in what manner?

For Hegel, it is important to remember that each polarity realizes itself through *limitation*. The infinite (empty beyond of the finite) is itself finite by virtue of what it excludes. Similarly, the finite, while limited, would be doomed to perish were it not for the perennial *ought* which posits the finite over and against itself in the beyond. The mutual sliding into opposition of either term is what, no doubt, provides for the circularity of the infinite judgment, for the "good" infinity. The infinite is what is drawn from the repetition of either term - or better yet, from the *emptiness of the other* which either term oscillates towards. Going towards its other, it returns to itself, *the One is the infinite that is coextensive with its other in the reproduction of itself*. This is Hegel's thesis.

Over and against the image of a linear progression, the Hegelian infinite is the *circle* drawn within repetition. "What arises is the same as that from which the movement began, that is, the finite is restored; it has therefore united with itself, has in its beyond found itself again."<sup>13</sup> But even if this reflective circle is composed of two terms, it is not a disjunctive process. This is no unity of difference. In the first place, it is from the limitation of the One, which is indifferent to difference, that the infinite is drawn. The very fact that two opposed terms could become their opposites attests to the very nullity of differences, to the fact that they differ only by virtue of limitation. In other words, it is not that a limit is necessary because of the immanence of otherness, since otherness only follows from the necessity of limitation. As Hegel later writes in the *Logic*, it is only when the limitation becomes constitutive that the Notion is achieved.

If any of this exegesis on indifference, on the "bad infinity" of alterity and externality leaves something to be desired in contemporary repudiations of Hegel, I will nonetheless stop short of Hegel's critics. I will only draw two conclusions at this point:

- a. That the repetition of the One, the continual reemergence of the same, does not sufficiently offer a closure onto a Notion. Jacques Lacan observed as much when he distinguished himself from Hegel: the false infinity is linked to a metonymy of recurrence, a metonymy which can luckily be drawn from the function of the repetitive One. But, as Lacan adds, "what experience shows us, is that the different fields that are proposed in it - specifically, the neurotic, perverse, and indeed the psychotic - is that the One which is reduced to the successions of signifying elements, the fact that they are distinct and successive *does not exhaust the function of the Other*."<sup>14</sup> It is not insignificant that Lacan calls it the *function* of the Other, for even if the Other is impossible, it still possesses a function in the object that repetition generates. It is even from the repetition of the One, from its recurrence, that the question from the other arises: "*che vuoi?*" what is it that I, the Other, demand of you? Don't get me wrong: there is not a lot of bad infinity in Lacan, this

is not a radical alterity of otherness, yet there is a remainder of the Other which is buttressed through *jouissance*. And the trouble, as Lacan said in *Television*, is that this latter term cannot be inscribed in a repetitive quantum. *Jouissance* does not have a numerical constant, it does not register "in" a given repetition. A repetitive quantum is not guided by the "energy" of a human constituent: it is guided forwards by a demand that must be deciphered. To speak directly to Hegel on this count, recurrence does not exhaust, much less *explain*, the determination of a singular being's *ought*.

- b. For Badiou, on the other hand, it cannot follow that the repetition of the repetitive One can be *called* infinite. Repetition, as a quantitative "bad" infinity, may indeed have qualitative being, but one may ask what it is that makes this quality "infinite" (and a "good" infinite at that)? For Hegel, the answer is simply because repetition "tires of the void," of the insubstantiality and empty beyond (or "trans-finite polarity") of the finite. For Hegel, the void does not present an obstacle because it is empty, nothing, not determinate.<sup>15</sup> It is because of Hegel's vehemence on this point that Badiou will fault his exclusion of the mathematical - in rejecting the bad infinity, Hegel, in effect, excludes the empty set as well: "in the numerical proliferation, there is no void, since the exterior of the One is its interior; the pure law which institutes the spreading of the same as One. *The radical absence of the Other - indifference - does not legitimize declaring that the essence of the finite number, its numericality, is infinity.*" The void, the empty set,  $\emptyset$ , cannot simply be reduced to nothing in repetition if, as interior of the One,  $\{\emptyset\}$ , it is what is being repeated. It is only by a retroactive maneuver, (which places the empty infinite as product, rather than origin, of the One) that Hegel can then locate the good infinity *elsewhere*, outside the extimacy that the mathematical provides. In naming the true infinity, Hegel draws upon a "bad" element, the void of the finite, to make his claims. There remains an empty object in Hegel, despite his best intentions.

Paradoxically, it seems as if Badiou and Lacan are at cross-purposes in their critique of Hegel. For Lacan, Hegel's grandiose gesture exhausts, or denies, the function of the Other; for Badiou, there is too much otherness in this meeting between the finite and the infinite, in this preservation of the difference-in-the-one. For the latter, the Hegelian One is both itself (finite) and its other (void as indeterminate) which (illogically, for Badiou) thinks the infinity

of number from the being of One number. Why name the One “infinite,” if not because the “One” (as counted, as title) must erroneously presuppose the infinite as its content? In his preservation of the other through the interiority of the One, Hegel is not Hegelian enough - he is still located on the side of Badiou’s nemesis - Deleuze. For what does Deleuze designate as his formula for the subject? Precisely the “Leibnizian” formula of the One over its infinite denominator:  $\frac{1}{\infty}$ .<sup>16</sup> It is One *with* the infinite, or rather, the infinite folded in the One as its pure interior. But Badiou cannot, nor should his reader, think the being of the One in global terms. The One is not what contains the infinite, it is what the infinite *passes through*.

Thus, what both Hegel and Deleuze presuppose, in spite of themselves, is an anti-mathematical theory of the subject. The very “point” of punctuality which marks the One receives its consistency through being “filled out” by its infinite denominator. Prior to this, it must be asked if there can even be a subject. For Badiou, there can be a different sort of consistency for his subject: it entails that *any* finite point expresses a subject. This is not to say, however, that there is therefore a formula of numbers (a Symbolic) wholly sufficient onto itself which can also exist without a subject. There is, as Miller has shown, something more: the empty set, *objet a*. This does not presuppose a “substance” of the subject: on the contrary, if anything, there is too much substance in this Hegelian One. And thus, finally, we are faced with a choice; if both Hegel and Lacan presuppose a subject - which is the locus at which philosophy can persevere - it is Hegel who opts without hesitation for a multiple subject. Psychoanalysis proposes, in contrast, a subject of division, of the “cut.” That the former would appear as more appealing is perhaps reducible to a refusal of the site where truth, in psychoanalysis, is to be sought. Truth is produced through *repression*, through the hole it produces in knowledge. It is here, impossibly, that the function of the Other (and, in consequence, of truth) is not exhausted. As Badiou himself writes: “a truth is the principle of a subject, *by the empty set whose action it supports*.”<sup>17</sup>

What Descartes, Lacan, and Badiou all share is a view of the complete exteriority of the subject to its representative. With the inauguration of the “I think” comes the guarantee that “I am” must reside elsewhere. *It is in this sense that the subject is not the void*. The naming which effectuates the subject leaves its indiscernible referent, its truth, in the future anterior of the situation of which the subject is a discernibly finite part. The subject, as One, names that *which will become* the truth that precedes it, the hole in knowledge,  $S(\emptyset)$ , which supplements its situation. It is the *finite real*, if such can be conceived, of its situation. If there can be an agreement between Badiou and Hegel, it is that the subject is indispensable for philosophy to persevere. What gets lost, however, in the latter’s insistence on the interiority of the finite, is the very extimate element that any external foundation must presuppose as its truth. In subordinating the true to the interiority of a conscious subject, one may as well dispense with it altogether. It is a small step that one takes when going from a point where the true is subordinated to the “human” towards another point where philosophy realizes its end. Badiou can evince the promises that this end affords, and it embodies everything which philosophy should save us from.

- 1 The quote comes from Lacan's unpublished tenth seminar on anxiety. From a lecture given on November 14, 1962.
- 2 See Miller, "To Interpret the Cause: From Freud to Lacan," *Newsletter of the Freudian Field*, 3. 1-2 (1989): 50. In his book *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), Bruce Fink notes that Lacan at times has suggested much the same: that is, that "... all truth is mathematizable." He quotes from Lacan's unpublished Seminar XXI:
- "[T]here is no such thing as a truth which is not 'mathematized,' that is, written, that is, which is not based, qua Truth, solely upon axioms. Which is to say that there is truth but of that which has no meaning, that is, of that concerning which there are no other consequences to be drawn but within [the register] of the mathematical deduction." Fink, 121.
- 3 The majority of my interpretation comes from Badiou's *L'être et L'événement* [Being and the Event] (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988). The present volume contains two articles in translation from this volume. Also see "On a Finally Objectless Subject," trans. Bruce Fink, *Who Comes After the Subject*, Connor, Cadeva, and Nancy, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1991) 24-32.
- 4 See Jacqueline Rose's translation of "Suture (Logic of the Elements of the Signifier)" in *Screen*, 18. 4 (Winter 1977-8). Also see Joan Copjec, "The Subject Defined by Suffrage," *Lacanian Ink* 7 (1993): 47-58.
- 5 We can thus see the primary distinction between the use that Gilles Deleuze makes of the term "suture" and the import that it has for psychoanalysis. For the former, the repression of the object proceeds from repetition:

"... we cannot suppose that disguise may be explained by repression. On the contrary it is because repetition is necessarily disguised by virtue of the characteristic displacement of its determinant principle, that repression occurs in the form of a con-

sequence in regards to the repetitions of presents . . . *We do not repeat because we repress, we repress because we repeat.*"

- Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia, 1993) 105. While Deleuze repeatedly drew upon Lacanian concepts throughout his career as a philosopher, it is clear that for psychoanalysis, his reading is absurd. Repetition could not even be possible without the included element - the null set - following the exclusion (repression) of something - the empirical subject.
- 6 Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1969) 117.
- 7 Hegel, 118.
- 8 Hegel, 120.
- 9 See Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying With the Negative* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) 39.
- 10 Hegel, 136.
- 11 Hegel, 138.
- 12 Hegel, 141.
- 13 Hegel, 147.
- 14 Anxiety Seminar: November 14, 1962.
- 15 This seems to be Žižek's thesis as well. See "The Wanton Identity" in *For They Know Not What They Do* (London: Verso, 1991) 51-98.
- 16 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1992) 130.
- 17 See Badiou, "Gilles Deleuze: *The Fold - Leibniz and the Baroque*," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, Boundas and Olkowska, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1993) 69.