

ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ

hoc est,

DE HOMINIS

PERFECTIONE ANI-
MO, ET IN PRIMUM ORTU HU-
jus, commentationes ac disputationes quorun-
dam Theologorum & Philosophorum no-
stræ ætatis, quos vetta pagina

Carlos Gómez Camarena

To Angélica Márquez Osuna, because my life is not the same after my
(dis)encounter with you.

*“The relative poverty of all that philosophers have
said about love, I am convinced of that, is because
they have tried to explain it through either psychol-
ogy or theory of passions”.*
—Alain Badiou, *Conditions*

Introduction

If one requires a concretised exemplar of the extent of psychologisation within contemporary society, one need only take a quick peruse around airport book stores. The surfeit of self-help literature that one finds there are invariably about sex and love, and are full of advice, hints and tips to ameliorate the quality of our relationships and, of course, maximize our sexual pleasure. The underlying assumption of such pop-psychology is that the secret to our happiness relies on an individual core of our personality; it is precisely such a

supposition which constructs our sense of being an individual with interiority. A key point to consider is that, for psychology, thoughts, feelings, mental processes, or the deepest core of our individuality—such as sex, spirituality, or desire—are what fill this so-called individual interiority.

For the purposes of this paper, I define ‘psychologisation’ as the process whereby a sense of individual interiority—where all the secrets of humans reside—is constituted, but also as an analytical framework through which to explore and explain wider social phenomena. So, for example, one can be said to be engaging in a process of psychologisation every time we explain a variety of phenomena—poverty, love, criminality, happiness, or the decline of literacy, and so on—through recourse to internal processes of individuals. Interiority, identity, and mentality are the most espoused mantras of this psychologisation process and its manifold agents of neuroscientists, economists, philosophers, and psychoanalysts, all of which engage in, what Stavrakakis calls, ‘psychoanalytic reductionism’¹.

Within the psychologised milieu of our everyday lives, there has been an emergent group of cultural theorists, and others, who have sought to problematise this assumption of an individual interiority, explaining the emergence of this sense of interiority—our sense of being a self, an individual, or having a core which defines us—as a discursive epiphenomenon. For example, it is typical of critical psychological work to approach the field of psychology through recourse to cultural or discursive explanations, supplanting concepts which resemble, and presuppose, some sort of interior essence, and explaining the emergence of these concepts in terms of historicity or social constructions.

I would argue that pop-psychology explains love and sexuality merely in its psychological dimension. However, much work within critical psychology is also inefficient, for that matter, as it so often reduces love and sexuality to issues of gender, or, using Foucault’s genealogical method, explores our relations with our bodies and how our sense of self is constructed—or, in Foucauldian parlance, ‘technologies of the self’.

My objectives, here, are two-fold: firstly, I aim to extract specific, critical elements from the corpus of Alain Badiou which I contend are expedient for de-psychologising love and sexuality; secondly, I want to make explicit important strategies, inherent in the work of both Badiou and Jacques Lacan, for de-psychologising philosophy and psychoanalysis.

¹ “Psychoanalytic reductionism is the study of socio-political problems (such as attributing war to outbreaks of repressed aggression, the Russian revolution to a revolt against ‘the national father image’ and ‘German National Socialism’ to a paranoid culture, that is to say, treating ‘society as a patient’ having a collective unconscious or superego and suffering from a psychological disorder) has deservedly given psychoanalysis a bad name among historians, sociologists and political scientists” (Stavrakakis, 2002: 1).

Lacan: Affects and Sexuation

"The sexed being of these not-whole women does not involve the body but what results from the logical demands of speech".

—Jacques Lacan, Encore

Assuming that the very core of our being is inhabited by feelings and affects, psychology, in turn, employs them as a compass through which to orientate research, clinical practice, and the construction of its body of knowledge. Love and sexuality, then, are classified as essences amongst other feelings. In order to maintain this idea, psychology must make a clear-cut distinction between feelings and thoughts, as though they were different entities— such as, for instance, when somebody explains that a patient suffers from 'over-rational behaviour' repressing his/her 'most inner feelings'.

In contradistinction to mainstream psychology, cultural or historical approaches conceptualise affects— or the very opposition between what is rational and what is emotional— as social or linguistic constructions. Amongst this multifarious range of approaches, Lacanian psychoanalysis posits a truly alternative theoretical framework through which to conceptualise affects; it is because of the radicality of this framework that Badiou draws upon Lacan's ideas to develop his own thought concerning love. Indeed, I would suggest that Badiou's cogitations on love are anchored in Lacanian psychoanalysis: principally, Lacan's conceptualization of affects and sexuality. It is to this that I now turn.

Affects

The dispute between Jacques Lacan and his pupil André Green is well known. The former Vice-President of the International Psychoanalytical Association (API), André Green, reproached Lacan for not sufficiently considering affects in the psychoanalytical clinic (1999: xv): "It soon became evident to me that Lacanian theory was based on an exclusion, a 'forgetting' of the affect".

Lacan immediately answered this objection. In his *Seminar X* (2004), entitled *On Anxiety*, Lacan states that all affections deceive, since they either belong to the imaginary or the symbolic; the only affection that does not deceive is anxiety, since it points to the presence of the *real* (found in the *objet petit a*). But what does it mean that all other affections deceive? The answer is extremely important for any attempts towards the de-psychologisation of psychoanalysis. When we face emotions and feelings, such as fear, sadness, hatred, enthusiasm, indifference, boredom, happiness or bitterness, we cannot, as psychoanalysts, be certain that these affections do not deceive. This is because, simply put, these affections are signifiers that replace, or stand-in for other signifiers and, thus, in

these affections there is a process of condensation or displacement— metaphor or metonymy, according to Lacan; ultimately, these affections don't mean anything on their own or without the signifier chain (Johnston, 2009). Or, said otherwise, affects do not guide clinical practice, and they do not have any clinical or analytical effects if we communicate them to the patient. The latter remark refers to the fact that, in all affections, except anxiety, the symbolic dimension—of the signifier— prevails. To think feelings as signifiers is what distinguishes psychoanalysis, not only from a psychological perspective, but also from cultural or historical discourses.

Compelling the analysand 'to feel in a more profound way' or 'to be in touch with their most sincere feelings', is contraindicated as an intervention by the psychoanalyst. But once again, why? Because at the very moment you invite the analysand 'to get in touch' with their feelings and emotions, you immediately move to the imaginary register. Within this register, humans search for unity, coherence, completeness, wholeness, empathy, and meaning, in everything we say. If the imaginary register is encouraged, the analysand will, ultimately, end up identifying herself with the analyst and, thus, will be nothing more than a copy of what the analysand believes the analyst wants her to be. The following quotation should make this point clearer:

This obviously implies that the analyst is an actor or actress who plays a part which does not necessarily convey his or her 'true feelings'. The analyst is not 'authentic', not communicating his or her deepest beliefs and reactions to the patient as one human being to another. The analyst may find a patient unpleasant and annoying, but what use is it to let the patient know this? The patient may very well react to an expression of the analyst's antipathy by leaving analysis altogether, or by trying to make him –or herself- pleasant and interesting to the analyst, censoring certain thoughts and feelings which he or she thinks might annoy the analyst, instead of getting down to true analytic work. Counterproductive reactions to say the least! (Fink, 1997: 5)

What the analyst seeks to do, then, is move from imaginary transference to symbolic transference (Fink, 1997: 33). Symbolic transference implies that the analyst no longer deals with an 'I' or a 'you', but, rather, that the work is done through language— without supposing any agency of self, being either 'I' or 'you', thereby rejecting any interiority— and, therefore, the relation becomes impersonal: it is no longer about an analysand and an analyst, but rather an analysis, as such. However, to work with language— on the side of the symbolic— is not the same as discourse analysis; rather, this form of analysis focuses upon ruptures in language— symptoms, dreams, slips, bungled actions, and so on.

One must note that the imaginary register promoted by 'interpersonal relations' and 'contact with our feelings', leads us to the belief that there is an 'interior self' which must, and can, be known, a sensation of 'mental profoundness' which, in turn, leads to the pe-

renial search for an 'identity'. In direct contrast to cultural and historical approaches, within mainstream psychology identity is not socially constructed, but, rather, an interior mentality or a *cogito*². Interiority, identity, and mentality are all words that psychologising discourses exalt. Against this theoretico-political doxa, Lacan proffers a subject who is formed by her bonds with others (fellow beings), through her relationship with the Other (language, law), or in an impersonal word which is organized through the clinical dispositive of the couch. If subjects—not individuals— establish their bonds with others— one of the possible meanings of the Oedipus complex—, and the unconscious is structured as a language, there is, thus, no room for any interiority, mentality or identity. This position explains Lacan's theoretical alliance with Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralism: structural anthropology is a form of de-psychologising psychoanalysis (Lacan, 2006a). This notion of 'deep feelings' and its relation to the 'I' or 'self' as an agent, hegemonic within mainstream psychological research, has been the source of sustained polemics from a number of critical psychologists, such as Ian Parker (2007: 115-7) and Jan de Vos (2009: 229, 239).

What does this mean in terms of affect, however? Affections are not something individual; such a conception has its origin in mental depth, in hormones, in neurotransmitters, or what was learned culturally. In psychoanalysis, by contrast, affections may be conceived of as structural places. A useful way of explaining this is to think of people as chess pieces on a board: their 'identity' or their 'feelings' are wholly dependent upon what

² We could even think, in a reductionist manner, identity through recourse to Lacan's triadic registers that structure the subject's life-world: psychological/biological (imaginary: identity is a substantial ego or self); sociological/cultural/anthropological (symbolic: identity is a social construction by historicity or language); and the psychoanalytic (*real*: identity is a paradoxical category because it produces a double movement, one of a constant negotiation of the construction of identity, and the other of a constant impossibility to produce a definitive identity since there is a void at the core of identity; identity never coincides with itself). We can classify this as reductionist because the sociological and psychological focuses also involve imaginary, symbolic, and *real* dimensions, as psychoanalysis also articulates these three registers. When we speak about the *real* as something which is removed from any relativism (a limit, as something that breaks all types of discursivity, as a subtraction, or an impasse) we are not confirming a non-historical truth, but, rather, confirming that the *real* is unique to each discourse and that is why there is no room for an unlimited relativism. Or, phrased otherwise, there are multiple gaps that are subtracted from any sociological/cultural/anthropological explanation, and relativism cannot escape from this. If it has been possible to equate these impasses to truths, it is because, today, as both Lacan—while distinguishing truth from knowledge— and Badiou state: truth is neither an identity nor a presence. Today, truth's statute against this unlimited relativism— and any other dogmatic position— is plural, subtractive and never identical to itself (Badiou, 2009: 113-4). This new conception of truth is compatible with the statement that every culture and every historical period has its truth, that is to say, impasse points or emptiness. What we don't have is full discourse or wholeness. We will say that in Lacanian psychoanalysis, sex and death are truths, places of non-coincidence and breaking points of any discourse. To see more on this discussion between historicism and psychoanalysis, see Žižek (2001) and Copjec (1996).

position the pieces occupy on the chessboard, and the prevailing rules of the game. Jealousy, fear, or shame, then, would thus indicate, both, a relation towards others, and a position within the overall structure. Our position within the structure, and our relations to others, becomes clearer through analysis of the speech of the analysand. For example, envy is not something I ‘feel’, in the sense that I desire to possess characteristics that someone else possesses— to do so would be to imply that the other person is an ‘individual’ who owns, in her interior and the depths of her ‘psyche’, particular characteristics; rather, envy is looking at the Other (someone in the structural place of the Other: God, Mother, Father, etc., that is to say, the one who incarnates the Other), looking at another of my fellow-beings (Copjec, 2004:160). After all, Cain did not kill Abel because he had something that he didn’t have, but because God was looking at Abel and not him. The first manner of thinking is psychological (imaginary), and the second is psychoanalytical (symbolic). Jealousy, shame, fear— among many other affections and emotions— can, therefore, be conceptualised in a structural fashion without recourse to concepts such as mentality, identity or interiority³. Moreover, and for precisely the same reason, within Lacan’s theoretical edifice, hysteria, or obsession, is not some mental disturbance which resides in the depths of the unconscious, but, rather, a structure— a position in relation to others, and the Other.

Simply put, whereas psychology examines feelings within the existential domain of the imaginary register— in other words, as entities inside the self, emanating either from the deepest recesses of the mind or from biological instincts—, cultural and historical perspectives analyse feelings from within the symbolic register. The most important difference between Lacan’s theory and other approaches is that the former takes into account the dimension of the *real*. What is the *real*, for Lacan? Certainly, the dimension of the *real* is not equitable with reality in the quotidian sense of the word. On the contrary, the *real* is that unknown which exists at the limit of the socio-symbolic universe, that which is subtracted from the imaginary and symbolic dimensions: it can neither be grasped by the imaginary nor represented by the symbolic. What in this world can neither be represented by signifiers nor comprehended by the image? Sex and anxiety, among other things, are paradigmatic exemplars of these kinds of ‘feelings’ which lie beyond the imaginary and symbolic dimensions. Putting aside anxiety, I now want to develop this idea of sexuality vis-à-vis the Lacanian dimension of the *real*.

³ For a very interesting approach to comedy, see Zupančič’s *The Odd One In* (2008).

Sexuation: There is no such thing as a sexual relationship

To explain the origin of exogamy, Freud, in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), invented the well-known myth of the primordial horde. The story is as such: before the law was established, the father of the primitive horde could dispose, without limits, of all women of the clan, since no law forbade it; hitherto, the only existing law was that of the strongest. The children of this clan, deprived of women, agree to murder the obscene father, and to eat him in a ceremonial dinner. So no figure could occupy his place in the future, the brothers instituted the law to seek women from other clans. Whereas, previously, the patriarch prohibited through force, after his death, it is prohibited by law.

This myth may be read in Lacanian terms: the primal father, he who has access to an (impossible) absolute pleasure—or *jouissance* in Lacanese—, returns transformed as the founder of the law, the symbolic father. This obscene monster, then, becomes a celestial divinity. Lacan formalized this myth through logics, in turn, transforming the myth into a logical structure. In order to do so, Lacan uses Bertrand Russell's logic of the types in his theory of sexuation in order to be subverted. It is beyond the remit of this paper to explain in greater detail how Lacan developed this idea in his seminar entitled *Ou pire...* (Lacan, 1971-1972); other authors—including Lacan— have covered this extensively (see Copjec (1996; Fink, 2002; Dhar, 2009). For my own purposes, I will focus upon the following chart:

Masculine Side	Feminine Side
(1) There is at least one X that is not submitted to the phallic function	(3) There is not one X that is not submitted to the phallic function
(2) All X's are (every X is) submitted to the phallic function	(4) Not all (not every) X is submitted to the phallic function

What does phallic function mean here? Phallic function means having to renounce a mythical pre-symbolic *jouissance*— a complete, yet entirely impossible, pleasure. The Phallic function is an epiphenomenal effect of being a speaking subject, of being traversed by language. What do these four propositions mean? The second formula (2) means that all men are submitted to the phallic function. If 'X' is a man (no matter what body s/he possesses) then 'X' is submitted to the phallic function. Moreover, if 'X' is a man, it is precisely because a symbolic father deprived him from absolute *jouissance*, which is why formula (2) is based upon an exception: there is at least one 'X' that is not submitted to

the phallic function; this is formula (1). The ‘X’ man from formula (1) would be the mythical father from Freud’s myth of the primitive horde, the obscene father, and founder of the law, who, mythically speaking, possessed all women. But this man, this ‘X’, must be excluded from the law he founded. It may be noticed that these formulas are *logical* functions.

Formulas (3) and (4) correspond to women. Formula (3) means that there is no woman (whatever body s/he possesses) who is not submitted to the phallic function. On the woman’s side, then, there is no exception; there is neither a primitive mother from the primitive horde nor a law founder. Consequently, the phallic function does not separate the woman from the mythical *jouissance*, because the existence of such impossible *jouissance* is a fantasy borne from masculine logic. The fact that the *jouissance*, which masculine logic fantasizes about, is impossible doesn’t mean that it doesn’t have effects on the logic itself. Women must not sacrifice this *jouissance* to attain the symbolic fictions or their entry into the system of language. The consequence of this is formula (1): not all women are submitted to the phallic function. But this doesn’t mean that exceptions might not exist. In the case of feminine logic, the submission to the phallic function is *undecidable*: it is included and, concomitantly, not included in it; resultantly, the phallic function neither forms a consistent set nor does it define women in a universal way. This is why Lacan famously stated that “THE woman doesn’t exist”, because the article ‘THE’ supposes a totalisation; but, as aforementioned, universalization is not valid in relation to women. To be a man or a woman, thus, implies two different positions of a speaking being submitted to language. This shift offers us an alternative framework through which to think identities: through Lacan’s *real* register. Or, phrased otherwise, there are two forms of failure in the constitution of any identity: on one side, identity is impossible since it exists at an impasse of self-reference (feminine side); on the other, identity is impossible since every universal faces the impasse of the exception (masculine side). Any identity—gender, nationality, race, class, etc.—, therefore, encounters two impasses: either the impossibility of any universal by the exception/exclusion; or the impossibility of any consistence by the self-reference dead-end⁴.

⁴ “This psychoanalytical definition of sex brings us to our third set of questions, for, defined not so much by discourse as by its default, sexual difference is unlike racial, class, or ethnic differences. Whereas these differences are inscribed into the symbolic, sexual difference is not: only the *failure of its inscription* is marked within the symbolic. Sexual difference, in other words, is a *real* and not a symbolic difference. This distinction does not disparage the importance of race, class, or ethnicity; it simply contests the prevailing theoretico-political doxa that sexual difference offers the same *kind* of description of the subject as the others do. Nor should this distinction be used to isolate considerations of sex from considerations of other differences; rather, it is always a sexed subject who assumes each racial, class, or ethnic identity” (Copjec, 1996: 2007-8). Sexuation, then, is the core which renders impossible any identity by means of exception or inconsistency (by means of a self-reference impasse).

'The' man does exist, even though it shouldn't be *the* man: we should exclude the man that exists (he is the father of the horde) so human society may exist. There *is* masculine identity but it must be expelled. Yet there is no feminine identity because the woman does not coincide with herself. In the man there is exclusion; in the woman there is scission (or a split).

In men's logic, there is a meta-language (a language that can name another language from above), or there is a law that expels itself from the domain it legislates. In feminine logic, it is the self-reference— to name herself, to know herself, and so forth— which is forbidden, and this is why the woman is consistent; but in being consistent she sacrifices completeness. If self-reference is accepted and completeness denied, it implies the inconsistency of the whole. Being a woman or a man are, ultimately, two ways of finding oneself at an impasse, a breaking point, an impossibility. Women's logical side means that one must choose between consistency (excluding self-reference), or wholeness (by means of being an inconsistent set). But, similarly, these are two forms of doing something with these fractures and impasses— that is to say, there exist two types of failures.

Things should hopefully be clearer at this juncture: 'whole', within feminine logic, does not mean complete, but, rather, consistent; whilst incompleteness in masculine logic appears to be symbolized by the existence of the exception— formula (1). In contrast, the completeness within feminine logic is written through the denial of the exception— formula (3).

So, we have two logics which in no way are complementary. One could even say that the masculine solution— the exception of an element— is a form of avoiding the impasse of the feminine undecidable. It is therefore possible to say that, for Lacan, the *real* has two faces: on one side, it refers to the 'X' one sacrificed when acceding to the symbolic order; on the other side, it refers to the impossibility of the symbolic itself— the aporias originated by the self-reference. Consequently, this means that any approach concerning the category of identity must necessarily end in these sort of dead-ends. This is problematic, not only for cultural/sociological/historical/anthropological theories of identity, but, also, because it marks the end of any relativism, since nobody can deny these impasses. Truth, in this case, is not a presence but a subtraction.

The truth in masculine logic is established by exception: when speaking one forgets behind what is said⁵. A famous example of this is when Epimenides says: "Cretans are always liars", whilst forgetting that he is also a Cretan. His truth is thus possible due to the impasse of the exception. The truth in feminine logic is given by inconsistency: the truth

⁵ This phrase refers to Lacan's *L'étourdit*: "That one might be saying remains forgotten behind what is said what is heard" [« Qu'on dise reste oublié derrière ce qui se dit dans ce qui s'entend »] (Lacan, 2001b: 449).

appears in the disagreement between the said and the saying; it is there where the feminine truth dwells (at the very impasse). Masculine subjects, then, erect their position on authority (based on the exception), whilst feminine subjects position is based upon the absence of a meta-language (based on inconsistency). What doesn't exist, in either one, is completeness or consistency.

Significantly, then, every discourse—including logics⁶—finds either its breaking point or its impasse. But there are only two types of impasses: exception or inconsistency. If the discourse is knowledge, then the impasse is the truth. As aforementioned, this truth is subtractive; it appears as absurd or meaningless, as Copjec notes:

Sex is the stumbling block of sense. This is not to say that sex is pre-discursive; we have no intention of denying that human sexuality is a product of signification, but we intend, rather, to refine this position by arguing that sex is produced by the internal limit, the failure of signification. It is only there where discursive practices falter-and not at all where they succeed in producing meaning-that sex comes to be (1996: 204).

Sexuation, in Lacanian theory, also implies a radical questioning of dogmatic positions that state that sexuality is something natural and biological, whilst differing markedly from culturalist, social-constructivist, or relativist positions. In this sense, the distinction that Copjec makes between psychoanalysis and deconstruction is an interesting one:

It's no use preaching deconstruction to psychoanalysis because it already knows all about it. Bisexuality was long a psychoanalytical concept before it was ever a deconstructionist one. But the difference between deconstruction and psychoanalysis is that the latter does not confuse the fact of bisexuality-that is, the fact that male and female signifiers cannot be distinguished absolutely with a denial of sexual difference. Deconstruction falls into this confusion only by disregarding the difference between the ways in which this failure takes place. Regarding failure as uniform, deconstruction ends up collapsing sexual difference into sexual indistinctness. This is in addition to the fact that, on this point at least, deconstruction appears to be duped by the pretention of language to speak of being, since it equates a confusion of sexual signifiers with a confusion of sex itself (1996: 216).

Sexuality, then, is the result of a logical failure, a position which sets apart Lacan's theory from psychologisation since sexuality is no longer some sort of substance which resides within any interiority. What I would emphasise in relation to this albeit brief précis of

⁶ For more on these logical impasses as encounters with the unsymbolizable *real*, see Dhar (2009) and Hook (2009).

Sexuation, is the radicality of Lacan's decision not to enter into sexuality via the biological or the cultural, but, conversely, through failures, contradictions, and violations of logic. Let us remember the etymology of the word sex. In Latin, sex (*sexus*) comes from the verb *secare*, which means to cut, to separate or to divide. Sex is, therefore, that which cuts in two without any possibility of re-union (Neill, 2009). This separation is not, according to Lacan, only *between* man and woman, but, more radically, a division *in* man (impossibility of a whole without exception) and a split *in* woman itself (impossibility of consistency without scission)⁷. Sexuality also refers to the impossibility of the subjects to obtain a total and definitive pleasure, which although only existing in a mythical way— as *jouissance*—, nevertheless, still has considerable effects upon the subjects' life.

I now want to elucidate some of the strategies that Lacan uses to de-psychologize affects and sexuality. One of these strategies is to opt for considering these dimensions through language. Whilst, for Lacan, affects may very well deceive, they are nevertheless still signifiers and, thus, through analysis of an analysand's speech we can ascertain what position they occupy in a structure, and, hence, de-psychologize and de-biologize affects.

When Lacan tries to think sexuality, he chooses logics. But he doesn't enter into logics in just any form; instead, he looks at those places where logics strike upon some contradiction. This is similar to the approach that Lacan uses when he deals with language. Stating that the "unconscious is structured as a language", in itself, doesn't tell us very much, unless it means that the analyst hears not only the language itself, but also the *contradictions* of said language— where the patient's moments of truth are found—, as well as the subject's position within the speech, or how the analysand changes some details of her narrative; otherwise, psychoanalysis would be no different to discourse analysis. We must say, then, that Lacan's strategy to de-psychologize—avoiding the infertile paths of identity, mentality, and interiority— is the use of formalizing knowledge: linguistics; logics; and topology (Gómez, 2009). However, when he uses these formalizing disciplines, he

⁷ Alenka Zupančič repeats this point but in a different- and more interesting- way (2003: 147-8): "One should not understand this in the sense that 'man' is Achilles and 'woman' the tortoise (the unattainable, opaque, enigmatic, inert being that man can approach only at infinity, without ever actually being able to reach her, or to coincide with her). Rather, 'man' and 'woman' are two different Achilles, whereas the tortoise is the 'object' through which they try to relate to each other (*objet petit a* in the case of a man, and Φ in the case of a woman). 'Man' is the Achilles who can never catch up with the tortoise, since, when he reaches the tortoise's point A, the latter is already at point B; and, when he reaches her point B, the tortoise is already at point C, and so on. In short, he keeps pursuing the metonymic object of his desire. 'Woman', on the other hand, is the (Lacanian) Achilles, who can do nothing but pass the tortoise, and who, so to speak, passes it already with the first step, relating to it from the initially double or split standpoint of the Other (i.e. from the standpoint where 'woman' is already and initially not-whole, where she is the Other as the irreducible difference of the same). Hence we are dealing with two different differences: the irreducible difference of (or to) the Other (the 'masculine' position), and the irreducible difference within the Other (the 'feminine' position)".

doesn't think of them as coherent structures; rather, he searches the place where these structures collapse.

This strategy of analysing failures through formalizing knowledge appears to be related to the Heideggerian critique of metaphysics. We mustn't forget that, for Heidegger (2000), philosophy committed a cardinal mistake in "the oblivion of the question that interrogates for the being"; that is to say, when philosophy asks itself about the nature of being, it answers with an entity or a thing. Heidegger's philosophic project was to 'do' philosophy without falling into this mistake, which he termed the 'metaphysics of the presence'. In order to accomplish this, he had to criticise the idea of presence, essence, and identity. Lacan followed this intuition, applying this critique of metaphysics to re-frame psychoanalysis. What Lacan didn't want was a 'metaphysical psychoanalysis' or an essentialisation/substantialisation of any of his concepts. That is why he struggled with the ideas of identity, mentality, and interiority through the application of formalizing knowledge, an alliance with philosophy and, of course, a reading of failures and inconsistencies, as opposed to coherence and unity—a strategy which Lacan considered an inherited gesture from Freud. To sum up, then, Heideggerian philosophy, formalizing knowledge, and Freud, can be considered as Lacan's tripartite alliance against any psychologisation of affects and sexuality.

It is Lacan's radical reading of sexuation and affects that propels Badiou's cavalcade towards a theory of love applied to philosophy.

Badiou: De-psychologisation of Love

"It may seem out of the ordinary to make Lacan a theoretician of love, and not of the subject or of desire. It is however from the angle of the innovations in thinking which deal with it, that his undertaking is an event and a condition for the renaissance of philosophy. I moreover know of no theory of love having been as profound as his since Plato's".

—Alain Badiou, Manifesto for Philosophy

"Love is instead what makes truth of disorder, which is why it is the bearer of that which is indelible in the event".

—Alain Badiou, Logics of Worlds

In his *Manifesto for Philosophy* (1999), Badiou states that philosophy is only possible if it meets four conditions: art, politics, science, and love. Philosophy does not generate truths; rather, it must humiliate itself in front of these truths, which are not presences, nor do they have a referent in reality. By subtractive truths, Badiou is referring to that which rips through the present constellation of knowledge within these four fields. Badiou names this

truth which pierces established knowledge, 'Event'. When this event is carried out to its last consequences, reshaping everything hitherto known in that particular field (politics, art, love, science), it is called "construction of the truth."

In order for philosophy to be reborn, then, it is necessary for it to be exposed to the most radical knowledge of its time. Accordingly, Badiou believes that there are radical elements within Lacan's theory of sexualisation. For the French Philosopher, philosophy has stagnated because, by in large, its cogitations on love have been framed by theories based upon passions, or a psychological approach to it. Buttressed by Lacan's theory of sexualisation, it is no exaggeration to state that Badiou strives to reflect upon love via an expulsion of psychology and any theory of passions from its territory, in turn, opening up new possibilities through which to think about love.

Love theory

For Badiou, love, first, implies an encounter, an event. This encounter is an event *between* a subject and another subject, a strange 'X' which is impossible to discern. This 'X' works in a very similar fashion to Lacan's *objet petit a*, which is not the *object* of desire but, rather, the object that *causes* desire. The love encounter between two subjects is, thus, only possible because of the emergence of an indiscernible object that causes desire. This 'X', although functioning in a similar way to *objet petit a*, is not the same; it is rather a 'logical operator'⁸. This is why we should name this event by saying— in the case of love events— the statement: "I love you". As we name this strange 'X', a truth construction process begins. As aforementioned, an event occurs, for Badiou, when knowledge is perforated by a truth; this event in the field of love is the emergence of a strange 'X', of a love encounter. Resultantly, it is possible to formulate the following equation: event = love encounter = emergence of a strange 'X'.

The emergence of truth through the love encounter— through this 'X'— is called an event, and the construction of this truth is precisely called love. This is why it is necessary to refer, once again, to the distinction between knowledge and truth. In the case of love, knowledge is the present life conditions of each subject. In this manner, a love encounter pierces a hole within the certainty of the present life conditions of each subject; in other words, after a love encounter— the emergence of a truth— neither of the subjects can continue their lives in the same manner as before. Each subject has present life conditions

⁸ (Badiou, 2009b: 190) "Desire is captive not its cause, a cause that is not the body as such, and still less the 'other' as subject, but that is not an object the body bears, an object before which the subject, in its fantasmatic framing, comes forth (*advenir*) in its own disappearing. Love obviously comes within the defile of desire but it *does not have the object of desire as its cause*. Two activated by love, which marks bodies *qua* materiality, can neither elude the object cause of desire, nor arrange itself with it".

(economical, cultural, psychological, psychical, social, historical, existential, and so on), which make them what they actually are. The love encounter displaces and smashes these present conditions, causing the identity of each one of the subjects to explode. Truths, as events, are not possible without knowledge— or present conditions—, but these truths are subtractions, impasses, dislocations, or the emptying of the present conditions, or the knowledge where truth takes place. In Badiou's own words:

“Love is that scene in which a truth proceeds, a truth about the sexuated positions through a conflict of knowledges for which there can be no compensation. This is because truth is at the crux of the in-known (*in-su*). Knowledges are veridical and anticipatory but disjunct” (2009b: 194).

An event can never be foreseen; nor is it discernable from within the present conditions— or situation in Badiouian parlance. The love encounter emerges as a rupture, and must be named: ‘I love you’. This statement, ‘I love you’, is a wager with no guarantees, because from within the present situation, there exists no knowledge which can guarantee whether this ‘I love you’ will last or not. This wager without guarantees is related to the Lacanian barred Other— in the sense that there is no signifier which can name the lack within the Other. Consequently, every first enunciation of the phrase ‘love you’ is a bet without guarantees, a wager that is undertaken in the belief that it will last forever; in other words, this sentence witnesses a bet for eternity in the present⁹, in as much as two lovers are not able to conceive of each other without the other, and, thus, will say in that moment: ‘what would my life be without you’? Once the dices are thrown, then, love, in a retrospective manner, becomes reality. Here, temporality functions in an *après-coup* way; or, phrased otherwise, it is the temporality of future perfect (*future antérieur* in French): once it is mentioned then *it will have happened*. The fact that a love encounter cannot be predicted, and that it breaks with a given situation¹⁰— regardless of whether it is produced through wagers in a retrospective temporality—, are characteristics that separate this love event from any psychological vision. How does psychology explain love? There would, perhaps, be a development of love, and one would find within their mind, within the personal history of each one of the lovers, their neurotransmitters, their ‘pathologies’, the conditions which makes this love encounter anticipatable, thus, concomitantly, changing the status of this love, as since it is predictable, it can no longer be an encounter.

⁹ (Badiou, 2000: 82): “Every love is eternal, and the enunciation of a phrase like ‘I love you’ is very profound truth. Even if 15 days before is false.”

¹⁰ (Badiou, 2009b: 187): “Love is *what makes truth of their un-binding (dé-liaison)*.”

In order to think this difference, let us imagine two kinds of love counsellors. On the one hand, if there was a psychological love counsellor who would give her opinion on love affairs, she may say: "it is important to know one's partner more, and later evaluate the advantages and disadvantages that this relation will bring to us; one should avoid risks, and then decide if one wants to begin a relation". On the other hand, a Badiouian love counsellor may say: "even if you have all the information relating to your partner, nothing will guarantee the success or the failure of this relation; it is simply a matter of betting. Do you love your partner or not? If your answer is yes, then take a leap of faith and you will see"! What guides the latter counsellor is a separation between truth and knowledge.

After naming the love encounter, the building process of this truth begins and, in this fashion, truth presents itself as subtraction. How can this truth be built if it's subtracted? The truth is to sustain and persevere in the Two. This Two is the precise split between man and woman—the sexed couple that is *not* necessarily hetero-sexed; that is to say, the disjunction between two subjects. This Two is the space that exists between one subject and the other, a space that can never reduce itself to zero without collapsing love. Badiou, as we already know, takes this idea of sexuation— man and woman are two forms to deal with a lack— from Lacan. The Two, then, is the difference that supports a love relation.

In this manner, there would be three situations where this Two would lose its capacity to build a truth, all of them expressed through numerical terms (2009c):

- a) First position, classical love: the two of love is really a 'one' plus another 'one'. Love would be a fiction of a relation, the addition of two solitudes, and the refuge of an unfathomable individuality. This is the classical pessimistic vision: all of us make believe that we love; love is a fake, it is the reduction of love to eroticism. The numericality for this love is $1+1$.
- b) Second position, romantic love: love is the step from Two to One. Love is the fusion of two halves that find each other again. Love would be the abolition of difference, the breaking up of the subject, and the fusion of an 'I' into the 'you'. It is a romantic vision where love is an exception in society. Romeo and Juliet against the world. Its numericality is 1.
- c) Third position, family love: Love is the step from Two to Three. Love is the emergence of the family, the adding of a good third, or the birth of a child. It is a vision where love is the instrument of society itself; eroticism is thus the delicious pill for the emergence of a child. The resulting number of this relation is 3.

In summary: a classical pessimist vision, a merging romantic vision, and a family productive vision. There is a game, a drama, and a reality. Badiou believes there is a fourth possibility, but it implies sustaining a lack or a failure in the relation of the Two from the disjunction¹¹. It is *a question of building a relation from this very difference*. It is, once again, a bet on the impossibility of a harmonic relation. Badiou affirms that love, as a construction of the truth of the Two, is *to experience the world from this very difference or disjunction*. The contrary position would be that each subject lived looking merely at each other without experiencing the world.

In concrete terms, what is love as a construction of the truth through this Two? What does ‘experience the world from the difference’ mean exactly? What it means is that love is built from the differences where a man and a woman find each other. What are these differences? Some of these differences arise from their condition: age, culture, family, way of being, nationality, and so on; others derive from their decisions: a trip, having a child, deciding not to have one, moving from their house, pondering over what to do with a shared friendship, and so forth. Other differences present themselves by accident and are wholly unexpected: an accident, an illness, winning a scholarship to study abroad, receiving an inheritance, unfaithfulness, a death, and so forth. Through each one of these differences, the couple must decide, with every decision, in turn, building ‘point by point’ (Badiou and Truong 2009) the truth of love: “Love is nothing other than an exacting series of enquiries into the disjunction, into the Two” (Badiou, 2009b: 189). This implies that, decision by decision, point by point, the consequences of this Two are explored; you never know, from the beginning in the love encounter, up to where and how much this Two can build.

Neither of the two (sexed) subjects may experience what the other experiences on her/his side: “I shall object to the notion that it is possible, in love, for each other of the sexes to learn anything *about the other*. What is possible is to experience the world from the difference. But this Two form the experience of the world and the construction of this truth of the Two would not be possible (nor bearable) without sex” (Badiou, 2009b: 193); rather, “only love exhibits the sexual as a figure of the Two” (Badiou, 2009b, 191). The ferocity of sexuality is due to the promise of union between both sexes, and the pleasure that is generated from the encounters. However, if the sexual encounter between two subjects delivered complete satisfaction, the possibility of desire between the couple would

¹¹ (Badiou, 2003: 55): “It remains that love is the only available experience of a Two counted from itself, of an immanent Two. . . Neither absolute transcendence, nor the Trinitarian doctrine. It is from this point of view that one can see to what degree love is atheistic. Because atheism is, in the end, nothing other than the immanence of the Two. Love is atheistic in the sense that the Two never pre-exists its process.”

cease to exist. This explains how such a colorful and intense emotion as love is not a matter of affects, but a feeling that we experience due to structural effects— thus putting aside any temptation to conceive of love or sexuality through a psychological framework. Desire is the difference between our expectations of this promise of a total encounter, and the actual resulting encounter itself— which is always greater or lesser, but never exact. This passion for wanting to obtain total pleasure can be termed impossible *jouissance*. As noted, going beyond this *jouissance* destroys desire. We must remember that, for Lacan, desire is a form of defense against this overflowing *jouissance*¹². The impossibility of union between man and woman is, then, at the same time, the possibility of love¹³, which is a symmetrical formula of this other: identity in the *real* register is paradoxical because the impossibility of a total identity is also what makes it possible. Furthermore, Badiou affirms that “the misunderstanding of the object supports the lack of rapport” (2003: 51). Evoking Lacan’s (1998: 163) famous statement, love in Badiou’s thinking is thus the passage “from impotence to impossibility” (Lacan, 1998).

The strange ‘X’ as an object that causes desire¹⁴, the hope of reaching total *jouissance* as a way to complete myself with the other, and the necessary accompanying dissatisfaction which re-stimulates my desire, are the sexual elements within love. There is no possibility of building love without sexuality; however, if sex is present alone it destroys love. Adrian Johnston makes this point astutely by paraphrasing Lacan (2005:71): “The amorous *is not* without the sexual”, but not the other way around. The central point within all these discussions is that sexuality is a matter of logical structure (as a structural impossibility of reaching total pleasure) and not a matter of a psychological interiority, a biological impulse, or a hormonal passion.

At first sight, Badiou’s theory of love appears conservative since, in contradistinction to the Deleuzian vision of the multiplicity of pleasures, the myriad of genders, and the deregulation of sexuality, it keeps the traditional separation of man/woman intact. Moreover, his theory could be criticised on the grounds that it is romantic and idealistic, because, in reality, ‘we are all selfish’, or because ‘issues of love are more complex’.

¹² (Lacan, 2006b: 696) “But it is not the Law itself that bars the subject's access to *jouissance* –it simply makes a barred subject out of an almost natural barrier. For it is pleasure that sets limits to *jouissance*, pleasure as what binds incoherent life together, until another prohibition–this one being unchallengeable– arises from the regulation that Freud discovered as the primary process and relevant law of pleasure”.

¹³ (Badiou, 2003: 45): “We would assert that, initiated in a purely descriptive excess, love is not less coextensive to its duration. Which means that it must attach itself to the construction of the scene of the Two, while its paradox is that the sexual disjunction is simultaneously its material and its obstacle”.

¹⁴ (Badiou, 2003: 43): “A real Two, since what composes it is only, by itself or in its being, a non-rapport which agitates the lure of the object”.

In the first place, one could not characterise Badiou's theory as romantic and idealistic, for the simple fact that Badiou doesn't believe that love is an ideal— a dream that must be followed, an idea that must be reached—, but, rather, a wager without guarantee in the here and now, an axiomatic principle that assumes the consequences of taking a position. Nor can it be said to be romantic, as it doesn't aim for the merging One, or the Three of the family; on the contrary, for Badiou, love is a complex, accidental, and turbulent path that is built upon assuming risks and making efforts, without any sort of pedagogy or prior instructions. This is why Badiou contends that love is threatened by what he calls “the coaching of love” — an expert who exorcises risks and dangers— whose principles are: “find love without taking chances”; “be in love without suffering”; “fall in love without *falling* in love”; “avoid risk in love”; “live without violence or sexual harassment from your partner”, and so on and so forth (Badiou and Truong, 2009: 13-4). For our French philosopher, such an idea of love is emblematic of the prevailing *zeitgeist* of “zero collateral damage” (Badiou and Truong, 2009:14), of the rampant struggle against insecurity (in which all others are turned into suspects waiting to harm us, especially figures such as terrorists and immigrants): “The securitarian love, as everything whose norm is safety, is the absence of risks for s/he who has a good insurance, a good army, a good police, a good psychology of the personal *jouissance* and all risk for s/he who is in front of her/him. You will notice that it is commonly said that ‘things are done for our commodity and for our security’” (Badiou and Truong, 2009: 16).

Apropos the charge that Badiou's conception of love is conservative, one may retort that the multiplication of desires and the deregulation of sexuality are, in fact, perfectly compatible with the present capitalist system: “Today the erotic scepticism lacks critical power... I believe that nowadays it rather serves the trade destiny of society, just look how sexuality is today systematically related with merchandise” (Badiou, 2009c: 105). This criticism is, in part, no doubt a consequence of Badiou's critical approach to Deleuze's philosophy (see Badiou, 1999)¹⁵. Furthermore, Badiou also believes— without his position becoming remotely conservative— that this Deleuzian-esque conception of sexuality as a multiplication of desires actually destroys love, because what keeps both sexuality and love alive is the desire of desire, never the *jouissance*; as Badiou notes: “The *jouissance* is the internal limit of love” (2000: 86), and if we cross that limit, love vanishes. *Love is a structural effect*, and for that very reason, if *jouissance* fills a gap in the structure, love disappears. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek finds a diagnosis of this problem within the literature of French writer Michel Houellebecq:

¹⁵ For similar criticism of how Deleuze is now used as a conservative philosopher rather than a critical one, see Žižek (2003).

Houellebecq depicts the morning-after of the Sexual Revolution, the sterility of a universe dominated by the injunction to enjoy. All of his work focuses on the antinomy of love and sexuality: sex is an absolute necessity, to renounce it is to wither away, so love cannot flourish without sex; simultaneously, however, love is impossible precisely because of sex: sex, which 'proliferates as the epitome of the late capitalism's dominance, has permanently stained human relationships as inevitable reproductions of the dehumanizing nature of liberal society; it has, essentially, ruined love'. Sex is thus, to put it in Derridean terms, simultaneously the condition of the possibility and the impossibility of love (Žižek, 2008: 35-6).

Reckless sexuality and the imperative of *jouissance* are, then, part of the current ideology, as Žižek notes:

Traditionally, psychoanalysis was expected to allow the patient to overcome the obstacles which prevented him/her the access to normal sexual satisfaction: if you are not able to 'get it', go to the analyst who will enable you to get rid of your inhibitions. Today, however, we are bombarded from all sides by different versions of the injunction 'Enjoy'! From direct enjoyment in sexual performance to enjoyment in professional achievement or in spiritual awakening. *Jouissance* today effectively functions as a strange ethical duty: individuals feel guilty not for violating moral inhibitions by way of engaging in illicit pleasures, but for not being able to enjoy. In this situation, psychoanalysis is the only discourse in which you are allowed not to enjoy –not prohibited to enjoy, but just relieved of the pressure to enjoy (2007: 56).

Referring to this passage, it is clear that one of the most important values operating within our psychologised society is the imperative to be happy. This obligation of happiness is not that different from the societal imperative to Enjoy: if someone is not happy, she should feel guilty. The same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, for sex: if you don't have an active sex-drive, it is you who is at fault. According to Badiou, love as a construction of the truth of the Two, of the difference of the love encounter, is a radical alternative, both, to the conservatism of love as a family, which is the base of propriety and selfishness, and to sexual 'neoliberalism', and the societal command to enjoy. For Badiou, sexuality as cynicism is also a form of moralism:

"Of course, there are also Lacan's considerations, which I rely on—save to contest his complicity with the moralizing pessimism which suspects that love is nothing but an imaginary supplement for sexual dereliction" (Badiou, 2009a: 530).

Mathematics of love: the strategy of de-psychologisation

*"But in the end I stand, in some isolation it seems,
between psychoanalytic pessimism, on one hand,
and neo-religious recuperation, on the other, while*

maintaining (as they both do) that to think love is a major task, and a difficult one. What sets me apart from the first is that I think it is entirely inexact to treat love as though it belonged to the order of failure; from the second, that my approach to love is not at all spiritual, but formal. What we need to invent is something like a mathematics of love who only envisages a universal erotic order”
—Alain Badiou, *Logics of Worlds*

In the same way that Lacan uses logics to remove any vestiges of thinking sexuality as substance, Badiou takes one step further in his approach to conceptualizing love. For Badiou, as aforementioned, all unfortunate perspectives on love— cynicism, securitarianism, romanticism, and so on— are effects of the same primary mistake: considering love as substance. Badiou’s strategy is clear: mathematize love, because the more you formalize love the more you de-psychologize it. Nevertheless, the path of mathematization, in the last instance, will lead our philosopher to a confrontation with Lacan. This dispute centers on logics, mathematics, and ontology.

Underpinning Badiou’s conceptualization of love is a mathematized formalization, developed in two of his three great works (*Being and Event*, *Logics of Worlds*) and in two further articles entitled “The Scene of Two” and “What is love”? The French philosopher recognises that formalizations used by Lacan are expedient for thinking of love beyond the imaginary register, and, thus, setting itself apart from any psychologisation process. The instant love is conceived of through logics, or, more precisely, through logical dead-ends and impasses, it no longer appears as a vital intensity or a colourful explosion of emotions¹⁶. This is possible given that the conditions of emergence for such thought were already inherent within Lacan’s thinking— affects are positions in a structure, and sexualisation is a matter of logical impasses. This is precisely how Badiou aims to ‘go further’ in thinking the subject of love, noting that: “no theme requires more pure logic than that of love” (2009b: 183). One should stress, here, that such thinking does not deny there are no emotions or feelings in love; rather, what it means is that, like affects in Lacan’s thought, feelings and emotions do not form an essential component of love, but are merely structural effects of love. As Badiou states:

¹⁶ “Several years ago, I was interviewed as part of an assemblage dedicated to the theme of sexual difference. My title had been: ‘Is love the place of a sexed knowledge?’ A broadcaster had followed the published articles of this gathering. He was enraged about what I had said, finding it intolerable that one would associate austere formulas with the marvelous experiences of love. The provocative point on which the broadcaster concluded was: for me, it was not a matter of saying, “I love you” (*je t’aime*), but rather, “I matheme you” (*je te mathème*) (Badiou, 2003: 43).

The mixture of long interlaced chromatic melodies and vibrant evocations exhibits love in its excessive truth, in what it says about the power of the Two beyond the self-regarding enjoyment of each and every one (2009a: 32).

Even though Badiou accepts, in principal, the idea of the logical impossibility of a structure, the material upon which Badiou's and Lacan's respective structures are made from differ markedly. As Badiou posits, for the French psychoanalyst—Lacan—the nature of the structure is linguistic, whereas for our philosopher the structure is ontological (2005). This means that the failure and the logical impossibility at the heart of Badiou's theoretical edifice are also ontological: there is something in ontology that does not work well, and it is precisely in this place where the event appears. This has consequences for how we think of, both, the matheme, and the subject in Badiou's theory. For Lacan, the matheme concerns the *real*, but the *real* is non-ontological, or as Lacan puts it: "the status of the unconscious is ethical and not ontic" — here, we must understand 'ontic' as a substantialization of being (1998: 34). In Badiou's thought, the matheme concerns the *real* of ontology which is multiple and subtractive, and for this reason, 'ontological' does not mean substantialization. For Lacan, the subject is a subject of language, and although it has a very specific object as a correlate (*objet petit a*), this object is an effect of language, or a remainder of the subject of language—once the subject is traversed by language, the result is a remainder). For Badiou, on the other hand, the subject is *possible* due to a failure in the ontological structure—i.e., the subject is a *subject of the event*. Ultimately, this means that the forcing of a truth, and its subsequent construction point by point, decision by decision, produces, as an effect, a subject:

The subjective effect here is that we must supplement the situation for the event which it contains, perhaps, to become manifest to begin with . . . A subject, hence a politics, is the in-between of an event to be elucidated and an event that elucidates. It is that which an event represents for another event (Badiou, 1985: 101).

This last remark is crucial because it represents two different ways of approaching the *real*, a point of divergence in the respective itineraries of Badiou and Žižek, and also between philosophy and anti-philosophy (Badiou, 2005: 434). For Badiou— and philosophy— there is a *beyond the real* which can be confronted through 'forcing', a mathematical technique that implies the way a new set can be constructed from a generic set (a multiple without ones)¹⁷. For Lacan— as well as for Žižek, and anti-philosophy— the way to

¹⁷ "For a truth to take place, therefore, something has to pass through the impasse. 'If, as Lacan says, the *real* is the impasse of formalization', then, Badiou suggests, 'we will have to venture that formalization is the impasse of the *real*', which reaches the existing states of things and its immanent deadlocks: 'we need a theory of that

approach the *real* is through the analytical act, an act that changes the very coordinates of the socio-symbolic order. For other anti-philosophers, the act is political, aesthetical, or even mystical (Bosteels, 2006: 168; Gómez, 2010: 5)¹⁸. But this also means that there is a link between anti-philosophy, formalization, and access to the *real*¹⁹.

Although this dispute is a logical consequence of Badiou's decision to go further down the formalization path—the same path chosen by Lacan—it is necessary to understand that this dispute opens up a fruitful debate about the function of formalization within philosophy, psychoanalysis, and other sciences. For instance, when any knowledge—be it philosophy or psychoanalysis—addresses the central concept of bio-politics: if we choose the formalization side, we are on Badiou's side; whilst, if we opt for the vitalist side, we are on the same side as Negri, Esposito, Deleuze, or Agamben. What are the philosophical, political, epistemological, ethical, and aesthetical effects of choosing formalization? And in the event that we opt for the formalization side, is it better to grasp it on the logical or the mathematical side? This decision may well decide whether a particular philosopher or psychoanalyst would be an anti-philosopher, or whether she defends either the ontological side or the relativistic side of logics.

Returning to our discussion, Badiou's amorous subject is thus only possible because of an ontological fracture. This ontological lack or failure presents itself in the Two: the lack subtracted from ontology in the form of the Two. We know this because the matheme (the mathematized formalization) is a way of touching the ontological *real* (which is not presence, but subtraction and multiplicity). We know, from Lacan, that the matheme is a letter, with the letter being the littoral between the *real* and the symbolic; that is to say, the letter touches the limit of the *real*.

Nevertheless, as in Lacan's theory of sexuation, this ontological lack of the Two is treated in a different way by the feminine subject than by the masculine subject. Man and woman, according to Badiou, have nothing to do with any biological substance or with culture. When the masculine subject states: "what will have been true is that we were Two

will pass through the *real*, that will pass through the formalization. Here, the *real* is not only that which can be missing from its place, but what passes with force'. Surely, anchored in the *real* as a lack of being, a truth-procedure is what gives being to this very lack. Pinpointing the absent cause of the constitutive outside the situation, in other words, remains a dialectical yet idealistic tactic, unless and until this evanescent point of the *real* is forced, distorted and extended, in order to give consistency to the *real* as a generic truth" (Bosteels, 2006: 141).

¹⁸ For further explorations of this issue, the reader should read chapter 2 of Briefings on Existence—approaches to ontology are mathematical and phenomenological are logical— (Badiou, 2006a), and Badiou's (2006b) article entitled: "The formulas of *L'étourdit*".

¹⁹ One must remember that Lacan briefly suggests to the analysts of his School, Vincennes (and later Paris VIII), that they train themselves not only in linguistics, logic, or topology, but also in anti-philosophy (Lacan, 2001a: 314). It is striking that anti-philosophy is aligned with three formalizing knowledges. The only step further that Badiou has to make is to posit this debate on the edge of ontology.

and not at all one", the feminine subject affirms: "what will have been true is that Two we were, and that otherwise we were not" (Badiou, 2009b: 194). The method of facing the construction of this Two is different, and it is not possible to share the experience of each one of the sides; rather, it is only possible to share the very split which separates them, the way they share together the world as difference: the feminine statement aims at being, as such, whereas the masculine statement targets the changing of the number, the painful fracture of the One by the supposition of the Two. For this reason, Badiou concludes: "to love well is to understand poorly" (2009b: 195).

Conclusions

"Love what you will never believe twice".
—Alain Badiou, *Theory of Subject*

In order to construct a different way to think about love, it was necessary to take a grand excursion so as to expel any vestiges of psychological premises. Subsequently, I attempted to elucidate, and develop, the specific strategies used by Lacan and Badiou to de-psychologize love and allow us to conceive of it in another fashion. This included: mathematization; the subtractive as a logical impasse; the wager without guarantees, and its importance for the construction of love; and the use of the three Lacanian registers— imaginary, symbolic, *real*.

On the one hand, Badiou invokes Lacanian psychoanalysis— in turn, radicalizing and going further than his master— to perform an inventive analytical procedure: thinking love vis-à-vis sexualization. On the other hand, Badiou subverts the Lacanian subject: for in contradistinction to the Lacanian subject— which is based upon ruptures in language—, Badiou's subject is reliant upon ontological inconsistencies and impasses.

The purpose of this paper was to explicate how Badiou draws upon Lacan's anti-philosophy to drive his inquiry into new de-psychologising territories, and create innovative strategies of de-psychologisation. In doing so, I explored the terrain of love through an engagement with Badiou's strategy of formalization and, finally, considered how these insights could be considered together to produce political effects.

This latter point is important because it stresses how the de-psychologisation of love is a political task; however, in order to commit this political task, it is necessary to use formalizations. Formalizations have political effects because, ultimately, they offer us a different way to approach metaphysics. This mathematical apparatus, through which Badiou 'thinks about love', was built by Badiou not only to eliminate the traces of any metaphysics of the presence, but also to lodge the unpredictable, which appears as a rupture in the midst of ontology. As I have demonstrated, when love is thought of in terms of affections,

intensities, an effect of biology, or by cultural determinations, it drowns the possibility of any innovation, in turn, preventing the emergence of a new subject. In conclusion, then, I contend that the de-psychologisation of love at the hand of Badiou's philosophy has an important, political aim: to save humans from freezing in the waters of a given world.

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