POLITICS AS SUBJECTIFICATION

RETHINKING THE FIGURE OF THE WORKER IN THE THOUGHT OF BADIOU AND RANCIÈRE

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The figure of the worker has disappeared from politics. It has disappeared from the left, which has replaced it with an increasingly fragmented and fractious series of identities, and from the right, which has proclaimed everyone an entrepreneur, even if it is only of their own human capital. Moreover, as politics gravitates toward "the center," toward consensus, the only class that dares to speak its name is the middle-class, which is absolutely ubiquitous because everyone claims to be it. Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière recognize this absence, but are perhaps unique in the field of political thought in that they address it as a problem, examining the process that has removed the worker from politics, and what is left in its wake. Rancière and Badiou are concerned with what we could call following Sylvan Lazarus "the figure of the worker," and that is the worker, or proletarian, as a political process, not as a sociological identity. For Rancière and Badiou the worker is not a referent, an object for a sociological analysis, it is not a matter of a group of people that can simply be defined according to their relation to the means of production, rather they are concerned with the worker as a political figure, and a process of subjectification. Thus, what I would like to propose is to examine what is novel in Badiou and Rancière's thought, the idea of politics as subjectification, through what appears to be antiquated, the figure of the worker. Specifically, I would like to argue that Badiou and Rancière offer the possibility of moving beyond what Slavoj Žižek refers to as the impasse of "two faces and a vase": either one sees the social, or the economy, and politics appears as at best an epiphenomena and at worst an ideological ruse, or one sees politics, and the economy appears to be at best the exchange of goods and at worst a force of necessity crushing freedom.[1] Which is not to suggest that the thought of Badiou and Rancière is identical, in fact their proximity at the level of political problems is contradicted by a divergence at the level of not just philosophical positions but philosophical practice.

Rancière's books that deal with political philosophy proper, namely *Disagreement*, *On the Shores of Politics*, and *The Philosopher and His Poor,* open with a return to the texts of Plato and Aristotle. While Rancière's turn to the ancient Greeks would seem to place him in close proximity with such thinkers as Hannah Arendt, who seek to revitalize "ancient democracy" against the modern (Marxist) tendency to reduce politics to social struggles, he reads these texts for the conflict they suppress rather than the ideal the espouse. Rancière argues that Aristotle's *Politics* gives two foundations for politics. The first is the definition of man as a "speaking" and thus "political" animal. It asserts a fundamental equality in access to speech, the capacity for all to recognize, and thus articulate, the just and the unjust. The second foundation appears in Book IV, after classifying all of the various types of political constitution monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, and so on, Aristotle argues that there are mainly two constitutions, of which all the others are only variations: democracy (rule of the poor, and many) and oligarchy (rule of the rich, and few). There are two foundations for politics, a principle of equality and the fact of hierarchy and division, that are in tension. What interests Rancière is how Aristotle must negotiate this tension, eventually surpressing the principle of equality. This can be seen most glaringly in the slave's relation to language: slaves understand language (how else could they be told what to do?) but do not posses it.[2] The tension between equality and hierarchy does not just affect the position of the slave, but it threatens the entire social order, and in fact, Aristotle's *Politics* is quite explicit in defining the strategies through which an ideal of equality can at once be as-

serted in principle and effaced in practice. One strategy is to place the capital in the middle, equidistant from the small farms and villages, which make up the populace. The people, including the poor, are thus permitted to participate in politics by right, but are excluded by the mundane facts of life. As Aristotle writes: "For they have enough to live on as long as they keep working, but they cannot afford any leisure time."[3] The rift between the rich and the poor is unavoidable, but it can be managed by other facts that are just as unavoidable. There is only so much time in a day, and given a choice between political participation and making a living, the poor will always choose the latter—if it can be called a choice.

Rancière's interest in Aristotle is not nostalgia for the lost object of true democracy, but to demonstrate that suspicion of and even hatred for democracy is as old as democracy itself. What Rancière finds at the origin of political thought is the suppression of the fact that politics always precedes political thought, distinctions between the just and the unjust are always already being made, prior to their authorization by philosophers.[4] In Aristotle this suppression takes a particular form: "Aristotle is the inventor of . . . the art of underpinning the social by means of the political and the political by means of the social." As Rancière writes:

> The primary task of politics can indeed be precisely described in modern terms as the political reduction of the social (that is to say the distribution of wealth) and the social reduction of the political (that is to say the distribution of various powers and the imaginary investments attached to them). On the one hand, to quiet the conflict of rich and poor through the distribution of rights, responsibilities and controls; on the other, to quiet the passions aroused by the occupation of the centre by virtue of spontaneous social activities.[5]

Politics undermines the social by displacing the divisions of the rich and the poor with a unified identity, that of the citizen, or of the nation. At the same time the social or economic activities of work and leisure are used to temper political grievances, the conflict over the distribution of offices. In contemporary terms, Rancière argues that there is a "reduction" of the social by the political whenever national unity is used to ward off the facts and conflicts of social division. The inverse, the reduction of the political by the social, takes place whenever the promise of general economic development, of progress, is offered as a solution to political conflict.

These two strategies intersect through the way in which the quotidian matters of time, space, and location reinforce a particular order that is at once social and political. In order to express how the social and the political are conjoined, Rancière draws together two concepts that come from fundamentally different fields of inquiry and practice. The first is the "police," which Rancière, like Foucault, expands beyond its restricted meaning as a well-armed element of the repressive state apparatus to include the system of categories and divisions that structure experience. "The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task."[6] Rancière pushes this concept further than Foucault, arguing that the police does not just describe the particular apparatuses of power and knowledge, the official knowledge of bureaucracies and statistics, but includes what he terms "the distribution of the sensible." Rancière defines this second concept as: "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it."[7] The two concepts "police" and "distribution of the sensible" would appear to be drawn from different fields of speculation, different regimes of experience, politics and aesthetics; however, Rancière argues that every political order, every policed state of affairs, is simultaneously a way of perceiving and feeling, and vice versa.

How the police and the distribution of the sensible intersect can be illustrated through Rancière's reading of Plato's *Republic* in *The Philosopher and His Poor.* Rancière underlines a very basic point, that the definition of justice that we get in Book IV (doing one's own work and not meddling) is a repetition of

what was already stated in Book II as an essentially economic argument, that every person must dedicate him or herself to one job. "The image of justice is the division of labor that already organizes the healthy city."[8] However, Rancière's point is not to demonstrate how an ideal of the political order, justice as demarcation and hierarchization of tasks and natures, rests on a social order, in this case the efficiency of the division of labor, as superstructure rests on base, but that the political and social order articulate and are articulated by a particular distribution of the sensible. This can be seen through the role time plays in Plato's argument. It is ultimately time that justifies the distribution of tasks. "The Platonic statement, affirming that the workers had no time to do two things at the same time, had to be taken as a definition of the worker in terms of the distribution of the sensible: the worker is he who has no time to do anything but his own work."[9] As Rancière demonstrates in *The Nights of Labor,* his study of the lives and struggles of workers in the nineteenth century, the disqualification of the worker from political participation is not just a project of Plato's philosopher king. As Rancière writes:

> That is, relations between workers' practice—located in private space and in a definite temporal alternation of labor and rest—and a form of visibility that equated to their public invisibility relations between their practice and the presupposition of a certain kind of body, of the capacities and incapacities of that body—the first of which being their incapacity to voice their experience as a common experience in the universal language of public argumentation.[10]

Thus, returning to the question of the relation between the social and political, it is because every political order, that is every form of police, is inseparable from an aesthetic order, from a distribution of the sensible, that politics and economy are intertwinned.

Rancière rigorously opposes "politics" to the "police." On the one hand, there is the logic of the police, which situates everyone according to his or her place, and on the other, politics, which starts from a fundamental assertion of equality. "Politics occurs when there is a place and a way for two heterogeneous processes to meet."[11] The "equality" which is asserted, or asserts itself, is not the equality before the law or the equality of opportunity it is an anarchic equality, an equality of speaking and thinking, that rises sporadically in opposition to every order.[12] It is the scandal glimpsed briefly in Aristotle's equation of all of mankind with the capacity to speak, and thus the capacity for politics, that all political philosophy tries to contain. This equality arises sporadically with respect to specific situations, specific "wrongs," but nonetheless Rancière argues that it takes the "form of a part which has no part." This excluded part cannot become one of the partners, one of the parties to the conflict of interests that are defined by the police, because they are improper, excluded by the very count of the society. "Whoever has no part—the poor of ancient times, the third estate, the modern proletariat—cannot in fact have any part other than all or nothing."[13] Rancière's interest in the proletariat stems in part from Marx's assertion that the proletariat is "a class that is in civil society but not of civil society."[14] What interests Rancière is the proletariat as a process of subjectification, a process that originates from the "wrong" of the exclusion of the count.

While Marx takes the excluded status of the proletariat to be a symptom of the lie of politics, locating the social process and interests behind political conflicts, the egotistical bourgeois behind every declaration of the rights of man, Rancière does not denounce appearances in the name of reality, but examines how these appearances constitute part of the "distribution of the sensible." In Rancière's historical and philosophical work he has examined how workers, proletarians, have used the traditions of equality, the merely formal freedoms declared in laws and constitutions in order to transform their social position. As Rancière writes: "The problem is not to accentuate this difference between this existing equality and all that belies it. It is not to contradict appearances but, on the contrary to confirm them."[15] Rather than view politics from the perspective of class struggle, locating in the latter's ironclad laws the secret of the former's intelligibility, Rancière views class struggle from the

perspective of politics, arguing that every politics, every political subjectification, involves the count of the uncounted, and passes through the division between the social and the political, scrambling the very distribution of the sensible that underlies and naturalizes such a division.[16] Thus, for Rancière there is no general problem of the relation between the social and the political, rather it is this relation which is reframed with every political interruption that argues for the political aspect of social divisions, measuring them against the standard or equality, and every police order that insists on the need for a order, which is ultimately a social order.

It is at this point, the identification of the proletariat as a process of subjectification, that Rancière's thought comes closest to Badiou. In *Théorie du Sujet* Badiou identified Marxism as "the discourse that supports the proletariat as subject."[17] In that early work Badiou sought to locate the point where the proletariat ceased to be an object, subject to the dialectic of forces and relations of production that defines its place in society, and becomes a subject, a disruptive force that not only eradicates its "place" but destroys the whole hierarchy of places that defines the state.[18] Which is to say that Badiou's dialectic sought to think the unity and contradiction of object and subject, mass and class, the social and the political. It is precisely this unity that Badiou later argues Marxism foundered on, the attempt to unify history and politics, knowledge and truth, an objective description of what is, with a prescription of what could be.[19] To borrow a term from Sylvain Lazarus, Badiou's fellow activist in the group "Organization Politique," this is the error of classism, the idea that subjectivity reflects an already existing group identity.[20] For Badiou (and Lazarus) the definition of groups, parts, and their relations can only be an affair of the state, and not of genuine politics.

The critique of classism does not mean that one dispenses with the worker, but changes its register and significance. As Badiou argues, "When we speak of a figure of the worker it's not at all an economic figure, but a political one."[21] Moreover, Badiou argues that the "factory" must continue to be thought as a political site. The factory for Badiou is not the "hidden abode of production," the social, which is to say economic, space of inequality that undermines the political commitment to "Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham," and yet it remains a privileged political site.[22] In a short essay, originally written to be included in *Being and Event,* titled "The Factory as Event Site," Badiou refers to it as the "event par excellence, the paradigm of the multiple at the edge of the void."[23]

To understand how this is the case it is necessary to examine Badiou's distinction between presentation and representation. For Badiou, set theory makes possible a rigorous thought of the non-identity of these two concepts. The two basic relations of set theory, belonging and inclusion, the first referring to all of the multiples that make up a situation and the latter referring to the count that represents the situation, make possible a rigorous division between presentation and representation.[24] Thus belonging designates presentation, an inconsistent multiple, and inclusion is part of a second order, that of representation, the multiple structured according to a definition of what counts as one. This definition makes possible three different nominations of terms within a given situation. As Badiou writes: " I will call normal a term which is both presented and represented. I will call excrescence a term which is represented but not presented. Finally, I will term singular a term which is presented but not represented."[25] Thus the excess of representation over presentation, of inclusion over belonging, is simultaneously a lack, since there are terms that belong but are not included. In other words, it is not just that presentation exceeds representation, but that representation exceed presentation: there are multiple counts possible of any given situation.

These distinctions, the actual logic of which makes up the entirety of *Being and Event,* can be clarified by bringing them back to the factory, which both illustrates and produces these concepts. ("Produces," in that Badiou's turn to set theory and a mathematical ontology in the 1980s can be understood as part of a sustained engagement, both political and philosophical, with the Marxist problems of the dialectics of mass and class as well as the problems of the state. All of which in one way present the problems of the inclusion and representation, the consistency and inconsistency of different presentations of the social bond.) The problem for

Badiou is not just that the worker is not represented, excluded from the count. Rather Badiou's idea of the inadequacy an excess of representation makes it possible to grasp a paradox of the present: as the worker disappears from politics the economy itself becomes central to the count, to the representation of society. (This is perhaps one way of defining neoliberalism.) As Badiou writes: "what is counted is the level of the stock market, the Euro, financial investment, competition, and so on: the figure of the worker, on the other hand, counts for nothing."[26] What has come to occupy the place of the factory in the count or representation of society is the company. The company is a pure representation, a "term that serves to hide a singularity beneath an excrescence," it represents the factory without presenting the workers.[27] The basic (and perhaps all too schematic) structure of capitalist society would be as follows: the bourgeois, or citizens possessing capital, would be the normal terms, presented and represented, the company, is an excrescence, represented without being presented, and the workers are singular, presented but not represented. For Badiou the exclusion of the worker is not simply a contingent fact, a bourgeois bias that could be overcome by a change in representation, but a fundamental aspect of an ontology of multiplicity. Thus, Badiou argues that while the Marxist theory of the state is correct in positing that the state deals with classes not individuals, which means "the state re-presents something that has already been historically and socially presented," it is incorrect, however, in that it reduces this class basis to a simple bias.[28] As Badiou writes with respect to Engels' theory of the state:

> The void is reduced to the non-representation of the proletariat, thus unpresentability is reduced to a modality of non-representation; the separate count of parts is reduced to the non-universality of bourgeois interests, the presentative split between normality and singularity; and, finally he reduces the machinery of the count as one to an excrescence because he does not understand that the excess which it treats is ineluctable, for it is a theorem of being.[29]

In the factory two fundamentally different norms confront each other; presentation, or the count that defines civil society, and productivity, which is not only unrepresented but unpresentable. As Badiou argues, if the worker is counted he is only counted as a worker, a statistical unity, not as a multiple that exceeds quantification in the statistics that measure employment. Representation does not induce presentation. There is no state or union that can adequately represent the worker, there is no way to represent the inconsistent multiplicity itself. The gulf between work and presentation is manifested in the walls and security guards that divide the site of production from general sociality. "The factory is essentially a non-political place, whether its workers are politicized or not. . . . Politics is the opposite of industrial work, precisely because it is itself work, a refined creation that requires the interruption of the other work."[30] The political demand is not to adequately represent the workers, such could only be an affair of the state, but to engage the site of the factory, the unpresentable, the inconsistent multiple. This engagement is not necessitated by the site itself, the factory is a site for politics, which does not mean it structures a necessary political response. There is no teleology of historical development, no dialectic of the forces of production bursting the fetters of the relations of production. The factory is an evental site, the space from which politics can emerge, not a force that has necessary effects on politics.[31] What is essential is that, from the perspective of the state, the factory and politics are distinct, they belong to two different orders of knowledge, two different norms of representation. The declaration that the "factory is a political site," the invocation of the political figure of the worker, is not only invalid from the perspective of the state, it is undecidable from the site itself. It must be named as such through the intervention of a political subject, a subject that constitutes itself in the fidelity to this event.

Occluding this site, letting it subsist as a zone of unpresentation, is an exclusion of politics, of the political event itself. Badiou diagnoses this exclusion not only with respect to

the various representations of the economy, the company and the stock market, but the representations of political belonging itself. Badiou indicates a historical chain of names, which has manifested itself in contemporary French politics; the elusions of this chain are as follows: "first workers, then immigrants, finally illegal aliens."[32] As Badiou illustrates drawing from several events in the recent history of France, in which striking workers were branded as immigrants, as a disruptive element hostile to France, this not only effectively effaces work from what is counted in society, but it effaces the effacement, there is only the law and those who violate the law: or, as we say in the U.S., a society based on the "rule of law" and "illegals." Rather than confront the worker as something that belongs to society, but is not included, as the void immanent to bourgeois society, the disruption of the count is attributed to an external cause. "The state blocks the apparition of the immanence of the void by the transcendence of the guilty."[33] Between the "company"—as a stand in for the factory—and the immigrant—as a stand in for the worker—the void of society, the inconsistency multiplicities that exceed representation, its count of society, is foreclosed.

Badiou's insistence that the figure of the worker is a political figure, determining the question of the "count," the representation of the inconsistent multitudes of society by the state, has as its correlate a disqualification of the economy as a site of radical intervention. "There can be no economic battle against the economy."[34] Radical political economy becomes an impossibility for Badiou, if not an oxymoron. In order to understand why Badiou argues this it is necessary to grasp one of the fundamental differences that distinguishes his thought from Rancière. For Badiou, like Rancière, politics is subjective, equality and justice can only be sustained by a subject that takes them as an axiom, which is to say, as the basis for interventions. There is nothing objective about equality; it does not refer to anything that exists in the world or a program to be realized.[35] Badiou radically distinguishes this subject, the subject that maintains itself in fidelity to the egalitarian axiom against the subject defined by interest. Behind every "Thermidor," every attempt to put an end to the political process "there is the idea that an interest lies at the heart of every subjective demand."[36] This can be seen in every cynical denunciation of political action, which sees interest, self-serving demands of a particular "interest-group" behind every protest and political action. But it is also the fundamental tenant, the fundamental anthropology, underlying economic thought, neoliberal or Marxist, the idea that every human being is defined by an interest, by the conservation of self.[37] For Badiou the division between the social and the political, economics and politics, traces a division at the core of mankind, on the one side there is interest, a struggle for survival shared with all living things, on the other there is the capacity to be immortal, to maintain fidelity to the truth of equality and justice. This is fundamentally different from Rancière, for whom the relation between the social and political refers back to the "distribution of the sensible," to the historically constituted divisions of places and activities that define what is seen and known. For Rancière, Badiou's "anthropology," for lack of a better term, of political subjectification, comes dangerously close to philosophy's original sin, the distinction between those who think and those who are incapable of thought. From the beginning, from Plato's *Republic* philosophy has sought to purge from philosophy those who are unfit for it, and who it purges is the craftsman, whose base interest threatens to not only to corrupt his soul but all of philosophy.[38] "It is for the sake of the philosopher, not the city, that one must postulate a radical break between the order of leisure and the order of servile labor."[39] For Rancière the order of thought and the social order are constituted by the same act, an assumption of mastery, or the imposture of mastery, and thus equality calls both into question.

A second point of distinction can be grasped by examining how Badiou and Rancière understand the worker, or the proletariat, as a figure of subjectification. Rancière's interest in the proletariat is not in its consistency, but its exclusion, dissolution as an objective class, the disidentification necessary to any subjectification.[40] It is the part that has no part. Against this Badiou has tried to maintain the perspective of a militant, seeking not the dissolution of names and categories, but the force that sustains them. The difference be-

tween Badiou and Rancière can be traced back to the way in which they interpret Spinoza's axiom (invoked by Lazarus) "Man thinks": which is to say that thought is not the privilege of a select few, but a universal capacity.[41] Rancière stresses the fundamental errancy of thought, that everyone thinks out of place, the worker does not always think as a worker, women as women, and so on, and thus thought calls into question the hierarchy of places necessary to any social order.[42] While Badiou stresses the consistency, or rather the fidelity, of thought, the capacity for thought not only to break with opinion, but to intervene in situations that are undecidable from the perspective of knowledge. Finally, this difference brings us back to the difference of their specific "philosophical practices": Badiou's systematic articulation of an ontology worthy of political action, and Rancière singular but overlapping investigations into history, art, and politics.

There are multiple ways of examining these differences, of comparing and contrasting Badiou against Rancière, what I have tried to underscore is not so much the identity, but the convergence of the trajectories of their thought around the figure of the worker, or the proletarian, not as a social reality underlying politics, but as a process of political subjectification. What this convergence makes possible is a way of reexamining the politics of the present through the absence of not only this subjective figure, but of any subject capable of sustaining a politics. As Badiou writes:

> This political subject has gone under various names. He used to be referred to as a 'citizen,' certainly not in the sense of the elector or town councilor, but in the sense of the Jacobin of 1793. He used to be called 'professional revolutionary.' He used to be called 'grassroots militant.' We seem to be living in a time when his name is suspended, a time when we must find a new name for him.[43]

This search for a political subject is not simply a matter of recognizing and including all of the unrecognizing classes and categories of society, but locating the point of interruption, where the political order of representation is confronted with its fundamental exclusion. Badiou and Rancière demand that any of thought of politics, of the political, must be a thought of the division which structures the representation of politics, it must engage with what politics excludes. Thus, Badiou and Rancière return to a question that many consider to have been buried with the "death of Marxism": that of relation between politics and the economy, between the place of work and the space of political representation, not as a simple opposition between truth and appearance, as in most forms of ideology critique, but as the exemplary site from which political subjects, and political interventions, are constituted.

ENDNOTES

1. Slavoj Žižek, "The Lesson of Rancière," afterword to Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), 75.
2. "This is because the possession of language is not a physical capacity. It is a symbolic division, that is a symbolic determination of the relation between the order of speech and that of bodies." Jacques Rancière,"Introducing Disagreement," trans. Steven Corcoran, *Angelaki* 9:3 (2004): 5.
3. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett), 1292b27.
4. Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1995), 11.
5. Ibid., 14.
6. Jacques Rancière, *Dis-agreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), 29.
7. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.
8. Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, trans. John Drury et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 25.
9. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 14.
10. Ibid., 13.
11. Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 30.
12. Jacques Rancière, *Le haine de la démocratie* (Paris: La Fabrique Éditions, 2005), 48.
13. Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 9.

14. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's* Philosophy of Right, trans. Annette Jolin and John O'Malley (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970), 141.
15. Rancière, *Disagreement*, 88.
16. "I don't so much frame politics in terms of class struggle as reinterpret class struggle from a political point of view: class struggle as the power of declassification." Jacques Rancière et al., "Democracy, Dissensus, and the Aesthetics of Class Struggle: An Exchange with Jacques Rancière," *Historical Materialism* 13:4 (2005): 289.
17. Alain Badiou, *Théorie du sujet* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), 62.
18. Ibid., 57.
19. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005), 334.
20. Sylvain Lazarus, *Anthropologie du nom* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 12.
21. Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward, (London: Verso, 2001), 102.
22. The phrases "hidden abode of production" and "Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham" are from the end of Part Two of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, volume one. In this rhetorically dense series of paragraphs Marx argues that the shift from the realm of exchange, the market, to the realm of production, the factory, is the shift from the appearance of equality to the truth of inequality in bourgeois society. Karl Marx, *Capital: Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1977), 280.
23. Alain Badiou, "The Factory as Event Site," trans. Alberto Toscano, *Prelom* 8 (2006): 172.
24. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 81.
25. Ibid., 99.
26. Badiou, *Ethics*, 103.
27. Badiou, "The Factory as Event Site," 173.
28. While Badiou's thought on the state is in many respects based on Marx, like Rancière he credits Aristotle for introducing class division into political theory: "Aristotle had already pointed out that the de facto prohibition which prevents thinkable constitutions—'those which conform to the equilibrium of the concept'—from becoming a reality, and which makes politics into such a strange domain . . . is in the end the existence of the rich and the poor" (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 104).
29. Ibid., 110.
30. Badiou, "The Factory as Event Site," 175.
31. There is perhaps tension between Badiou's insistence on politics as an event, a rupture with any existing situation, and his insistence on the figure of the worker and the factory as central site of politics. Badiou address this tension in *Peut-on Penser la Politique?* In that text Badiou argues that the engagement with the worker is at least strategically necessary for any politics of non-domination. This necessity stems not from the nature of work itself, but from the situation of the factory. See Alain Badiou, *Peut-on Penser la Politique?* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 81.
32. Badiou, *Ethics*, 103.
33. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 208.
34. Badiou, *Ethics*, 105.
35. Alain Badiou, *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2005), 98.
36. Ibid., 132.
37. Badiou, *Ethics*, 46.
38. "For other worthless little men see that this position has become vacant, even though it is brimming with fine accolades and pretensions, and 'like prisoners escaping from jail who take refuge in a temple' leap gladly from their crafts to philosophy. . . . And that is what many people are aiming at, people with defective natures, whose souls are as cramped and spoiled by their menial tasks as their bodies are warped by their crafts and occupations." Plato, *Republic*, trans. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 495d.
39. Rancère, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, 33.
40. This critique is made by Peter Hallward, "Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery," *Paragraph* 28 (2005): 43.
41. Lazarus, *Anthropologie du nom*, 11.
42. Rancière, *The Names of History*, trans. Hasson Meleny (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 67.
43. Badiou, *Metapolitics*, 102.

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