



Volume Four, Number One

**A Musing with Alain Badiou à la ‘Dialogue Between a
Chinese Philosopher and a French Philosopher’,¹ or,
An Exercise in Self-Reference**

Kyoo Lee

John Jay College, CUNY, NYC

Free Badiou!

The Same, Sex Problem in Alain Badiou on Love,
and One Possible, Queer Solution from the Master Himself [...] or Herself?

¹ The event: [‘Alain Badiou: Dialogue between a Chinese Philosopher and French Philosopher’](#), 13 December 2014, The Educational Alliance, NYC.

And “What is Love?”² Alain Badiou asks and answers:

[...] The question of sex is the primary obscurity, a difference thinkable only at the cost of a laborious determination of identity that it puts to work. Let us add that contemporary philosophy addresses itself at all times to women. It might even be suspected that it is, as discourse, partly a strategy of seduction.

Cogito Interruptus.³ Or subtraction, you mean?

Besides, it is from the bias of love that philosophy touches upon the sexes, to the extent that it is to Plato that Lacan must look for what hold thought has over the love of transference.

Such or any, as one might already know,

truth is essentially an empty category for Badiou – it is produced, in Badiou’s own words, as *a hole in knowledge*, an unnameable element. It is essentially something which is indiscernible to either language or mathematical counting. Hence, Badiou’s recourse to a philosophy of foundations grounded on mathematical logic

² Alain Badiou, “What is Love?,” *UMBR* (a), 1996, p.37.

³ Kyoo Lee, ‘*Cogito Interruptus: The Epistolary Body in the Elisabeth-Descartes Correspondence, June 22, 1645–November 3, 1645*’, *philoSOPHIA* 1.2 (2011), 173-94.

resulting in a refusal of the totality of the One [...] For Badiou, the One is One through the effect of being “counted-as-one.”⁴

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As with Lacan’s symbolic, virtually convertible to the feminine (w)hole ‘at all times’, such foundations are indeed ‘empty and powerful’,⁵ itself a perpetuated ‘phallacy’⁶ perhaps, collective if not exactly collectable.

A small extraction or two, let there be then: Badiou’s theory of love could and must be saved – from itself – insofar as the same, sex problem persists per se.

Badiou’s vision of love, as long as it remains formally wedded to ‘the scene of the Two’ that ‘embrace(s) the individual lover *and* the You of humanity at large’,⁷ as Sigi Jöttkandt notes, stands a good chance to win many lovers, as many sets of lovers as allowed by its serial singularities edged by the infra-infinity of missed immortality. For ‘in love’, Badiou notes, ‘fidelity signifies this extended victory: the randomness of an encounter defeated day after day through the invention of what will endure.’⁸ Love is an inventive event com-posed by two subjects that follow its pure logic, the inter-face of its drive. Good, love that, the heart of the idea.

⁴ Sam Gillespie, ‘Subtractive’, *UMBRA* (a), 1996, p.7.

⁵ Felix Bernstein and Kyoo Lee, [‘The Phallus in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: And How to File the Fallacy of the “Privileged” Avant-guard\(e\) and Its Conceptual Impo@tence’](#), *Dismagazine*.

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Sigi Jöttkandt, ‘Love’, *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts*, p.78.

⁸ Cited in ‘Alain Badiou: A Life in Writing’ by Stuart Jeffries, published in the Guardian on 18 May 2012 and available [here](#).

The trouble with this auto-creative topology of love however, however minor, is that there would be a kind of altered “u” unembraceable or unlocatable in actuality if not in theory – as partially apparent to the lovers & frenemies of Badiou’s “u”, a transposition of the Lacanian object (a) into a pure subject position, namely, “one.”

Listen, I mean: you, quite rightly, invoke Simone de Beauvoir to say, ‘one is not born woman but becomes one’,⁹ i.e., not a human or a subject but *one*, but now, how does one *become* or even remain one(*self*) to begin with, numerically or nominally – or singularly or serially? What’s this one or that? “A” one or “the”? Is “*the individual lover*” *the* one or one of the? When “philosophy (*la philosophie*) addresses *itself* to women” (*emphasis added*), definitely to indefinite plurals, the sliding shift of a register from *a* philosophical event to eventual women in the cogitographical scene of self-delivery appears queer-lubricated by a lesbianized phallic auto-unity. How else is the theatrical production of one *of two or two* to be seen? Seriously, consider homosexual or bisexual or asexual or transgendered or generally queered “subjects” as both a topic and an agent here, a structuralized symptom discoursed as such. Such markers function as a kind of a priori or precluded non-subjects, “one of those”, precisely, in a hetero-naturalized or neutralized scene of the Badiouian love of the absolute, insofar as “the two” as one and in one means, or implies, *hetero-duo*. My concern, my query, is that per chance, those that do and cannot exist in the Badiouian philosophical imaginary as definite articles are buzzing around & through the super-set of the very inconsistent, “transfinite” multiplicities held dear by the philosopher himself, or I mean “herself”, the mediated addressee in the Badiouian

⁹ Idem.

ménage à trois (in an orgy of hetero-auto-reference). Why this impasse, this exceptional one?

Just get one free? How? Badiou's singular-universal love remains testy vis-à-vis a certain "u" that departs from the you of "I love you (I mean, heterosexually)." What triggers a potential misconfiguration of the Badiou love system, subject then to a deconstructive redeployment, is the third "u" riding along and at times across the heterophallogocentric discursive economy of philosophy. In that regard, Kevin Floyd seems spot-on, on this necessary perversity of queer "totality": 'to the extent that the boundaries of queer thought are defined in relation to its own versions of excluded, *unembraceable* forms of epistemological perversity.'¹⁰ Let us, I suggest, go out & in there and see how stretchy Badiou's love could be vis-à-vis his own Marxist social vision of "free associations". Will it be tested negative or positive, when it positively 'stands "at the edge of the \emptyset [...] the void'?'¹¹ And what is being avoided?

¹⁰ Kevin Floyd, *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*, p. 6

¹¹ Badiou cited by Peter Hallward cited by David Vilaseca, *Queer Events: Post-deconstructive Subjectivities in Spanish Writing and Film*, p.12

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