

almost colloquial speech that in translation may turn out to be awkward or simply unidiomatic. Some of these instances, especially those borrowed from Lacan, receive an extensive commentary from Badiou himself. For others, I have tried to give a literal translation, all the while explaining the ambiguity in the translator's notes included at the end of this volume.

The second idiosyncrasy, which Badiou also seems to have adopted from Lacan even though a similar trend is typical of a certain French style of writing in general, consists in using single-sentence paragraphs whose bold and compact syntax gives them the feel of gnomic or oracular statements. While in English it would have made sense to produce a smoother rhythm by incorporating such sentences into the flow of longer paragraphs, I have opted instead for a faithful rendering, respectful of the graphic effect with which these one-liners punctuate, in a well-nigh clinical sense, the gradual process of analysis undertaken by Badiou in *Theory of the Subject*.

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Notes on the translation

A number of recurrent technical terms used in *Theory of the Subject* merit a brief explanation. Especially when combined with the author's own 'Thematic Repertoire', included at the end of this volume, this list may simultaneously serve as a basic glossary. The four fundamental concepts of the theory of the subject—courage, anxiety, justice, and the superego—do not receive a separate entry in this glossary, since Badiou himself in the course of the book amply defines them. Certain grammatical ambiguities and occasional technicalities, on the other hand, will be annotated together with additional bibliographical references in the final section of 'Translator's Endnotes and References'.

Annulation ('annulment' or 'annulation'): This is one of the three basic operations associated with Mallarmé's poetry in terms of the structural dialectic, together with the chain effect caused by a vanishing term and the null effect of foreclosure. By annulling a vanishing term, this operation so to speak carries out a lack of lack, which raises lack to the level of a concept all the while producing anxiety. Alternative translations would be 'rescission', 'nullification', 'cancellation', or 'revocation'.

Basculement ('tipping over' or 'toppling', occasionally 'changeover' or 'turnabout'): A term used in the present context to refer to the sudden transformation whereby a structural or algebraic orientation tips over and opens out onto a historical or eventual orientation. From the very beginning of *Theory of the Subject*, there are clear hints of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, as in the 'passing-over', or *übergehen*, of quantity into quality, especially when the whole process of contradictory transformation takes on a more abrupt, leap-like aspect of a sudden overthrow or inversion, as in the German *Umschlag*. Jason Barker, in the English translation of Badiou's *Metapolitics*, renders this term as 'overbalancing', for example, of what exists into what *can* exist, or from the known towards the unknown, as the result of a political intervention.

Battement ('oscillation' or 'vacillation', occasionally 'batting'): A term used to describe the movement around an empty place, as part of what Badiou defines as the structural dialectic. Alan Sheridan, in his translation of Lacan's Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, opts for 'pulsation', which is perhaps all-too-physical for the purely structural function that Badiou has in mind, even though Lacan's own explanation is wholly to the point for the term's use in *Theory of the Subject*. 'I have constantly stressed in my preceding statements', Lacan says, 'the *pulsative* function, as it were, of the unconscious, the need to disappear that seems to be in some sense inherent

in it—everything that, for a moment, appears in its slit seems to be destined, by a sort of pre-emption, to close up again upon itself, as Freud himself used this metaphor, to vanish, to disappear' (S XI, 43). Still in the same seminar, Lacan also uses the term to refer to the 'fluttering' wings of Chuang Tzu when he imagines he is a butterfly, while Badiou in *Theory of the Subject* refers to a 'batting' of eyelashes to name the appearing-disappearing of Mallarmé's vanishing cause. The term also evokes the role of the 'signifying battery', *la batterie signifiante*, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, and, insofar as Badiou seeks to go beyond the idealism of this structural model, there is nothing wrong with hearing echoes of 'beating' in *battement*, including in the pejorative sense of 'beating around the bushes'.

Brin ('strand'): This term refers to the sections, strands, or bits that are knotted or braided together in a subject, especially the strand- α (combining courage and justice) and the strand- ψ (combining anxiety and the superego). Badiou thus relies on the concept-image of a cord or a piece of textile weaving together multiple strands or filaments.

Coupure ('cut', occasionally 'break' or 'rupture'): In *Theory of the Subject*, this term most often retains the meaning of 'cut' that Lacan invokes, for example, in his topological discussions regarding the tying, untying, and cutting of a knot. The other connotation, which via Althusser would refer us back to the concept of an epistemological 'break' or 'rupture', *coupure épistémologique*, in the work of Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, and Michel Foucault, seems less meaningful in the context of *Theory of the Subject*.

Déviance and déviation ('deviation'): A term used in *Theory of the Subject* to translate *clinamen*, i.e. the slight 'deviation', 'swerve', or 'inclination' of atoms falling in the void whereby a world is formed according to the ancient atomism of Lucretius. While *déviance* has the same sexual and/or criminal connotations in French as 'deviance' or 'deviancy' in English, I have opted for the more neutral 'deviation' instead. The term then openly begins to resonate with the religious and political debates regarding *déviances* or 'deviations' from orthodoxy or from the correct line, debates that Badiou constantly has in mind throughout *Theory of the Subject*. Another possible translation for *clinamen*, used in certain English versions of Marx's doctoral dissertation on Democritean and Epicurean atomism, is 'declination'.

Épuration ('purification', sometimes 'purging'): A term used to describe the process by which force—and the subject more generally—works back upon the system of places that otherwise determines its identity as this or that force: this or that subject. The term could obviously be translated as 'purge' or 'purging', but the Stalinist overtones of this expression, while never wholly absent, should not be allowed to dominate the term's interpretation in *Theory of the Subject*. In *The Century*, Badiou will discuss the path of destruction and purification, including in its Stalinist excesses, in opposition to the path of

subtraction and minimal difference. Even here, in any case, he insists that purification and purges, including the excommunication of traitors and the sectarian defence against deviations and heresies of all kinds, are common practices throughout the twentieth century in many artistic avant-garde groups, from surrealism under André Breton to the situationists under Guy Debord, as well as in psychoanalytical groups, from Freud to Lacan.

Esplace ('splace'): This is a neologism or portemanteau word based on a contraction of *espace de placement*, 'space of placement'. It can be understood as a near-synonym for 'structure' or even 'symbolic order', even though there is no strict parallelism with either Althusser or Lacan. That which Badiou calls 'state of a situation' in *Being and Event* and 'world' in *Logics of Worlds* also roughly corresponds to 'splace' in *Theory of the Subject*. The dialectical counterpart to the 'splace' is the 'outplace', just as 'place' in general functions in a dialectical opposition with 'force' starting as early as in Badiou's *Theory of Contradiction*.

Étatique and étatisme ('statist' and 'statism'): While in *Theory of the Subject* Badiou has not yet fully developed the notion of 'state of the situation', which will be pivotal in *Being and Event*, he does rely on a series of terms to describe the static, statist, or state-like nature of certain historico-political phenomena. In English, these terms cannot easily be separated from the ones that translate the French *statique*, which Badiou uses both as an adjective ('static') and a noun, *une statique* (a 'static', or 'statics', perhaps even a 'statistics' in the etymological sense of the term as a science of the state, *Statistik* in German) as opposed to *une dynamique* (a 'dynamic' or 'dynamics'). A related expression is *faire état*, 'to draw up an overview', 'to inventory', or, for the present context, 'to define a state of affairs', for example, regarding the being of the working class.

Évanouissement and terme évanouissant ('vanishing' and 'vanishing term'):

The basic operation of the structural dialectic, whereby a totality or whole is constituted as the effect of an absent or vanishing cause. *S'évanouir* also means 'to faint', 'to fade (away or out)', 'to pass out' or 'to die away'. In this sense, the term is not without recalling the role of *aphanasis* or 'fading' in Lacanian psychoanalysis. The main implied reference, however, is to the Althusserian conceptualization of 'structural causality' in *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*—unless Jacques-Alain Miller is right, against Althusser, in claiming paternity for this concept under the name of 'metonymical causality'. A third genealogical line, finally, would take us from Spinoza's 'absent' or 'immanent cause' to Deleuze's 'quasi-cause' as discussed in *The Logic of Sense*, all the way to Žižek's recent return to the same structuring principle. What should become clear from this network of references surrounding the concept of the 'vanishing term' is the extent to which Badiou in *Theory of the Subject* is giving form to a unique type of 'post-structural' thinking that takes to task the entire tradition of the 'structural dialectic' without ignoring its fundamental insights.

Force ('force'): The counterpart of history to the structure of assigned places, force is a term first borrowed from Hegel's *Science of Logic* that in the course of the argument developed in *Theory of the Subject* will come to designate what Badiou will later systematically discuss in terms of 'event'. Already in *Theory of Contradiction*, force stands in opposition to place, while readers of Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference* may be more familiar with the opposition of force and form. Three other idiomatic expressions are related to this concept in *Theory of the Subject*: *coup de force* ('stroke of force', 'violent overthrow', 'strike', 'trick', or sudden 'blow'), *passer en force* ('forcing one's way through' or 'pushing through') and *forcément* ('by force', 'per force'). Wherever possible, I have tried to retain the conceptual link with 'force' in English, while in the case of *coup de force* I have most often left the expression in French. Finally, I have already mentioned that Badiou uses the expression *force de loi* ('force of law') long before Derrida would make this into a topic for deconstruction. Derrida, too, discusses how there is no *force de loi* without some intrinsic and violent *coup de force*. This is also by far the most significant connotation that the reader should keep in mind for *Theory of the Subject*.

Forclusion and forclos ('foreclosure' and 'foreclosed'): A term used to describe the effect of the *points d'arrêt* or 'halting points' in Mallarmé's poetry, that is, terms such as the meaningless 'ptyx', which put an abrupt stop to the infinitely sliding metonymical and metaphorical chains. In French, *forclusion* also serves as the official translation of Freud's *Verwerfung*, which together with *Verneinung* ('denial') and *Verleugnung* ('disavowal') constitutes one of the many forms of negation considered in the practice and theory of psychoanalysis. By rejecting the existence of 'halting points' (there are no unknowables), at least in *Theory of the Subject* and once again in *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou could thus be said to be negating foreclosure. Whether this negation, in turn, takes the form of a denial, a disavowal, or a foreclosure remains to be decided.

Horlieu ('outplace'): This is a neologism or portemanteau word based on a contraction of *hors-lieu*, 'out of place' or 'out of site', as when someone is *hors-jeu*, 'off-side', in soccer. An alternative translation might have been 'outsite', or 'offsite', which is the term preferred by Oliver Feltham in his introduction to Badiou, but in my eyes this creates unwarranted confusions with the use of '(evental) site' in *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*. Badiou sometimes uses the full grammatical expressions *hors-lieu* and *hors du lieu*, which I have rendered accordingly as 'out-of-place' and 'out of place' in English. An interesting analogy could be established with the expression *hors-sexe*, 'outside (of) sex', in Book XX of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Encore*, which Lacan relates to Guy de Maupassant's fantastic short story 'Le Horla', itself often read as a contraction of *le hors-là*, 'that which remains outside (of what is) there'. More generally, Badiou's *horlieu* echoes the logic of the 'nonplace' or *non-lieu* in its interplay with the *lieux* or 'places' of a given structure, which is pivotal in

the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism for French thinkers as diverse as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Rancière and Michel de Certeau, before its depoliticization in the anthropological work of Marc Augé.

Idéalinguisterie ('idealinguistry'): A portemanteau word to the second degree, which Badiou creates by contracting *idéalisme*, 'idealism', and Lacan's own portemanteau word *linguisterie*, based on *linguistique*, 'linguistics', and the mostly pejorative suffix *-erie*, which suggests a 'fake' or 'false' version. François Raffoul and Bruce Fink respectively propose 'linguistrickery' and 'linguistricks' for Lacan's *linguisterie*. This would give us 'idealinguistrickery' or 'idealinguistricks' for Badiou's *idéalinguisterie*, to which I have preferred the less cumbersome 'idealinguistry'.

Lalangue ('llanguage' or 'lalangue'): A term Badiou directly borrows from Lacan to refer to the unique, slippery, and playful dimension of language taken into account by psychoanalysis, as in the possibilities opened up in puns or homonyms. While Bruce Fink in his English edition of Book XX of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* proposes 'llanguage' as a translation, I have chosen to leave the term in French.

Lieu ('place', occasionally 'locus'): The structural element determining the nature and identity of anything whatsoever, as defined by the general space of assigned places. To distinguish *lieu* from *place*, one could have relied on 'locus' or 'site' for the former and 'place' for the latter. In *Theory of the Subject*, however, I see no strong reasons to differentiate the two except in the context of the four mathemes of anxiety, courage, justice, and the superego, where *lieu* and *place* are kept separate. The use of 'site' to translate *lieu* not only would have caused misunderstandings in suggesting an early anticipation of the terms *site* ('site') and *site événementiel* ('evental site') as used in *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*, but the reader would also have missed out on the play in *Theory of the Subject* between *lieu* and *horlieu*, whose internal rhyme is best rendered as 'place' and 'outplace'. English-speaking readers of Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan may be familiar with 'locus' as a common translation for *lieu*.

Manque and manque à être ('lack' and 'lack of being'): This is without a doubt the most central concept of the structural dialectic, which Badiou attributes to both Mallarmé and Lacan. Other French terms, such as *défaut* ('defect', 'fault', 'lack') and *défaillance* ('shortcoming', 'failure', 'miss', 'faint'), are parts of the same conceptual constellation in *Theory of the Subject*. For this reason, I sometimes render them as 'lack' as well, even though this comes at the price of missing out on the terminological diversity. Lacan proposed 'want-to-be' as the official English translation for *manque-à-être*. Badiou, however, does not use the dashes that would make *le manque à être* into a more stable technical term, and, insofar as he also plays on the inverted expression *l'être du manque*,

'the being of lack', I consistently stick to 'lack of being' instead of 'want-to-be'.

Passé ('pass' or 'passing'): Badiou frequently has recourse to this term both in its common sense and in its technical meaning in the Lacanian school of psychoanalysis. For Lacan, who instated the procedure in 1967 as part of his *École Freudienne de Paris*, the *passé* provides an institutional structure for the 'passage' from analysand to analyst, that is, the end of analysis testified by the *passant* to a committee of *passeurs* or 'passers', who in turn relay the account to a jury who decides whether or not to award the 'pass'. In *Theory of the Subject* Badiou refers to the heated debates provoked by this procedure up to ten years after its introduction by Lacan (who, upon listening in silence to the formal complaints raised at a meeting in 1978, went so far as to call it a 'complete failure'). Insofar as the procedure involves the possibility of transmitting knowledge (*savoir*) about the analytical practice, Badiou takes an interest in *la passe* similar to the role of the universal transmission of mathematics in the scientific community. Among the many common meanings, the noun *la passe* and the verb *passer* can refer to 'passage', 'pass', 'patch', 'passing (for, over, by)', 'crossing', 'going through', 'skipping', 'lending', and so on. Relevant expressions include *passer un examen*, 'to pass an exam', *faire une passe*, 'to make a pass', *passer en force*, 'push through', and *mot de passe*, 'password'. In addition, Badiou systematically plays on the dialectic between *passe* and *impasse* (sometimes spelt *im-passe*, with a dash, so as to highlight the pun), in a key argument that will reappear in *Being and Event*.

Place ('place'): Throughout *Theory of the Subject*, Badiou exploits the tension between that which can be mapped topologically in terms of spaces, places, and splace, on one hand, and, on the other, that which is a-topological, that is, force or the event. I did not find a significant difference between *place* and *lieu* that would warrant a solid distinction between 'place' and 'locus' or 'site'. Badiou frequently insists on the deadening effect of that which remains *sur place*, 'in its place' or 'on the same spot', most often as the result of an overly structural emphasis in which place and splace take precedence over force and the outplace. *Faire du surplace* is also a colloquial expression that refers to the quasi-immobile gesture by which a cyclist at a stoplight or at the start of a race tries to remain still with both feet strapped on the pedals. Interestingly, in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze describes an ethics of willing the event in terms of 'a sort of leaping in place', *saut sur place*.

Point d'arrêt ('halting point' or 'stopping point'): A term used in *Theory of the Subject* to refer to those signifiers that put an end to the sliding of metaphors and metonymies in Mallarmé's poetry. Badiou refers especially to the amphora, the master, and the *ptyx* in the famous 'Sonnet allegorical of itself', and proposes to read these three signifiers in terms of death, the poet, and the pure signifier of the signifier as such. Invoking a quotation from Chairman

Mao ('We will come to know everything we did not know before'), a quotation that will be reused in *Logics of Worlds* against the dogma of finitude, Badiou denies the existence of insuperable halting points and affirms the open-ended nature of the periodized dialectical process. *Point d'arrêt* in *Theory of the Subject* thus has a completely different meaning from the one it has in *Being and Event*, where the void or empty set is said to be the only 'halting point' of multiplicity, that is, multiplicity goes all the way down, *qua* multiple of multiples, until the void. In *Ethics*, finally, aside from its ontological meaning, *point d'arrêt* also refers to the 'unnameable' that must not be 'forced' in the name of truth, lest one falls into the evil of a disaster. This concept of the unnameable, with its connotation of an insuperable limit-point calling out for an ethics of respect, is purely and simply abandoned in *Logics of Worlds*, where Badiou once again—consistent with his return to the quotation from Mao—affirms that there are always consequences, and no unknowables. In this last sense, it is worth keeping in mind, for *Theory of the Subject* as well, that *point d'arrêt* can be understood not only as 'halting point' or 'stopping point' but also as 'no halting' or 'no stopping at all'. Derrida, in his reading of Maurice Blanchot's *Arrêt de mort* (*Death Sentence*), has exhaustively deconstructed the linguistic possibilities afforded by the signifier *arrêt*.

Processus subjectif ('subjective process'): A term directly and explicitly borrowed from Lacan's *Écrits* to designate one of the two aspects or temporalities of the subject, namely, the durable, ongoing, and most often laborious time of recomposition that gives a subject consistency, either in the guise of a new form of justice or in the guise of the superego's terrorizing call to order. The other moment or time of the subject is called subjectivization.

Réel ('real'): Badiou tends to use this term in a way that is reminiscent of Lacan's use without ever fully coinciding with its technical meaning or meanings in the triad of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary. I have chosen not to use a large capital when translating the term as '(the) real', in an effort both to leave intact the fluidity of Badiou's use of the term and to avoid associations with New Age terminology, as in English discussions of Badiou's work that render all his key concepts with large capitals: Being, Event, Truth, and so on. Badiou also plays on the French expressions *point du réel* ('point of the real' but also 'not real' or 'not of the real at all') and *point réel* ('real point' with *point* as a noun but also 'not at all real' with *point* as an adverb).

Retournement ('reversal', occasionally 'return'): This term, used in the title of Part IV in order to propose a 'materialist reversal of materialism', is reminiscent of, but also somewhat different from, the usual 'inversion' (*Umkehrung* in German, or *renversement*, in the typical French translations) by which Marx, for example, claims to put the Hegelian dialectic 'back on its feet'. The difference stems from the fact that *retournement*, aside from a 'turning (over, upside down, inside out)', also evokes a 'return' (*retour*) and a 'turning back'

or 'sending back' (*retourner*). Finally, the French term also serves to translate Hölderlin's notion of a 'return' or 'reversal' (*Umkehr* in German) in his 'Remarks on "Antigone"', in a figure amply commented upon in Part III of Badiou's *Theory of the Subject*.

Subjectivation ('subjectivization'): A term directly and explicitly borrowed from Lacan to designate one of the two aspects or temporalities of the subject, namely the hasty, slightly hysterical, and most often short-lived time of interruption and destruction, which according to *Theory of the Subject* takes the form of either anxiety or courage. Bruce Fink, in his translation of Lacan's *Écrits*, and Oliver Feltham, in his translation of *Being and Event*, opt for the spelling 'subjectivization', which I have adopted as well, while Slavoj Žižek and Alberto Toscano usually prefer the more literal 'subjectivation'.

Topique ('topology', occasionally 'topic'): A term used in *Theory of the Subject*, first, to designate Marx and Freud's respective 'topologies' or 'topographies' of the subject of class and of the unconscious and, then, to map out the various discourses of 'ethics', in the book's final part, titled *Topiques de l'éthique*, which I have translated as 'Topics of Ethics' so as to maintain something of the worldplay that would be lost if I had chosen 'Topologies of Ethics' or 'Ethical Topologies'. Badiou also has in mind and openly discusses Lacan's topological investigations from his final seminars. There may even be a faint echo of Claude Lévi-Strauss' great work of structural anthropology, *Tristes Tropiques*.

Torsion and torsade ('torsion' and 'twist'): This is one of the pivotal and most obscure concepts of *Theory of the Subject*. In part conditioned by mathematics, whose algebraic 'torsion groups' Badiou discusses at some length in the book, the concept of 'torsion' at the same time functions in a much broader sense to refer to the way in which a subject works back upon the structure that determines it in the first place. In this sense, *torsion* is related to *forçage*, another concept borrowed from mathematics and discussed in *Theory of the Subject* that will become even more central in *Being and Event*. *Torsade*, like *tresse* ('interlacing'), designates the twisted unity of the subject itself, that is, the divided articulation of courage, anxiety, justice, and the superego into two basic trajectories: the so-called mode- α (from courage to justice) and mode- ψ (from anxiety to the superego); and according to two temporalities: the time of interruption or destruction (anxiety and courage) and the time of recomposition (justice and the superego). Interestingly, Jacques Rancière also defines politics in terms of a constitutive 'torsion' that treats a specific *tort* or 'wrong', in *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*.

(Le) Tout ('Whole', 'Totality', or 'the All'): Again, a term used with a combination of Hegelian and Lacanian connotations to designate both the effect of a vanishing cause, namely, the resulting Whole, and that which, like any splace, by force must include-exclude something, namely, the outplace, in order to

come into being *qua* totality, so that the Whole is also always not-Whole or not-All.

Tresse ('interlacing'): A term used, in the same topological vein as *brin*, *nœud*, and *torsade*, to designate the subject's divided articulation. Other translations could have been 'braid', 'plait', 'weave' or '(inter)weaving'.

Unité de contraires ('unity of opposites' or 'unity of contraries'): This basic concept of the dialectic, which is as old as philosophy, is usually translated as 'unity of opposites' in English. Whenever Badiou insists on the role of 'contraries' or 'contrariness' in relation to the principle of *unité de contraires*, I retain the more literal translation as 'unity of contraries'.

Versant ('aspect', 'strand', 'side', 'tendency', or 'slope'): A term most often used to designate the two 'sides' or 'aspects' of the dialectic according to *Theory of the Subject*—its structural side and its historical side, the side of place and the side of force, its algebraic side and its topological side, the idealist aspect and the materialist aspect.

Voie ('path' or 'road'): A common noun that Badiou further associates with the Marxist and more specifically Maoist discussions about the struggle between two 'paths' or two 'roads', the bourgeois and the proletarian, the revisionist and the socialist. More generally speaking, the term is part of the topological orientation behind *Theory of the Subject*.