1. Democratic Materialism and Materialist Dialectic

Today, natural belief is condensed in a single statement:

*There are only bodies and languages.*

Badiou calls this conviction the *democratic materialism* (DM). One other possible name for this conviction is ‘postmodern’. Badiou announces this as being the enveloping ideology for the new century.

There is a correspondence between the terms of the statement and the terms of the name:

- **Body** -> **Materialism**
- **Language** -> **Democratic**

Body is our vehicle of enjoyment. It is what makes us a living being. And, it is where our finitude is inscribed.

Because of the dominance and importance of the body in this form of materialism we have the doxa of:

- **Existence = individual = body**

Insofar as we are in possession of a body, we are a member of the animal kingdom whose normative sense is regulated by bioethics, and our materialism today is, therefore, a ‘bio-materialism.’

The current materialism is also democratic insofar as there is a consensus on the plurality of languages, without one dominating or regulating all bodies. A terrain of language constitutes a subspecies of the human animal (as a species) and the bodies regulated under languages have juridical equality.

One of the central aims of this book is to provide a scientific examination of democratic materialism.

However, the examination carried out herein is in fact opposite to the usual examination and critique of DM performed by *aristocratic idealism*, either of the communist ilk, or inspired by nostalgia, of a Return to the glories that have come to
pass. This examination is philosophical, in whose essence “elaborates the means of saying ‘Yes!’ to the previously unknown thoughts that hesitate to become the truths that they are.” (3)

Badiou posits the name *materialist dialectic* (MD) for the examination underway in this book.

So instead of a materialism (the priority of bodies) that is dialectical (regulated under normative equality of plurality of languages) we have a dialectic that is materialist.

What does this new term designate? It designates the following statement:

*There are only bodies and languages, except there are truths.*

- First, this statement adds a third term to the duality of body and language, truth, which supplements the reality of the Two.
- Second, the term truth like the other two terms has a ‘reality’ of its own (albeit not quite the same modality of being as bodies and languages – as we will see below). That is, a reality that is in excess of the reality designated by the other two terms. In other words, the existence of truth is supported by empirical evidence.
- Third, the constituents of what constitute the reality of truth are still bodies and languages that are devoid of meaning, and are generic infinities and unconditioned supplements.
- Fourth, as the syntax implies, the existence of truths is an exception to what there is. That which makes up the structure of worlds is a mixture of bodies and languages. Truths interpolate themselves into the continuity of what there is.
- Fifth, the DM expresses that there is only one substance: body, and one principle of organization: language. In that sense the DM is an ontology that emphasizes on what exists (bodies) and how it exists (languages). The MD’s emphasis, on the other hand, is on what is an exception to what the DM ontology delineates. That is, what there is that the DM cannot account for.

Badiou’s reference to Descartes is illuminating. It begs the question how much the democratic materialism is a Cartesian project. Bodies and languages seemingly map to two substances with attributes of extension and thought. Yet, Badiou illustrates that, even if they seem to map to the Cartesian dualism of body and mind they fall short of the inexistent component of truth in the Cartesian philosophy. According to Badiou, Descartes believed in eternal truths that in-exist in the same modality as bodies and minds (truths exist in thought). Bodies and minds that exist, exist individually – there is no universality of existent substances – substances exist individuated and separately. However, truths according to Descartes exist
universally so in the sense in which substances exist they really in-exist (to Descartes they have a logical existence).

Like every genuine philosopher, Descartes registers, at the point where ontology and logic rub up against each other, the necessity of what we have chosen to call ‘materialist dialectic’ (6)

In fact, then, Cartesianism is not quite what infamously thought as dualism, it is indeed, as Badiou thinks, a trialism. Therefore, while at the surface the dictum “there are only bodies and languages” seem to be a statement that fits into Cartesianism, a true Cartesian will say “there are only bodies and language, except there are truths.” This firstly points to the three modalities of being: bodies, languages and truths and secondly it points at the exceptional character in which truths are: truths do not exist in the same way in which bodies and languages exist – as being-there.

Badiou then fast forwards to some of the currents developed in 20th century, as the handmaiden of the DM, such as phenomenology or linguistics.

The materialist dialectic only exists to the extent that it ploughs the gap which separates it, on its right flank, from the diktats of authenticity, and on its left, from the humilities of Critique. (7)

What is nice in the above quote is how Badiou sums up the philosophical tradition in 20th century as a sort of dualism between authenticity (phenomenology, existentialism) and critique (analytical philosophy, linguistic) and map them into the dictum of democratic materialism: our philosophical destiny, the destiny of human being, is torn between living in authenticity and critique.

Badiou emphasizes that the leitmotif for these orientations of the DM is their commitment to the finitude of thought (which to Badiou is what bestows the attribute of ‘modesty’ to all different schools of the DM). In countering this finitude the MD is joint by the vitalist tradition from Bergson to Deleuze, who were also fervent advocates of the infinite rights of thought.

Both the MD and vitalist orientations propose an ontological break with the DM.

But an ontological break with the DM is not enough. In other words, it is not enough to show that there is another modality of being according to which truths are, which is what Being and Event (BE) did. It is also necessary to show that truths exist and appear in worlds. In this sense if BE is like Hegel’s Science of Logic that disclosed the process of thought that thinks being qua being, Logics of Worlds (LoW) is like Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit that disclosed the process of thought when it thinks consciousness.
This is first and foremost to understand that truths for their appearance are
dependent on subjects and subjective operations. This means that while a variant of
the statement of the DM can be stated as:

*There are only individuals and communities*

The MD opposes the statement:

*The universality of truths rests on subject forms that cannot be either individual or
communitarian.*

Or:

*To the extent that it is subject of a truth, a subject subtracts itself from every
community and destroys every individualism.*

### 2. For a Didactics of Eternal Truths

The purpose of *LoW* is to examine the theoretical trajectory of the appearance of
truths in a singular world, and what grounds the evidence of their existence: to
establish that truths not only *are*, they *appear*.

I demonstrate that the appearing of truths is that of wholly singular bodies (post-evental
bodies), which compose the multiple materiality wherein special formalisms (subjective
formalisms) are set out. (9)

Although truths in-exist, they come to existence by a subjective process that gives
body to them: subjects make truths to exist as being-there, and once truths appear
they compose an a-temporal meta-history.

In the rest of this preface, Badiou wants to try a didactic approach that aims to show,
via examples, that the positions of exceptions do exist, although at this stage it is not
possible to deduce from them their necessity or the fact that they differ from
opinions.

This didactic approach is no stranger to philosophy. Save the critical philosophy,
Badiou mentions, that all philosophy since Plato (especially in his early dialogues)
has tried to start from certain Ideas first. The MD demands of us such a Platonic
gesture (as Badiou had outlined in his *Manifesto of Philosophy*). The examples
provided in this preface are sketches of such a gesture.
3. Mathematics Example: Numbers

To demonstrate the place of the truth and the position of the subject to the truth Badiou's first example is from mathematics, and its most fundamental concept, that of numbers.

The study of numbers was a popular occupation of the Greeks, and in fact they were the ones who discovered amazing properties of numbers.

Badiou remarks that despite many cultural differences, in everything including mathematics, between us and the Greeks, what the Greeks touched upon was the very texture of number, which modern arithmetic enveloped and unfolded in novel ways with employment of new symbols and techniques. In other words, the truth of numbers, as was disclosed to Greeks, remained the same throughout time and persisted in history. So did the subjective engagement through which these truths found their bodies in the shape of mathematical proofs, which also persisted through time.

In here Badiou picks two sequences having to do with prime factorization as well as the infinity of prime numbers.

Every composite (i.e. non-prime) number can be divided by a prime number. Every number is either odd or even. If even, it can be divided by 2, which is prime. If odd composite it can be written as multiples of odd numbers only. Let $p$ be a composite odd number, therefore $p$ can be written as:

$$p = p_1 \cdot p_2 \cdot p_3 \cdot \ldots \cdot p_n$$

with all the multiples also odd numbers.

Every composite number can be written as a multiple of prime numbers. This can be easily shown from the previous theorem: for any $x$, if $x$ is composite, there exist a prime number $p$ that divides $x$: $x = p_1 \cdot q_1$. Now $q_1$ is either a prime, in case which the proof is done or $q_1$ is composite so there exists a prime $p_2$ such that $q_1 = p_2 \cdot q_2$. This chain will continue for all the $q$'s till we reach a $q$ that is prime. This chain must to come to an end because $x$ is a finite number. This will result in a chain of multiplications as follows:

$$x = p_1 \cdot p_2 \cdot \ldots \cdot q_n$$

such that all multiplicands are prime numbers.

The third Euclid’s theorem discussed is that there are infinite prime numbers. Euclid’s proof is through *reductio ad absurdum*. Let’s assume that’s not the case, hence there are only $N$ prime numbers, $N$ being a finite number: $p_1$ to $p_N$. Now let’s consider the number $P$ as follows:

$$P = p_1 \cdot p_2 \cdot \ldots \cdot p_N$$
P is a composite number that is larger than any of the prime numbers in the list. Now consider the number P+1. This number cannot be divided by any of the prime number p₁ to pₙ, thus P+1 is a prime number that exceeds the limit of finite prime numbers. This is absurd, meaning that our assumption that there are only finitely many prime numbers is a concept that leads to absurdity, and therefore cannot be true. But if that concept isn’t true then its opposite must be true: there are infinitely many prime numbers. So, the movement is as such:

Opposite of the concept -> absurdity -> un-truth of the opposite of the concept ->
truth of the concept.

In showing this Badiou demonstrates two distinct ways of the subjective act: in proving the first two theorems the subject of mathematics is constructive. In the proof of the third theorem the subject of mathematics is faithful. What does faithful mean? It means that when the subject finds a contradiction between concept and situation she will abandon the situation.

In contrast, Badiou emphasizes, an ideological choice, is one that is made in favor of the situation not the subjective concept, a choice that a nihilist subject will not make, a nihilist subject who prefers itself to every situation.

As such mathematics, far from being distant from practice or the real life, is the one that makes real choices and is a “subjective analyzer of highest caliber”.

**4. Artistic Example: Horses**

In his second example Badiou compares the rupestral art of 30,000 years ago from Chauvet cave and two paintings by Picasso (1929 and 1939). The preponderant theme of both paintings is horses. Again, like the example before, and along with the didactic aim conducting his inquiry here, Badiou would like to show that despite the large temporal gap between the two artists, and despite the fact that Picasso was unaware of the drawings at the Chauvet cave, there still exists an invariant between the two drawings, which is again, the place of truth.

What is this invariance?

It seems here that Badiou is invoking Plato’s theory of ideas, and the invariance between the two sequences of art is the idea of Horseness.

Suppose that you entertain a relation of thought to animals that makes them into stable components of the world under consideration: there is the horse, the rhinoceros, the lion. . . Now suppose that the empirical and vital diversity of individual living beings is subordinated to this stability. The animal is then an intelligible paradigm and its representation is the clearest possible mark of what an Idea is. That is because the animal as type (or name) is a clear cut in the formless
continuity of sensorial experience. It brings together a flagrant organic unity with the always recognizable character of its specific form. (19)

The drawing of art, on the walls of the cave, opposite to the role that shadows had in Plato’s allegory, stand for coming out from the cave. “Far from being the descent of the Idea into the sensible, it is the sensible creation of the Idea.” (Ibid) The drawing avers the horse “as what exists eternally for thought.” (Ibid) The main contemplation – Badiou also calls it the ‘raw intuition’ – in the form of drawing, which is achieved by a ‘cut’ made by the ‘separating line’ – or what Badiou calls the dominating contour – manifest the same Idea in both artifacts.

In that respect, the hunter and the modern millionaire, are both subjects to the same truth: they have given body to the same immortal truth that we call the Idea of Horseness.

5. Political Example: The State Revolutionary (Equality and Terror)

The example is provided here is from two temporal sequences in China: the great debate between Legalists (progressive) and Confucians (conservative) in 81 BC and Mao’s critique of Stalin of the thirties to the fifties at the threshold of sixties.

Badiou captures the essence of these political debates as follows:

a transversal public truth that may be designated as follows: a truly political administration of the state subordinates all economic laws to voluntary representations, fights for equality, and combines, where the people are concerned, confidence and terror.

This immanent articulation of will, equality, confidence and terror can be read in the proposals of the Legalists and of Mao. It is rejected in the proposals of the Confucians and of Stalin, which inscribe inequality into the objective laws of becoming. (21)

Using Badiou’s other formulation of this matrix in his Theory of the Subject, this could also be articulated within the general framework of subjectivization (will, confidence) and subjective process (equality, terror) that constitutes the two main operations within the Idea of revolutionary politics and also the subordination of the state to this Idea. The central question within this politics are under what conditions (or decisions) a figure of a political subject can emerge (Subjectivization through the determinations according to will and confidence) and under what conditions (or decisions) this figure can be maintained (subjective process under the determinations of equality and terror)? Badiou captures this central question in the following way:
But, in a more essential sense, one can see in this entire immense temporal arc that thought, confronted with the state’s logic of decision, must argue on the basis of consequences and that, in so doing, it delineates a subjective figure that detaches itself from the conservative figure. (21, 22)

The central issue, as Badiou captures, within both historical sequences is the emergence and maintenance of the political subject. How is the question of emergence of the subject (or subjectivization) addressed in relation to the two determinations of will and confidence? In the first political sequence this question is addressed around the choice between following the established mode of production (a conservative choice under the determination of will with no confidence) or allowing a new mode spurred by commerce (a progressive choice under the determination of will with confidence). In the second sequence this question is addressed around the choice between the Stalinist distrust of the great mass of the people, who are still peasants, manifested in Stalin’s emphasis on ‘knowledge of the law’ and valuing only ‘technology and the cadres’ (conservative – will without confidence) versus what Mao proclaims, which is confidence placed in the peasants, and a distrust for the cadres and their children (a progressive – will with confidence). As Badiou indicates in both situations what is central is the matter of ‘subjective activism’, or subjectivization.

Regarding the second set of determinations, which support subjective process, i.e. equality and terror, Badiou also relies on the same two examples. In the first sequence it is a choice between morality and leniency of the law (a conservative choice with equality under weak authority) or formidability and absolute authority of the law (a progressive choice with equality under strong authority). This opposition is still at work in Mao’s reaction to the *Manual of Political Economy*, published in Soviets under Khrushchev, by saying that the role of the State as a machine is to oppress hostile forces. As Badiou indicates in this regard, without terror or authority, the natural movement of things lies in the dissidence of the power of the rich. In fact, it is only through the absolute authoritarianism that a principled egalitarianism can be brought about.

An instance of politics is a temporalization of the consequences of the operations of subjectivization and subjective process. That is, it is the consequence of conditions according to which a political subject emerges and is maintained. As the result an instance of a politics is a knotting together of all the four determinations of will, equality, confidence and terror.

Badiou summarizes his point in four remarks:

1. In both sequences the determinations the truth regarding the emergence and maintenance of the political subject are perceived to be under the following four determinations:
   a. Will: against socio-economic necessity
   b. Equality: against the established hierarchies of power or wealth
   c. Confidence: against anti-popular suspicion or the fear of the masses
d. Authority: against the ‘natural’ free play of competition

2. The four determinations are knotted (measured up) according to the consequences of their inscription in an effective world. A politics is always made (knotted) according to the consequences of the decision according to these determinations.

3. There exists a subjective form adequate to the different instances of the generic kernel of truths (e.g. state revolutionary like Mao, mass rebel like Spartacus)

4. The subjective form must be ‘carried’ in a historically determinate world. This is the question of a political body: e.g. Leninist party, Red Army, etc.

A Note on Lazarus

Badiou spends a few pages in the appendix to speak about the relation of his theory of universal truth in relation to Lazarus’ conception of politics is a thinking that exists as a discontinuous modal interiority. To Lazarus politics is a thinking that is disjoint with any other thinking, such as scientific and philosophical thinking. Politics is an objectless thinking, and therefore objects such as party, state or classes do not belong to politics. The two axioms of politics, “people think” and “thought is a relationship of the real” intend to carve out a space for politics as pure immanence, designating a space of subjectivization with no object. When Lazarus says that politics is an interiority, in a nutshell, he means that politics has its own field of thought, proper to it and identifiably separate from other fields such as philosophy, economics, history and sociology, etc. This difference is established not only by the way in which politics sets up its own boundary from its outside, but also from the way in which its internal operations follow a grammar that is different from that of the sciences, for example.

Lazarus says politics is modal. It means that political thinking only is only identifiable by the thoughts that have been opened up in the world in a specific space and time. Thoughts create categories, notions, and concepts that are only applicable to the space and time of the mode, not outside of it. When the mode ceases, the categories of the mode become saturated. The modal character of politics’ existence makes it singular. Since politics only exists as a mode, and since each mode is specific and unique, then each instance of politics is singular.

Given this conception of politics, as Badiou remarks, “[t]he idea that there exist subjective invariants (constituted here by the conjunction of four predicates: equality, confidence, will and terror) seems directly to contradict the nominalist discontinuity of modes.” (521)

It seems to me that Badiou is offering two justifications that this in fact is not the case. One is a structural justification and the other logical (or perhaps phenomenological).
In brief, the structural justification states that the relation of politics to philosophy is not the relation of a part to a whole: philosophy does not subsume politics. He has made this abundantly clear in his previous works, and in particular in his *Manifesto for Philosophy*. Badiou calls philosophy the ‘space’ for the composibility of all four generic procedures: it is where these generic procedures together form a philosophical ‘vision’ compatible with each particular condition. As the result to Badiou there is not only no contradiction between philosophy and politics, there is also no competition between the two. They fall under different domains of ‘concern’.

The logical (or phenomenological) reasoning goes to the essence of Badiou’s project in *LoW*. The project of *LoW* in brief is to show how truths that in their appearance are always singular (specific to a world, their bodies are made from the elements of a specific world – very much adaptable to the conception of Lazarus of political thinking) are at the same time eternal and universal: “in the materialist dialectic, what secures the eternity of truths is precisely the fact that they result from a singular process, in a world disjoined from every other.” (520) It is only today that philosophy can think a combination of singular and universal together.

### 6. Amorous Example: from Virgil to Berlioz

The amorous example is from Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Berlioz’s *Trojans* in which the two artists have both aptly recognized and produced artistic manifestations of the sheer excess of the Two that love makes out of banal and anonymous individual ones. In *Aeneid* the excess embraces both divine as well as cosmical infinities. In Berlioz this excess is translated into an exceptional symphony fragment that itself presaged the twentieth century jazz orchestra.

What is common in these two seemingly disjoint forms of representation (poetry of antiquity and 19th century opera) is the truth of love that turns a body, a banal individuality, and creates an exceptional infinity of existence.

### 7. Distinctive Features of Truths, Persuasive Features of Freedom

Going through these anecdotal instances the point is to recognize that there are cross-worldly invariants that despite having each instance of which belonging to a given individual world, they remain nevertheless universal and eternal (cross-worldly). Badiou calls these invariants truths. A truth is part of a world. Its body is constituted by the elements of a world. Nonetheless it “exhibits a type of universality that those elements, drawn from worldly particularity, cannot sustain on their own.” (33)

Badiou summarizes in 7 points the distinctive features of truths:

1. A truth is eternal despite being produced in a measurable or counted empirical time.
2. A truth is trans-linguistic (it is separable from every specifiable language) despite being inscribed in a particular language.
3. A truth always presupposes the material traces of an event. These traces do not pertain to any empirical uses or utilities within the world but they affect at least one object of this world.
4. A subject is an operative figure linked to the traces of an event. A subject is an operative disposition of the traces of the event and what they deploy in the world.
5. A truth articulates and evaluates it components on the basis of consequences and not of mere givenness.
6. A truth, starting from the articulation of consequences, elicits subjects-forms which are linked instances of an invariant matrix of articulation.
7. A truth is both infinite and generic. It is a radical exception. It is “an elevation of anonymous existence of the Idea.” (34)

Given what has been said one crucial difference between the DM and the MD can be captured as follows:

DM -> promotes the correlation of life and individual
MD -> advocates the correlation of truth and subject

This difference grounds the difference in the definition of freedom and life to the respective ideologies.

**Freedom**
In the DM freedom is defined in a negative way: no language forbids individual bodies from deploying their own capacities.

This definition of freedom explains why in the DM sexual freedom is the paradigm of every freedom. The other freedoms will necessarily follow from: “the non-interdiction of the uses that an individual may make, in private, of the body that inscribes him or her in the world.” (34)

In the MD freedom is defined in a positive way: participation of bodies through languages in the exception of a truth.

Being free “does not pertain to the register of relation (between bodies and languages) but directly to that of incorporation (to a truth). This means that freedom presupposes that a new body appear in the world.” (34)

As a consequence, in the MD, sexuality is no longer the paradigm of freedom (without becoming a counter-paradigm either, as in certain religious moralities).
Instead, the paradigm of truth becomes the four conditions of truth (love, art, science, politics).¹

**Life**

Life is the other category that is important to both the DM and the MD, and the difference between their definitions can help us to measure the difference between the two ideologies.

For the DM the category of life is a major signifier which “designates every empirical correlation between body and language” (35). The ‘success in life’ is today the only imperative that everyone understands. It is therefore quite natural that the study of the norms of life is central to what the DM calls ‘knowledge’, or even ‘philosophy’, which is “always a blend of a genealogy of symbolic forms and a virtual (or desiring) theory of bodies.” (35) This blend, which may also be called linguistic anthropology, and is systematized by Foucault, “serves as the practical regime of knowledges under democratic materialism.” (35)

We saw earlier that Badiou believes Deleuze was one of the figures that in 20th century tried to counter the regime of the DM by positing the infinite power of thought in an effort to uphold “the chances of a metaphysics against contemporary sophistry”. But, his materialism did not cut deep enough in the body of the established ideology. For example, in relation to the category of life, which is also a central category of Deleuze, he “came to tolerate the fact that most of his concepts were sucked up, so to speak, by the doxa of the body, desire, affect, networks, the multitude, nomadism and enjoyment into which a whole contemporary ‘politics’ sinks, as if into a poor man’s Spinozism.” (35)

What about MD? The category of life is also important to MD. This category is defined in MD in relation to the ‘What is it to live?’ and finds the following as its preliminary definition:

> To live is to participate, point by point, in the organization of a new body, in which a faithful subjective formalism comes to take root. (35)

**8. Body, Appearing, Greater Logic**

One can say that Badiou’s entire ‘mature’ project (mapped to three volumes of *BE*) is the investigation of truths. What is the being of a truth and what does it mean to say that truths are? How are truths trans-worldly or universal, that is, how could the same truth exist in multiple worlds? And how is it that truths are absolute?

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¹ It is important to also note that for Zizek (following Lacan) the sexual difference (or ‘sexual relationship does not exist’) is the paradigm for the fundamental thesis that the real (and not just the big Other) is not-All. For Zizek, Kantian antinomies are not epistemological but ontological, and, following Copjec, he believes that these antinomies are reflected in the Lacan’s formulae of sexuation. In this regard, sex, for Zizek, is THE paradigm for the failed Absolute.
The three volumes of *BE* map to these three questions. *BE* volume 1 deals with the being of truth as a generic multiplicity. Truths are as indiscernible multiplicities in a situation of being. *LoW*, *BE* volume 2, deals with the problem of the universality of truths: how is it possible that despite having their being in a particular world – i.e. despite being singular in their appearance, truths can be trans-worldly? Finally, *Immanence of Truths*, *BE* volume 3, deals with the problem of the absoluteness of truths.

In order to address the universality of truths, *LoW* proposes that we need to first solve the problem of existence. That is, if being is understood by ontology as indifferent multiplicity how is it that multiples come to exist? This is the general problem of appearing. *LoW* calls the lowest level of appearance a ‘world’. The problem of appearing as a world is then broken down to three different problems:

1. How is a world possible? What are the inner-worldly rules (problem of transcendence)
2. If a world is made of objects, what are objects and how objects are possible (the problem of object)
3. How is it possible for objects to have relationship with each other? (problem of relation)

These three problems make up a complete theory of the worlds, which Badiou calls it the *Greater Logic* (*GL*).

After defining what a world is, as the place in which a truth can arise, the next question is how are truths possible in a world. This problem can be broken down into three problems:

1. What is a subject? (theory of subject)
2. What are the truth procedures? (theory of change)
3. How does the truth process create the world appearance of a truth (or how does the subject give a truth its body?) (theory of points)
4. And finally, what is a body?

In presenting the solutions/answers to these seven problems/questions, Badiou chooses to tackle the problem of subject before the problems in *GL*. Therefore, theory of the subject presented in *LoW* is a formal theory (or a metaphysics) only (since the concept of a body is not yet addressed).

According to this, the general layout of *LoW* is as follows:

1. Formal theory of the subject
2. *GL* part I: Transcendence
3. *GL* part II: Object
4. *GL* part III: Relation
5. Theory of change
6. Theory of point
7. Theory of body
Badiou provides other crucial remarks here:

1. As alluded above, the problem of appearing (or being qua appearing) for Badiou is a logical problem, as opposed to ontology (which addresses the problem of being qua being).

2. Similar to the role of mathematics (set theory) in ontology, Badiou uses great deal of mathematics in GL (topology, algebra and category theory).

3. Ontological formalization is more conceptual and axiomatic. It examines and unfolds decisions of thought whose impact is very general. Ontology requires deeper comprehension of formalisms, while the GL requires a more vigilant tracking of consecutions.

4. Ontology is the theory of consistent multiplicities. This theory tries to do away with, or hid, the inherent inconsistency in being, through a fundamental axiom (axiom of foundation). That’s why theory of truth had to go around and outside of ontology to show, despite what ontology is trying to achieve, the inconsistency is prevalent in all situations of being and that is the condition of possibility for truths as generic multiplicities. Dissimilar to ontology, logic (or GL in this case) tries to show that in the inconsistent world of appearances there is in fact stability and consistency (worlds, bodies, relationships) and it is possible to build a consistent instance of a truth as a durable object of a given world.

5. Categories of transcendence and object have a long and rich philosophical pedigree (especially to Kant and Husserl). In LoW Badiou is revamping the sense of these words and making them powerful tools in service of MD is trying to achieve: a theory to establish the universality of truths.

Despite a continuation of the project of BE volume 1, Badiou states that there may some loose ends: “I have not taken care to guarantee at every point a continuity between the two projects.” (39) He cites the problems to be in the area “between ‘generic procedure’ and ‘intra-worldly consequences of existence of inexistents’”.

At the end of this review of the Preface, I like to leave one thought that I hope we can come back to when we review the theory of the subject and later the theories of points and bodies. Badiou, in his Manifesto for Philosophy, declares the category of the subject to be THE operative category that defines our epoch, and he means this very radically. He believes that it is the time to think of the category of the subject as a pure, not a relational, category. That is, the category of the subject without the category of the object. Understanding this shift in the thinking of the category of the subject has a huge impact on what Badiou tries to do in BE (volume 1, the importance of the axiomatic thinking as an objectless theory). It is important to examine this commitment in relation to LoW’s theories of the subject, appearing and body.