



Portrait of [Alain Badiou](#). The portraits are used as illumination to a method outlined by the philosopher in seven steps. The revue *Là-bas si j'y suis*, plays on an idiomatic expression "vas voir là-bas si j'y suis" used in French when you want to get rid of someone. Lit. *go see if I am there...*

A methodological problem defined by [Alain Badiou](#) raises a problem when applied to his own philosophical venture. When his answer to *how there is something rather than nothing* is that "The solution to the problem is quite striking: maintain the position that nothing is delivered by the law of the Ideas, but make this nothing be through the assumption of a proper name" we may ask, in return: does the philosophy that carries Badiou's name count as one? Or, is it a multiple that is somehow *forced* in cluster (rather than obligated by the requirement of *logical consistency*)?

Is his work called to being by the assumption of a proper name—Alain Badiou—but exists as a multiple? That when we speak of *it*—the philosophy—it is by assumption of his *name*? Evidently, we cannot stop at this: what is the [communicative chain](#) that gives birth to that name that applies in *this way*? If this question is from Saul Kripke, we are not necessarily bound by his answers to it.

If the name is a solution to a *specific* problem, what is the problem that the emergence and application of a name resolves? In sum: how is a name *assigned*?

There two critical moments in Badiou's philosophy: the one is when the *state of the situation* becomes *excessive* as the elements it represents become innumerable—it is a situation with a *state*, where the subsets proliferate: it is, for instance, administration gone mad. If the elements are innumerable the subsets become countless. This is the ontological excess, or *point d'excès* in Badiou's philosophy. The trail of the unaccounted casts an ever longer shadow in its administration. And then this excessiveness also sets a precedence. The excess acquires a provenance and sets a precedent. Which, in turn, is unaccounted for.

The counterpoint to this unmanageable over-representation is what Badiou calls the *evental site*. Here, there is a *lack* rather than an excess that has an ontologically defining impact: "I will term evental site an entirely abnormal multiple; that is, a multiple such that none of its elements are presented in the situation . The site, itself, is presented, but 'beneath' it nothing from which it is composed is presented . As such, the site is not a part of the situation". They are what we have called [dead-pools](#). Here multiples are made up of singularities that are around but not presented. They



Borges, *The library of Babel*, illustration: Erik Desmazières, 1997.

are not. Yet, they exist.

Hence the question: when and how do the *threshold of excess* and the *evental site* meet? They can meet e.g. in art school—that is, when art school forms and enclave in society that holds back on *presenting itself to* and being *over-represented by* society at the same time. Arguably, these two *loci* (the site and the situation) are brought together in Badiou's play *Ahmed philosophe* (which is somewhat awkwardly translated into English as *Ahmed the philosopher*). The point being that both Ahmed and philosophy is at game, or in peril. It is an un-divine comedy.

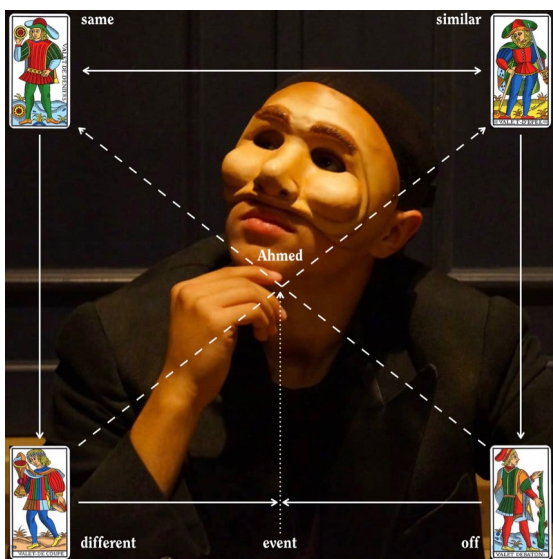
With the strange and somewhat alienating provenance of artistic research from the Bologna agreement—where artistic research defines because art education should be structured like higher education in general, and therefore have a PhD—artistic research has been defined as *different from* and *equivalent to* scientific research. From its basis in national legislation it has resulted in a distinction between artistic and scientific research *within* art-schools (e.g., KHiO). Resulting in an *excessive representation* and *lacking presentation* of the “scientific staff”.

Thereby a part of the obliquely empowering condition of the *evental site*, has inadvertently been transmitted from the artists to the theoreticians inside art-school. That is, on account of their presentational *deficit*—ranging from the strategy-texts of the art-school, down to how the programmes are being communicated to the students—while in the public debate artistic education has been criticised for academisation. In Badiou's framework, it is quite clear that this “academisation” comes from artistic research itself, and not from the staff of its scientific employees.

The point being that *excess of representation* and *lack of presentation combined*, has a transmissive potential: it brings up communicative chains transmitting in a *trans-individual* self, in terms that no single person would have come up with on their own, and operates *beyond* the descriptions we may have of it. Furthermore, there are other contemporary examples of the same phenomenon: which is the dormancy that our habits may induced by *lack of presentation*, that coincide with an *excessive representation* as meta-data in digital search and AI technology.

While digital technocracy is annexing the *state of the situation*—with its excessive representation—the *evental sites* that eschews it develops at a similar pace. I will not indulge in predicting the line of political consequence that this may have (save that the US is a prominent example of it). But instead point out a realm of 3rd agency that defines between the *short term* calls and cries, and *long term* dispositions: the *meantime*. We can ask (somewhat rhetorically): what do we do in the meantime? Or, we can ask: what is the kind of shaping agency that brings up the meantime?

Can we, for instance, *hold back* on representation before it becomes excessive? Can we similarly *secure* that minimum of presentation that brings us beyond the horizons of expectation (such as, in history, messianic expectation)? Can we envisage that credit is added to a name by doing so? How is credit won and removed. How can a name be tainted and lost. These are things the we may want to think of and debate, both at the individual and institutional level (given that they operate at a trans-individual level anyhow). What is the caution/value-balance here?



Faced with two options we will consider the *evental site* (defined by lack of presentation of the *same* event) and the *state of the situation* (defined by excess of representation) as *analogous* (rather than as opposite). That is, the *over-representation* of a multiple is analogous to the *under-presentation* of the same multiple: they are *similar*. Which means that when we look at the *difference* between them, we can set specific limits to each and take *off* in performance (featuring the cluster action-choice-value-meaning). Ahmed in performance, clustering the philosopher.

The *same*, *similar*, *different* and *off*. Artist Alejandro Jodorowsky discovered this pattern, reconstructing a Marseille card-deck from 1471 together with card-master Philippe Camoin. As a fictional framework it attracts the event and is marked by it. Which makes it *different* from illusion (which is a world unto itself and contains its own reality). An artistic bid on the real: a heritage with claims unsegmented by regular science.

In the meantime. Photo (© Smoners asbl) from Alain Badiou's play *Ahmed philosophe* at [espace Magh](#) in Brussels. Montage (Theodor Barth) with cards from Jodorowsky/Camoin's [Marseille deck](#) (1471). A normal counterpoint to a [Klein's group](#).