



A Basseri-settlement in the Shiraz district of Iran: its open and elemental character features a balance between the spaces of living and transformation.

Alain Badiou's *excess point* and *evental site* remain loosely connected. His argument departs from Cantor's set theory (mathematics) in which multiples constitute our point of departure. The ontological argument is *adjacent* to mathematics. To each mathematical sequence there is an ontological consequence alongside it. *Naming* and *counting-as-one* is a case in point. To Badiou, excess—or, excretion—is initial in the sense that a for two elements x and y , there is a set-representation: $\{\{x\}, \{y\}, \{x, y\}, \{\emptyset\}\}$ —that is, the representation of x and y exceeds their presentation.

The connection is less loose if we consider that the representation of x and y as a set— $\{\{x\}, \{y\}, \{x, y\}, \{\emptyset\}\}$ —prompts the simulation, substitution and erasure of x and y as presented. What starts as a state of the *situation*, can thereby degenerate into a (*evental site*): there *is* no situation, but we are led to anticipate and postpone something that will *happen*; an event. However, if the representation is something that will have to be *assigned*, rather than something that is *assumed*, there is a workload added to each instance of representation: there is an *ontology* of representation.

Whether the expounding of the two elements of the set are surreptitiously assumed by Badiou as *epistemic*—rather than ontological—remains unanswered (pending on further investigation). However, it makes a difference whether the *representation* of x and y as a set *assumes* the presentation of x and y as such. If the representation $\{\{x\}, \{y\}, \{x, y\}, \{\emptyset\}\}$ is not assumed, but results in an assignment of x and y , it will necessarily implicate and involve x and y . If assigned, and not assumed, the set will not lead to the erasure of x and y .



In Prof. Fredrik Barth's account of the wanderings of the Basseri—which is a nomadic tribe in South Persia, of the Khamse confederacy, there was a number of invisible lines and borders regulating their migration of livestock. He eventually learned to identify and not to overstep these boundaries.

In other words, they do not evolve into as isolates: they are isolates when **1)** the representation is *excrecent* [past the *excess point*]; **2)** the presentation is *singular* [when they turn into an *evental site*] while **3)** representation and presentation remain entangled. They are in a process of separation, but they are never entirely split. If moving in the opposite direction, representation has to be worked as an *assignment*, that yields *another* assignment on x and y . The assignment of the mouse-trap is always *dual*. Which is why each separately, both together and neither ($\{\{x\}, \{y\}, \{x, y\}, \{\emptyset\}\}$) is *insufficient*.

Since when they are separate they are *not* analogous, when they form a set they are *not* different (we only know that they are not identical), while the empty set

{ \emptyset } is a supplement to something that has already been assumed: namely, that the action of the set—as it is introduced to represent the elements x and y —leaves *no* mark. It is thus constructed as an assumption rather than as an assignment (since an assignment, by definition, always leaves a mark as it hatches a new one). Infinite regress is part of the structure of assumption.

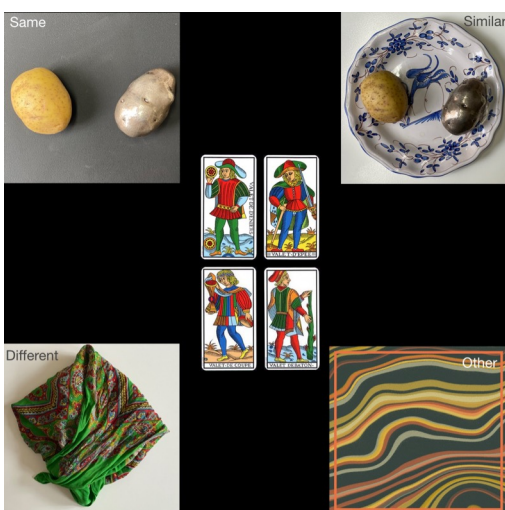
For this reason, there is an ENTER and EXIT from the work of representation which is unaccounted for. The representation is sudden, its correspondence with x and y is assumed, and its multiplication is (in principle) never ending. To progress on the matter we need to consider that there are two vantage points on each ENTER and EXIT: *internal* and *external*. This dual boxing is what defines a mousetrap. The one can lock on the other, which one it is depends on the vantage point (internal/external), and thereby *traps* something which it is possible to screen, intercept, frame.

With these precautions we cannot assume that it is the natural state of the world to be named and counted: in time, practices of naming and counting—patenting and earning—that build on this assumption, is entangled with the world: it (and we with it) respond to this assumption by *going dark*. Which is how the *point of excess* (*excrecence*) is co-generative with the *evental site* (*singularity*). And it becomes ever more difficult to achieve a balance between the two: because *normalisation*, in this sense, demands a critical amount of creative work at ENTER & EXIT.

We will argue that AI is *excrecence* that has reached the *point of excess*, producing an *avalanche-like* effect. Similarly, we propose that the *anthropocene* is the world gone dark, turning into an *evental site* (*singularity*) in which something is continually about to happen. But this is something that happens when naming and counting happens *in medias res* rather than *in limine*. In the latter case, it will be more readily apparent that the larger part of reality is *unnamed* and *countless*. People who were born before the 80s have lived in a world where this was possible to think.

If the present argument holds, the correspondence established between the spot-markets and the future-markets in the 80s—one on the spot *in medias res*, the other financial—followed by the substitution of spot markets for future markets (because the numbers yielded were good approximations) placed the world of exchange into a permanent *liminal* state. That is, what others have coined the state of exception: that has been diversified and expanded through multiplication. Here the OECD/IEA were the avant-garde: *If you cannot count it, it doesn't count* (as the saying goes).

Constructing the world as a place which in increasing aspects is monitored/constructed as a huge calculator, is imminently crazy. But realising that doesn't help so much. What we need is a protocol of steps whereby naming and counting is contained: that is, there is an inside/outside of the liminal zone, and that this is a condition for learning something of substance *in medias res*. Such that what Badiou calls the truth procedure is articulated in concrete showpieces. As we have already attempted in the ANALOGIES handout, through the use of items with a *history* of their own.



The reader will note that the steps have moved from the items (in the ANALOGIES handout) to the images (here). Which changes the way we name and count. Here, the images are same, similar, different and other. This is the internal vantage point. In the ANALOGIES handout the vantage point is external. We are in *medias res* looking at each item, and then we are in *limine*. Here we are in *limine* and then exit.

In that handout, the *liminal* steps are trapped by items defined *in medias res*. A potato from REMA 1000, a silvered potato from 1932, a ceramic plate with a Moustier pattern decoration from my mother's collection, and my grandfather's hiking scarf. This is from the outside: the external vantage point. From the inside they are vehicles to instantiate the steps *in limine*: same, similar, different and other/off. The first item (the potato) is included into the set, but does not belong to it. The last item (the scarf) belongs to the set but is not included in it: since it exits the liminal and goes back to *in medias res*.

Here presentation and representation do not separate, and become integrated though operating in two very distinct modes: *in limine* and *in medias res*, which correspond exactly with *virtual* and *actual*. These prerequisites are of the essence when establishing a *critical usership* of AI, which will be one of the dimensions of teaching in the theory classes this fall. It will be discussed in more detail in a separate handout.