DEMOCRACY AND THE SOUL OF POLITICS. RETHINKING A THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN THE LIGHT OF BADIOU, NANCY, MARX, AND RANCIÈRE

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1. *68–08–18*

In 2008 Jean–Luc Nancy published an essay in tribute of the year 1968 under the title "The Truth of Democracy."[1] This text is a reaction to a political situation that, even now in 2018, is still prevailing. It is the situation of "inadequate democracy,"[2] as Nancy puts it. As a political situation this inadequate democracy is a result of a process in which western society was (and still is) exceeding history and thus historical comprehension of their socio–political existence. The re–establishment of democracies and their respective procedures happened in the shadow of a state of shock due to the experiences of totalitarianisms, systemic oppression, and mass murder during the 20th century. What happened was that "very early on — too early, too quickly, in fact, even before the invention of the word –" these totalitarianisms were designated, on the one hand, as an "absolute political evil that is in opposition to democracy" and, on the other hand, as "an evil that simply befell democracy, that came in from nowhere, or from outside already in itself bad."[3] This panic reaction, then, obscured the fact that the evils of totalitarianisms were but man–made (not a 'devilish' stroke of fate) and historical (not a 'transfigured' detached, i.e. *absolute*, force).[4] In transfiguring them as

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1 Jean–Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, trans. P.–A. Brault and M. Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

2 Ibid., 5ff.

3 Ibid., 6.

4 Alain Badiou makes the same point and discusses it more in–depth in his *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. P. Hallward (London/New York: Verso, 2002), 58–89. Guy Collins offers a religious and theological understanding of the matter that draws heavily on Badiou's work: Cf. Guy Collins, *Faithful Doubt: The Wisdom of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2015), 80–118.

absolute the conception of modern democracies was always seen in the light (or rather the dark) of evil powers that by all means needed to be deterred and avoided. Accordingly, the political situation after the shock was built on a negation (of evil) rather than an affirmation of a political existence that provides the basis for democracy. In Alain Badious terms: "Evil is that from which the Good is derived, not the other way round."[5] — And this is the core of the problem.

What occurred then was an ongoing labeling process of what, *from then on*, *had always been* evil. Any policy associated with either the right or the left wing was now suspect, since this association did recall their paradigmatic affiliation with the respective totalitarian systems — especially the association with Marxist ideas. Being Marxist, "even if in one of its sophisticated or aestheticized versions, […] was necessarily to be 'revolutionary' […]."[6] Consequently, in pronouncing anything, i.e. *any*thing, associated with the totalitarianisms guilty of being evil, and by construing the democratic procedures as defense against it, the realm of democracy was scaled down heavily, thus resulting in its "mediocrity."[7] So, instead of establishing a social procedure that moderates the situation that is based on the pure multiple[8] of the *demos* the inadequate democracies favored the establishment of new power— and hierarchy–based systems with the 'police state'[9] leading the way. 'With all due respect' to national, cultural, religious, sexual, and, most notably, personal sensitivities the realm of the law, on the other hand, was (and is) expending. The shrinkage of democracy and the inflation of regulation and law spawned an a–political situation that is, for the most part, ruled by fear: either the "essential fear" of the "privileged people" who see their world picture (*Weltbild*) waning or the "derivative fear" that is the

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5   Badiou, *Ethics*, 9.

6   Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 6.

7   Ibid., 7.

8   I am intentionally avoiding the term 'diversity' here and instead use Badiou's terminology (cf. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. O. Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2005)). To be precise, the term 'diversity' would connote a paradigmatic differentiation between its elements, each of them being counted as–one, which, as a result, will form the *one* diversity consisting of different single beings/elements. The term 'multiple,' however, implies that any multiple consists of multiples which can only imply, not state, existence and thus being. Accordingly, speaking of a 'diverse' *demos* as the condition of the possibility of democracy would convey the idea of *one* diversity that happens to *be*, that is, a diversity already counted. Speaking instead of 'the pure multiple' will impart the idea of a *demos* that *occurs*. The pure multiple of the *demos* is uncountable.

9   "The police is not a social function but a symbolic constitution of the social. The essence of the police lies neither in repression nor even in control over the living. Its essence lies in a certain way of dividing up the sensible." (Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. S. Corcoran (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2010), 36.)

"fear of fear."[10] While the first mode of fear can be associated with right wing politics that are clutching at the last straw of an old world that has already lost its meaning; the latter mode can be associated with left wing politics that do not offer a genuine political program but instead derive their procedures from simply being in opposition to the right wing.

In such an a–political situation the "68 thought," then as well as nowadays, bears a "'messianic inspiration'" that was and is "greeting the present of an irruption or disruption that introduced no new figure, agency, or authority."[11] Here Nancy gives two statements about 68: On the one hand, 68 is an 'idea' that conveys a mindset. In this sense, it is a dynamic principle that is associated by Nancy with the concepts of "desire," "spirit," "breath," and "sense."[12] On the other hand, it is a cesura, a turning point that, in a quasi–Euclidean sense, has no parts, meaning having no historical expanse, i.e. duration. My thesis is: The latter statement introduces the idea to think of 68 as an *event* and thus the *truth* (of democracy); the former statement connects 68 to the theological concept of the *soul*. In the following, I will discuss how the idea of democracy and soul come together in what Badiou calls a truth procedure. After that, I will examine the biblical concept(s) of soul and show how the idea of the soul connects with Badiou's ontology. Finally, I will review these ontological considerations in the light of both Giorgio Agamben's reading of the young Karl Marx and Jacques Rancière's concept of politics.

2. *The Event 68 and the Truth of Democracy*

So nowadays, forty years after the *event* 68, Nancy proclaims that his essayistic reminder should not be confused with a eulogy whether it would be due to an anniversary or a case of death.[13] The challenge that 68 stands for has not grown old and weary; and only because Nancy, when he wrote his text, saw the number 2008 on his calendar this does not mean the *idea* 68 stands for dissolved or even died back in the days. Its "process, mutation, or impetus […] today is at best still in its early stage." To be more precise, it can be said that the idea of 68 is something a–temporal since it evokes the "questioning of the very truth of democracy."[14] By stating then that 68 was "neither a revolution nor a reform movement," "neither a protest nor a rebel-

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10   Cf. Alain Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, trans. D. Fernbach (London/New York: Verso, 2008), 7–20.

11   Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 10.14.

12   Ibid., 15.

13   Here and for the following: cf. ibid., 3f.

14   Ibid., 1.

lion, neither a revolt nor an insurrection,"[15] Nancy strips 68 of all the concepts that would reduce it to a historical phenomenon that is passed down as a mere date in historiography. But then again, it seems that in doing so, Nancy himself reduces 68 to being(–)nothing. This operation becomes quite plausible if we consider his idea in the light of Alain Badiou's 'philosophy of the event.'

For Badiou, "truth is an undertaking; it is a process made possible by the event."[16] But what does "event" mean? To speak in Badiou's formal language, it is undecidable if an event belongs to a situation; on the one hand, it can only occur in a situation, but, on the other hand, it occurs "'on the edge of the void'" which is "the pure multiple, absolutely unpresentable" and thus "the outside–point on the basis of which any place — any situation — maintains itself to its being."[17] To break this down we have to be clear about the terms Badiou uses in his main work on ontology, *Being and Event*. The terms in question are (a) "situation" and (b) "void."

(a) For Badiou, it is clear that anything that presents itself is a multiplicity.[18] But the presentation of such a multiplicity can only occur as it is being "counted–as–one." Otherwise, it would not be possible to discern *a* multiplicity. The result of this "operation" is what Badiou calls a situation. The situation is the "structured" multiplicity. As a situation the multiplicity of being can be comprehended and thus it is possible to live, or rather to be, in the situation. It is the "place of taking–place." So, "[t]here is nothing apart from situations." To make a (simplified) example: The above–mentioned (political) situation is structured by the results of the operation of the right–wing's fear for their privileged position (even the–left wing agenda is structured by it, as we have seen). In trying to keep the *status quo* or even return to a former social structure *one* make–or–break interpretation of the political order and people is implemented to form their political agenda. But how can this *one* interpretation rightfully work as a principle that gives being and thus the world its structure? It certainly cannot. Since the one is merely the result of an operation it cannot be argued that it, in whichever way, can constitute a world principle.

In *Being and Event* Badiou calls to the "decision to break with the arcana of the one and the multiple in which philosophy is born and buried […]." Since there can be no doubt that "what presents itself is essentially multi-

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15   Ibid., 4
16   Alain Badiou and Farbien Tarby, *Philosophy and the Event*, trans. L. Burchill (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 12.
17   Cf. Badiou, *Being and Event*, 201.175.53.77.
18   For the following: cf. ibid., 23–30, here 25.

ple," it is the one that is in question. Now, the fundamental idea of Badiou's ontology is that "the one *is not*." "For if being is one, then one must posit that what is not one, the multiple, *is not*." This would lead to a formal contradiction. But since the (pure) multiple is preceding any supposed being of "Oneness" the only conclusion to the problem would be to renounce the being of one and instead proposing its operational character. But when we respect the statement that there are only situations, and that any situation is a result of an operation, the situation implies that "[i]nsofar as the one is a result, by necessity 'something' of the multiple does not absolutely coincide with the result."[19] This leads us to the question of the void.

(b) In a situation there can be nothing that is not a result and thus being counted as–one. But a result implies the operation of which it is the outcome, and the operation implies 'something' to apply to; so, operation and result leave a "phantom remainder" of that which is the condition of the possibility of any situation. This is the "pure multiple" which is "being *qua being*." But speaking of it in these terms should not hide the fact that it is unpresentable, i.e. without the one. And since anything "from the standpoint of immanence to the situation" is "subject to the law of the one," the pure multiple must "be *nothing*." This, nevertheless, does not mean it is "non–being;" it is just the opposite.

> "What is at stake is an unpresentable yet necessary figure which designates the gap between the result–one of presentation and that 'on the basis of which' there is presentation; that is, the non–term of any totality, the non–one of any count–as–one, the nothing particular to the situation, the unlocalizable void point in which it is manifest both that the situation is sutured to being and that the *that–which*–presents–itself wanders in the presentation in the form of a subtraction from the count. It would already be inexact to speak of this nothing as a point because it is neither local nor global, but scattered all over, nowhere and everywhere: it is such that no encounter would authorize it to be held as presentable. I term *void* of a situation this suture to its being."[20]

In this regard, the void is "in–different" to anything, any multiple, since there is no possibility of its structured presentation.[21] So, only by *naming* this phantom remainder, this nothing, the void is present in a situation as the unpresentable.[22] Consequently, this means that the void (or rather its name) is included in any situation as a sub–multiple. But any situation presents itself on the basis of the void which implies that the void is *included*

19   For the following: cf. ibid., 52–59, here 53.
20   Ibid., 55.
21   Cf. ibid., 67.
22   Here and for the following, see Badiou's proof: cf. ibid., 81–92.

in itself (that does *not* mean it is an *element* of itself, since this would imply that the void would not be void). This ultimately results in the "excess" of the void.

> "It is the case — and politics in particular shows this — that the void, once named 'in situation,' exceeds the situation according to its own infinity; it is also the case that its eventual occurrence proceeds 'explosively,' or 'everywhere,' within a situation; finally, it is exact that the void pursues its own particular trajectory — once unbound from the errancy in which it is confined by the state."[23]

This explosion of the void is an effect of it being a sub–multiple of any multiple, i.e. situation, and of itself because *"no multiple is capable of forming–a–one out of everything it* includes."[24] So, although the void 'only' includes its name this commences "the unlimited production of new multiples ..., each drawn from the void."[25] This, in Badiou's terms, makes the void an "eventual" multiplicity. And so, the circle is complete and we can now understand the event.

The event as such is a paradox. When it occurs "on the edge of the void" it is still "in situation" but it somehow is not.[26] In a situation the event *is* insofar as it is presented. And since the event can only occur in a situation it automatically belongs to the situation and its structure. But its presentation is the presentation of an unpresentable, i.e. a name.[27] Thus, it is but another "nomination" that is "addressed [...] to the void itself." This, as we have seen, will result in the explosion of the void in which the void 'breaks its way' through a situation.[28] The effect of the eventual multiplicities will eventually be what constitutes the event. So, the event is the effervescing effect of the void from the standpoint of a situation. As such it is faithful to the void. It transcends the structure of a situation, i.e. the (count–as–)one. Since the one is a result and the situation is subject to the law of the one, the truth of being is not the situation but the pure multiple which name is the

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23   Ibid., 74.

24   Ibid., 85. The reason for this is *Russell's paradox* that shows the aporia of a set (here: multiple) that is a member of itself (here: the void). "Let *R* be the set of all sets that are not members [here: elements; T.M.] of themselves. If *R* is not a member of itself, then its definition dictates that it must contain itself, and if it contains itself, then it contradicts its own definition as the set of all sets that are not members of themselves." ("Russell's Paradox," Wikipedia, accessed October 5, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russell%27s_paradox.)

25   Ibid., 92.

26   For the following: cf. ibid., 178–183.

27   Cf. also ibid., 90: "In the case of the null–set, the count–as–one consists in fixing a proper name for the negation of any presented multiple; thus a proper name for the unpresentable."

28   To keep this summary of the first third of *Being and Event* as compact as possible I am leaving out the whole concept of 'metastructure' (cf. ibid., 93–101).

void. So, the event marks the point of a subjection that produces a subject.[29] This is also the reason for the fact that here Badiou speaks of "*existing*."[30] Subjection and existing can only be understood as a paradoxical effect that brings together the extremes of freedom and necessity, infinity and finitude, eternity and timeliness[31] — or, to put it into Badiou's terms, the void and the situation. And any existential situation comes with the demand of a decision: either being faithful to the event or to the melancholic subjection[32] to the situation, in short, either the multiple or the one.[33]

The (ethic) decision Badiou is aiming for with his ontology is the former. Being faithful to the event means being faithful to the truth of being. But this does not mean that this process calls to passivity and the desperate hope for the advent of a "miraculous event;" instead the subject needs to be "following through to the very end, to the utmost degree, [of] what [it has] been able to extract from the previous event […]."[34] What the subject in this case is following is nothing but the "possibilities" the event is the "source" of. In whichever way these possibilities show themselves, their name in general would be "Idea."[35] By being associated with the event, and thus with the void, the ideas, from the standpoint of the situation, have no being. This is why Badiou can say "that the 'French Revolution' is merely a pure word" and "that *nothing* of such sort ever took place."[36] The same goes for Nancy stripping 68 of its historical clothing. The truth of both events is not that there was the storming of the Bastille or that there really was a May 68 but that they were (and are) an idea. In what way the idea of 68 is associated with the truth that Badiou's concept of the event conveys can be shown in the following quote by Nancy:

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29   This is a reference to Judith Butler's theory of subjection and the paradox of subjection (cf. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanfort University Press, 1997)).

30   Badiou, *Being and Event*, 183.

31   Cf. for instance the famous quote from Søren Kierkegaard in the first chapter of *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening by Anti–Climacus*, trans. A Hannay (London: Penguin, 2004), 43.

32   Cf. Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, 21–30.

33   "It is at this very point that the interpretive intervention has to both detain and decide. By the declaration of the belonging of the event to the situation it bars the void's irruption. But this is only in order to force the situation itself to confess its own void, and to thereby let forth, from inconsistent being and the interrupted count, the incandescent non–being of an existence." (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 183.)

34   Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event,* 12.

35   "I name 'Idea' that which, regarding a given question, proposes the perspective of a new possibility. […] The 'event' […] can very well be said to create an Idea. An Idea is associated with the event because the event is the creation of a possibility and the Idea is the general name of this new possibility." (Ibid., 14)

36   Badiou, *Being and Event*, 182.

> "[W]hat is important is one sense of this truth, namely, that 'authority' cannot be defined by any preexisting authorization (whether institutional, canonical, or based on some norm) but can only proceed from a desire that expresses itself or recognizes itself in it. There is no subjectivism, certainly no psychologism, in this desire, only the expression of a true possibility and thus of a true potential of being."[37]

The 'authority' Nancy rejects here cannot refer to a preexisting authorization because this very authorization would necessarily be associated with the one. Or, to put it differently, this authorization would legitimize a certain interpretation of the law of the one and force it upon reality. This would make a mere result the general reference for existence. But existence can only be true existence when it is faithful to the event. And for Nancy, as for Badiou, this does imply: "true possibility" and "true potential of being."

Concerning the question of the truth of the event 68 which Nancy associates with the truth of democracy the effervescent effect of being will show itself in a "desire" of "being *all together, all and each among all*."[38] With implication of the idea of communism and the emphasis on the inoperative community[39] Nancy shows that the event 68 opens up the truly democratic perspective that is "more than the work" of any kind of politics which identifies itself as political administration and maintenance of the capitalistic logic of value and exchange. Instead, 68 conveys the Idea of an "unworking or an inoperativity […] of what is without value because it is outside all measurable value. The share of what is without value — the share of the sharing (out) of the incalculable, which is, strictly speaking, unshareable — exceeds politics."[40]

It is easy to see these statements in accord with Badiou's event. Other formulations of the matter speak of an "infinity in actuality" or a "proliferation of figures;"[41] but what is most interesting is the rendition of the idea 68 Nancy gives when he speaks of democracy *as "spirit"* and all its implications: "The spirit of democracy is nothing less than this: the breath of man, not the man of a humanism measured against the height of a man as he is given — for where would one find this given? under what condition? what status would it have? — but man who infinitely transcends man."[42] Here, he introduces the human condition in the specific sense that resonates with the

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37   Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 14.

38   Ibid.

39   Cf. Nancy's famous work on the concept of the community *The Inoperative Community*, ed. P. Conner, trans. P. Conner, L. Garbus, M. Holland, S. Sawhney (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 1991).

40   Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 17.

41   Ibid., 11.26.

42   Here and for the following: cf. ibid., 15f.

concept of spirit. When he states that democracy is "lacking in desire, that is, in spirit, in breath, in sense," he uses some of the meanings of *animus* and *psyche*. This is where we set out to consider the concept of the *soul*.

3. *The Soul of Man*

When considering the soul of man in this context we must follow Nancy on the point that this is not about a subjectivism or a psychologism. The soul is not to be 'pinned on' to any one particularity as its individual quasi–essence. So instead of speaking of the human soul which may too easily impart the idea of a single element of a single human being I will speak of the *human–soul* where the hyphen signifies not only the reciprocity of the terms but also the human *as soul* and the soul *as human* (also implying its corporeity). There is no soul without a human but there is no humanity without soul. What at first glance seems to be forming a closed circle is actually a circulation, or rather a *procedure*. For a human being to occur in the sense of human–soul he or she must be faithful to the soul. In the following I will show that this faithfulness to the human–soul is a "truth procedure," namely a truth procedure of love.[43] To elaborate this point, we will have to take a look at the meanings of the term soul in the Scriptures.

The Old Testament's terms for soul — *nesamah, næpæš, rûaḥ* — are connoted with the concept of (life–)breath and spirit. As a basic principle *nesamah* refers to God's "soul–breath" that animates man. This makes it the life principle which man owes to God.[44] The understanding of this life principle is deepened by the meaning of *næpæš* which refers to the basic "vegetative core" of the creature. In the sense of "life power" and "vigor" *næpæš* is often used to convey an understanding of the threat to life and its possible annihilation but also for its salvation. Finally, *rûaḥ* is used synonymously with *nesamah*. But this time the breath of life *re*animates.[45] In the Gospels the term *psyche* is oftentimes used in a way similar to *næpæš*.[46] Most of the biblical references address the *psyche* in the context of "life–threatening ultimate

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43 "This is what I name a 'truth procedure.' The event creates a possibility but there, then, has to be an effort — a group effort in the political context, an individual one in the case of artistic creation — for this possibility to become real; that is, for it to be inscribed, step by step, in the world. […] I speak of truth because something is created that sets down, not simply the law of the world, but its truth." (Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 10.) Badiou knows four kinds of truth procedures: politics, science, art, and love.

44 For the following: cf. Karin Schöpflin, "Art. Seele II," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (=TRE), Vol. 30, ed. G. Müller (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 737–740, 738. Cf. there for the respective biblical references.

45 Cf. ibid., 739.

46 For the following: cf. Gerhard Dautzenberg, "Art. Seele IV," in *TRE*, Vol. 30, 744–748, 745.

situations [*Grenzsituationen*]." The *psyche* is something that must be cared for — especially since the presupposed concept of man is holistic. Thus, it is interesting or somehow paradoxical to see that *psyche* is also connoted with an idea of devotion that not only includes strong commitment but even the sacrifice of one's life. The possibility of sacrifice is but transfigured by the idea of the resurrection, i.e. "recovering the ψυχή." In this regard, 1 John draws a parallel from Christ's sacrifice to man('s sacrifice):

> "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."[47]

It is remarkable that in this passage the 'ethereal' concept of *psyche* is associated with the material aspect of life. The soul, as life or life principle, is a shared experience that demands faithfulness to the other, i.e. sharing. The same can be said for *næpæš*: Its vital energy comes not only from within itself but is developed in relationships between human beings who are in–need–of one another.[48] In this sense, *næpæš* and *psyche* both involve love as desire of and devotion for the loved person (not only in spirit but also in a physical sense).[49] This devotion can also be understood as a modification of the godly *nesamah.* Due to the idea of Christian discipleship the godly other is but the other human being, the neighbor, and thus everyone.[50]

So, 'laying down one's life for the other' is a loving act, i.e. a *praxis*, that refers to the soul, or, more precisely, to the idea of the human–soul; and by that it is implemented in its procedure. Accordingly, the *praxis* is, at the

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47   1 John 3:16–18.

48   Cf. Jan Dietrich, "Human Relationality and Sociality in Ancient Israel: Mapping the Social Anthropology of the Old Testament," in *"What is Human?" Theological Encounters with Anthropology*, eds. E.–M. Becker, J. Dietrich, B.K. Holmes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 23–44, 26.

49   Cf. ibid.: "It is næpæš which seeks physical unity with the beloved person in order to 'stick' with them (Gen 34:2f.)."

50   This refers directly to the resurrection. In the Genesis man is animated by God. The Gospels tell the story of Christ's 're–animation' which is exemplary for discipleship (as shown in the first epistle of John). It is but important to notice that the term discipleship and especially its German equivalent *Nachfolge* convey a misleading understanding of the matter. Since both terms imply a preceding force (of God/Christ) they are subtly hawking a fundamental belief in a certain hierarchy of power and jurisdiction. Hence, I am opting for the understanding of a coalescence of creator/savior and creature (cf. Thies Münchow, *"Wir machen Sinn." (Post)Moderne Bedingungen, Perspektiven und Grenzgänge theologischer Hermeneutik* (Flensburg: Zentrale Hochschulbibliothek, 2018), 219–223, accessed October 5, 2018, https://www.zhb–flensburg.de/fileadmin/content/spezial–einrichtungen/zhb/dokumente/dissertationen/muenchow/muenchow–thies–2018–.pdf). See also footnote 77 of this paper.

same time, a *poiesis*, a 'bringing into being.'[51] What it is bringing into being is humanity, i.e. that which is human as well as that which is humane — this is the resurrection 1 John speaks of. In that way the commandment of the love of the neighbor is directly associated with the resurrection. The loving act brings humanity into being. Hence, there is no other way to love than to "love thy neighbor as thyself." It implies the pure relation: The other as the one and the other "is breath, spirit: sense."[52] This is the point where being faithful to the human–soul shows itself as the truth procedure of love.

As a truth procedure, love begins with the event of an encounter of at least two persons.[53] Although one might think that this event results in the "romantic, fusional conception of lovers' merging in a supreme, ecstatic unity whose only truth is death, as illustrated by Tristan and Isolde," instead "that love splits each individual's narcissistic unity in such a way that opens up an experience of the world that is taken on as the experience of the two."[54] We can see that love does still impose some kind of dying off; but then again, it opens up the dimension of the multiple to transcend the finality of death. In Nancy's words: "The resurrection is the extension of a body[55] to the measure of the world and of the space in which all bodies meet. […] [T]he impossibility of Christian love could be of the same order as the impossibility of the 'resurrection.'"[56]

With this in mind, we are now able to connect the dots and show how the idea of human–soul reflects Badiou's ontology. To see what is the eventual site, i.e. the condition of the possibility for the event of human–soul to

51 "The Greeks, to whom we owe all the categories through which we judge ourselves and the reality around us, made a clear destinction between *poiesis* (*poiein*, 'to pro–duce' in the sense of bringing into being) and *praxis* (*prattein*, 'to do' in the sense of acting). […] The essential character of poiesis was not its aspect as a practical and voluntary process but its being a mode of truth understood as unveiling, ἀ–λήθεια." (Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. G. Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 68.69.

52 Cf. Nancy's throughts on the Trinity in Jean–Luc Nancy, *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity II*, trans. J. McKeane (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 32: "God is relation. He is his own relation — which is not a reflexive relation, neither an aseity [*aséité*] nor an ipseity, one that does not relate itself but *relates* absolutely. The ternary structure or appearance goes from one of its aspects to the other via something that is other to each of them, which is the relation *between* them. What is other to each of them is breath, spirit: sense."

53 Cf. Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 42.

54 Ibid., 39f.

55 Notice that for Nancy soul and body are not distinct elements. "The *soul* is the form of a body, and therefore a body itself (*psyche extended*)." (Jean–Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, trans. R.A. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 75.)

56 On the subject of resurrection cf. Jean–Luc Nancy, *Noli me tangere: On the Raising of the Body*, trans. S. Clift, P.–N. Brault, M. Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 44–48, 44.52. Cf. also his mediation on the idea of "death as another life" in Nancy, *Adoration*, 22–27.

occur, we have to start with the multiple. This is indeed a very simple deliberation because it implies the statement that '*there are human beings*.' This is what Badiou means with the hypothesis that "there is only one world." "This is not an objective conclusion. […] This sentence 'there is only one world' is performative. […] And we shall be faithful to this motto."[57] As a hypothesis, this motto shows quite plainly that despite all differences there are persons and peoples who share a space together, i.e. the globe. One must consider that the axiom is meant as a refutation of the capitalistic promise of an 'international community' that is but "a world of objects and monetary signs, a world of free circulation of products and financial flows."[58] That is to say, such a community would presuppose the 'law of the one.' The ultimate rationale would be that of the 'civilized nations' of the so–called western world. So, it is all about 'democracy' and 'freedom' that are compatible with bureaucratic norms that ensure the steady flow of that which Marx termed Capital. Hence the concepts of 'integration' or 'inclusion' of 'foreigners' which, before anything else, demand of the western courts to decide whether these immigrants are 'economic refugees' who need to be deported. "The most widespread conviction, and that which government policies constantly seek to reinforce, is that *these people come from a different world*. That is the problem. They are the living proof that our democratic and developed world is not, for those in charge of the dominant capitalist order, the only world of women and men."[59] In the same way as Badiou's motto, now, the sentence 'there are human beings' functions as a paradigm. Since the human–soul is a procedure it presupposes that of which it is the actualization of. This presupposition however is not the act of positing *one* world order but a working hypothesis, i.e. the very procedure of the human–soul.

The above mentioned 'problem of immigration' is also a perfect example for the event itself in this context. Though, to be honest, as of yet it is an example for an event that is not acknowledged.[60] As we have seen above, the truth procedure of love begins with the event of an encounter. This might be the encounter of at least two persons or even two different peoples. To acknowledge this event as the condition of the possibility for a truth procedure — and not as the (unwelcomed) means to an end — one needs to be faithful to the event. This means to begin with the idea/axiom that 'there are human beings' or 'there is only one world.' Any attempt to think the encounter as means to an end would disacknowledge the event. It would rather introduce

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57　Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, 60.

58　Ibid., 55.

59　Ibid., 57.

60　That the occurring (political) event of our times is not acknowledged is discussed by Slavoj Žižek in *Event* (London: Penguin, 2014).

the 'estranging' effect Marx spoke of in the first manuscript of his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* into the interhuman relation. Where a certain normativity (either bureaucratic or pseudo–humanistic) dictates the mode of the encounter by implementing a calculation that is immanent to the situation and thus falls under the 'law of the one' there can be no truth procedure because the elements of *praxis* and *poiesis* are kept apart. The kind of acts the immanent normativity demands are only integrating the elements into its very own logic. The community would be 'operative' and functional within a certain logic — but this community would not be a human community. The implementation of the estranging effect of socio–economic administration and calculation "estranges the *species* from man. It changes for him the *life of the species* [*Gattungsleben*] into a means of individual life. First it estranges the life of the species and the individual life, and secondly it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged form."[61] Marx's analysis of the problem shows that the estranging effect leads to a very different kind of (administrative) procedure than the effect of the motto 'there are human beings.' This procedure has nothing to do with the human being or the community but with the maintenance of man–made systems. The final part of this paper will elaborate on this point. But first we will have to be clear about the role of the human–soul in the context of the event.

To speak of the eventual site and the event itself we had to draw on the idea of 'there are human beings' which also includes the idea of the 'human being.' Where does this idea, this hypothesis, come from? It is an idea made possible by the human–soul. The human–soul is that element which can be associated with the name of void from the standpoint of a situation that asks for what is human. To be more precise, it is the name of the void associated with the sub–multiple humanity. It is thus the condition of the possibility for the idea of humanity to occur. In this respect, it is not the name for a predisposition of the *being* of man but of the *pure being* of humanity. Thus, it is the opening [*l'écartement*, *die Aufspreizung*][62] of a procedure that involves the cohesion of *praxis* and *poiesis*. The human–soul is not a concept, let alone a model for what *is* human; it is rather the name of the pure multiple

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61 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. M. Milligan, accessed October 5, 2018, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Economic–Philosophic–Manuscripts–1844.pdf), 31. For the original text cf. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke (MEW)*, Ergänzungsband, 1. Teil (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968), 465–588, here 516.

62 This is Nancy's terminology. Both in the French original and the German translation a sexual undertone is resonating with the terms, referring to the act of love–making.

that yields the occurrence of humanity.[63] "Since its beginnings, the soul has about it something transitory which transcends nature and man. It has no substance; it is immaterial. […] It refers to a blank space [*Leerstelle*] within man and in nature that cannot be filled, that stays and unsettles thinking."[64]

The agitation of thinking is an essential aspect of the event. The irruption of the void into a situation has an unsettling impact on a thinking that submits itself to the logic of the situation and the 'law of the one.' This is why there is a "situational anxiety of the void, or the necessity of warding off the void."[65] This 'defiance' is in some way important because without any reliance on situational terms there would be chaos, i.e. the absence of any structure. Then again, since the structured situation is but a result its inherent logic cannot be defined as *the* logic of the world. This can easily be exemplified: The encounter with the 'foreigner' challenges the western concept of 'humanity.' How come that this person has no legal ID? How come that this person does not even speak English? How come that this person wants to live in peace? The person somehow does not fit in. But although the occurring 'foreigner' may be treated as if he or she comes from a different world, from that point on, it cannot be denied that he or she belongs to the one world. How this could be unsettling to situational thinking — take for instance the above mentioned capitalistic economical paradigm — does not need further explanation.

So, the only veritable option is the faithfulness to the event. It is important to notice that the loving act of 'laying down one's life for the other' is not, in its entirety, active but involves a passivity which is due to its poietic character. In that moment in which the individual acts directly related to the occurrence of the other and without any digression that involve administrative procedures, in one word, when its act refers to the human–soul, it brings into being true humanity that, in response to Marx's finding, changes the life of the individual into the means of the life of the species. It stands without question that this truth procedure challenges the situational elements of the individual's life and demands of him or her a passivity, i.e. a submission to the event. This submission is not to be confused with the melancholic subjection. On the contrary, as submission to the idea of the human–soul it means nothing else but the faithfulness to the event. This faithfulness instigates the truth procedure of love (of the neighbor). And, as we have seen, this procedure is, at the same time, a *praxis* and a *poiesis*. In being faithful

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63   As a procedure this idea of humanity and the human–soul can be compared to the aspect of *temporization* that Jacques Derrida uses to describe the (non–)concept of *différance*.

64   Christoph Wulf, "Präsenz und Absenz: Prozeß und Struktur in der Geschichte der Seele," in *Die Seele: Ihre Geschichte im Abendland*, eds. G. Jüttmann, M. Sonntag, C. Wulf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 5–12, 5. Translation T.M.

65   Badiou, *Being and Event*, 93.

to the event of the encounter humanity is brought into being, i.e. produced. In this regard, the truth procedure of love (of the neighbor) is equivalent to a truth procedure of politics. To understand the equivalence of the procedures we have to take a closer look at the cohesion of *praxis* and *poiesis*

4. *The Soul of Politics*

In the eighth paragraph of his debut *The Man Without Content* Giorgio Agamben attends to the matter of *praxis* and *poiesis*. In the sub–chapter on Marx he shows how the commonly accepted idea that "all of man's doing […] is praxis, that is, manifestation of a will that produces a concrete effect," can be "conceived differently."[66] Such a different understanding can be found in Marx for he "thinks of man's being as production."[67] In this regard, Marx speaks of men as "*Gattungswesen*."[68] "But *Gattung* does not mean only 'natural species': this is proven by Marx's assertion that the quality of *Gattungswesen* is precisely the characteristic that distinguishes men from other animals, and by his explicit linking of it to the praxis, to the conscious vital activity proper to man, and not to the vital activity of animals."[69] For Marx, the animal is "one with its life activity […]. It is *its life activity*;" whereas "[m]an makes his life activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness."[70] In this sense, man, as a productive being, relates to himself when producing. While the animal lives on the organic nature, man also lives on the "inorganic nature" which means that he or she lives on a 'theoretical part of human consciousness' that involves the sciences and art. This is why Marx can say that "man produces universally."[71] Man can conceptualize the life he or she wants to live; and by doing this "he turns his vital activity into the means for his existence."[72] So, Agamben can conclude that "[t]he character of production, then, is to constitute man as a being capable of a genus; it is to give him the gift of a genus (*Gattung*)."[73] But this is a double bind. Because being a *Gattungswesen* is a prerequisite to produce universally in the first

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66   Agamben, *Man Without Content*, 68.

67   Ibid., 79.

68   The English translation I am using translates *Gattungswesen* with "species–being." The English translation of Agamben's text, for the most part, makes use of the German term and sometimes of the term "genus." Notice also that the biological term for 'making love' in German is '*begatten*.'

69   Agamben, *Man Without Content*, 80.

70   Here and for the following: Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 31.

71   Ibid., 32.

72   Agamben, *Man Without Content*, 79.

73   Ibid.

place. "We face here a real hermeneutic circle: on the one hand, production, man's conscious vital energy, constitutes him into a being capable of a genus, but on the other hand it is his capacity to have a genus that makes a producer of him."[74] Or, with Marx's own words: "…[T]he productive life is the life of the species. It is life–engendering life."[75] In Marx's anthropology we have a coalescence of the individual and the *Gattung*, and with it we also have a coalescence of *praxis* and *poiesis*. Man producing universally thus implies an autopoietic act in which each individual produces the *Gattung*. And this is possible only because the *Gattung* is the pure multiple and thus the basis for each individual's production. This becomes clear when consulting the sixth of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* where he states that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."[76] Marx's anthropology starts with the multiple, not with the one. This is why Agamben comes to the following (a–theological) conclusion:

> "In the productive act then, man becomes suddenly situated in a dimension that is inaccessible to any naturalistic chronology, since it is man's essential origin. Freeing himself at once of God (as prime creator) and nature (understood as the All independent of man, of which he is part with the same claim as animals), man posits himself, in the productive act, as the origin and nature of man."[77]

So, we see that Marx's concept of *Gattung* can be understood as equivalent to the human–soul. It is the irruption of the void as the idea of humanity that opens up the socio–political situation. Without such an opening the immanent law of a certain situation would be pursued and artificially perpetuated, and man would be estranged from his life activity and his *Gattungswesen*. This would lead to "the *estrangement of man* from *man*."[78] But in relating to the *Gattung* the individual is/becomes/produces the *Gattung* and thus its essence, the *Gattungswesen*. This is why Badiou can say that man is "*something other than a mortal being*."[79] In fact, man as *Gattungswesen*,

74   Ibid.
75   Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 31.
76   Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, trans. W. Lough, accessed October 5, 2018, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm). For the original text cf. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke (MEW)*, Bd. 3 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1978), 6. Furthermore, cf. Agamben, *Man Without Content*, 82.
77   Agamben, *Man Without Content*, 83. This interpretation conveys a similar understanding of the God–man–relation as the one Nancy offers in *The Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. F. Raffoul, D. Pettigrew (Albany: State University Press, 2007), 57–74, and *Dis–enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. B. Bergo, G. Malenfant, M.B. Smith (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2008), 47–50. Basically, both texts deliver the idea of man as creator (cf. Münchow, *"Wir machen Sinn,"* 203–223).
78   Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 32.
79   Badiou, *Ethics*, 12.

i.e. as human–soul, is an immortal. In the following quote of Badiou we can find a strong impact of Marx's idea and his differentiation between man and animal:

> "An immortal: this is what the worst situations that can be inflicted upon Man show him to be, in so far as he distinguishes himself within the varied and rapacious flux of life. In order to think any aspect of Man; we must begin from this principle. So if 'rights of man' exist, they are surely not rights of life against death, or rights of survival against misery. They are the rights of the Immortal, affirmed in their own right, or the rights of the Infinite, exercised over the contingency of suffering and death. The fact that in the end we all die, that only dust remains, in no way alters Man's identity as immortal at the instant in which he affirms himself as someone who runs counter to the temptation of wanting–to–be–an–animal to which circumstances may expose him. And we know that every human being is capable of being this immortal — unpredictably, be it in circumstances great or small, for truths important or secondary. In each case, subjectivation is immortal, and makes Man."[80]

Again, we can see that the idea of the eternal aspect of humanity, i.e. the *Gattungswesen* or the human–soul, shows itself in drastic or life–threatening situations. And, again, we can perceive here the distinction of subjection as a truth procedure and melancholic subjection. 'Wanting–to–be–an–animal' for man would mean that he or she turns his or her freedom to conceive a plan for life against this very life itself. Metaphorically speaking, this would initiate the process of dying off to humanity. But true human life can only be achieved by being faithful to what we can call *psyche*, the human–soul, or the *Gattungswesen*. And, as we have seen through our reading of 1 John, the faithfulness to this life principle brings about the resurrection. This leads even the decidedly atheist thinker Badiou to the statement that the "fable" of the resurrection instigates the truth procedure of universal redemption.[81]

Now, having discussed the coalescence of *praxis* and *poiesis* in the human being, we can finally understand what I called the 'soul of politics' in the title. In his *Ten Theses on Politics* Jacques Rancière writes that "[p]olitics cannot be defined on the basis of any pre–existing subject."[82] It goes without saying that this statement is perfectly on par with Badiou's ontological findings upon which our considerations are based. In other words, politics do not start with the one but with the multiple. "*It is the political relationship that makes it possible to conceive of the subject of politics, not the other way round.*"[83] In this respect, when we want to talk about democracy we are en-

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80   Ibid.

81   Alain Badiou, *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. R. Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Cf. Carl. A. Raschke, *Critical Theology: Introducing an Angenda for an Age of Global Crisis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 97.

82   Rancière, *Dissensus*, 28.

83   Ibid., 27.

countering a certain paradox in common political thought that, as Rancière states, is connected to a fundamental separation, or rather opposition, of *poiesis* and *praxis*. With reference to Aristotle he shows that "[f]ormulations that define politics as the ruling (*commandment*) of equals, and the citizen as the one who *partakes* in ruling and being ruled, articulate a paradox which demands a rigorous conceptualization. […] In Hannah Arendt's work, for instance, the order of *praxis* is an order of equals who are in possession of the power of the *arkhêin*, that is the power to begin anew (*commencer*)."[84] This *arkhêin* should thus be understood as the poietic element of the democratic situation. But in order to speak of *arkhêin* as the condition of the possibility of equality of the ruling (and ruled) equals one needs to refer to the power of an *arkhê* in which the supposed equals participate.[85] Rancière then brings to mind that *arkhêin* actually refers to a single power that precedes the power(s) of the multiple. *Arkhêin* means "to walk at the head." "And if there is one who walks at the head, then the others must necessarily walk behind. The line between the power of *arkhêin* (i.e. the power to rule), freedom and the *polis*, is not straight but broken."[86] For that reason "the opposition between *praxis* and *poiesis* by no means enables us to resolve the paradox definition of the *politès*."[87] Accordingly, a 'demarchy' would be a conceptual impossibility. Instead, democracy denominates the very point where the line between power and freedom is broken. "Democracy is the specific situation in which it is the absence of entitlement that entitles one to exercise the *arkhê*. It is the commencement without commencement, a form of rule (*commandement*) that does not command."[88] Consequently, Rancière can say that politics is paradoxical.[89] And it is paradoxical in the way in which man is paradoxical. We have here, again, a coalescence of *praxis* and *poiesis*. Therefore, politics can only emerge where it presupposes itself — just like man does. So, the only option to have politics that do not contemplate power and hierarchy, that is, politics "defined in its own,"[90] is to be faithful to the *demos*. *Demos* refers to every human being. And as *demos* every human being is a citizen; not a citizen of any state or nation but a citizen of the world, a cosmopolitan in the real sense. Thus, "the *demos* as figure breaks with all forms of correspondence between a series of correlated

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84   Ibid., 29.
85   Cf. ibid., 30.
86   Ibid.
87   Ibid.
88   Ibid., 31.
89   Ibid., 29.
90   Ibid., 27.

capacities,"[91] i.e. the rulers and the ruled. The *demos* is the condition of the possibility of politics. There simply cannot be politics, let alone the truth procedure of politics, where there are no humans. Hence, Rancière can conclude that "[d]emocracy is the very institution of politics itself."[92]

At this point, Rancière's idea of democracy correlates to the idea of human–soul. Democracy then would be the idea of the *political event*. The site of the event is, once again, the observation that 'there are human beings.' The event itself is the encounter. This time the encounter can be specified as an encounter between citizens. In accord with Rancière's reading of Aristotle, we term citizen the human being "defined by *partaking* (*metexis*) both in a form of action (*arkhêin*) and in the passability corresponding to this action (*arkhêsthai*);"[93] in one word: *demos*. So, this specific kind of encounter would happen in the light of the idea of democracy. The human beings that form a bond of this kind of citizenship would stay faithful to the event and its implication that 'there are human beings' in this one world. In *doing* so they *bring* the *demos into being*. In that way democracy corresponds to the human–soul and the *Gattungswesen*. In *partaking* in both the political activity (i.e. ruling) and passivity (i.e. being ruled) man relates to himself universally. This is how the human being that is faithful to the political event of democracy is free, i.e. not bound to the immanent logic of a situation. So, democracy diagonally cuts through any *arkhê* that would function as the reference for the legitimization of power or hierarchy. This does not even leave a space for the theo–political concept of an original sacrifice to end all sacrifices because, again, this would include a leader and a follower. "[T]he dividing of the *arkhê* […] is not a founding sacrifice. It is the neutralization of every sacrificial body."[94] As we have seen in 1 John, it is not about Christ 'laying down his life' for humanity but about the perpetuated *praxis* of 'laying down one's life' for the other. This is not the production of the sacrificial body but the pro–duction of humanity, of its eternity, and of man as an immortal.

This is why Rancière, similar to Badiou, can speak of "void" when referring to the community. "It is not the laboring and suffering populace that emerges on the terrain of political action and that identifies its name with that of the community. The 'all' of the community named by democracy is an empty, supplementary part that separates the community out of the sum of the parts of the social body. This initial separation founds politics as the action of supplementary subjects, inscribed as a surplus in relation to every

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91   Ibid., 32.
92   Ibid.
93   Ibid., 28.
94   Ibid., 34.

count of the parts of society. The core of the question of politics, then, resides in the interpretation of this void and surplus."[95]

As *demos* the community is overflowing, surpassing any counting. This is where the idea of democracy is equal to the idea of the human–soul or the idea of the *Gattungswesen*. The community, the *demos*, the *Gattung* is not actual. We have now come full circle. This community is the "inoperative community" of Nancy, a community that is never actualized. Instead, it is "*all together, all and each among all*."[96] This 'all' does not refer to a certain sum of living people but to the whole of humanity that the idea of the human–soul gives a glimpse of. It includes those unheard, and those unseen,[97] and those who will be, i.e. the actual *proles*, the offspring.

It is no wonder, then, that Nancy sees "'communism' as the truth of democracy."[98] In the sixth annotation of his essay, though, he criticizes Badiou's idea of the *communist hypothesis*. For him, communism should instead be "posited as a given, as a fact: our first given. Before all else, we are in common. Then we must become what we are: the given is an exigency, and this exigency is infinite."[99] For Badiou, on the other hand, "[communism] can only be a movement, it cannot be a State. In reality, 'communist State' is an oxymoron, an absurdity."[100] But in the perspective given in this paper these statements are reconcilable. When Nancy introduces a dynamic mode to the *demos* (i.e. the 'given') that now 'must become what it is' he presents an idea we, in accord with Badiou, can term a truth procedure. Only because the *demos* can relate to itself it can produce universally and thus produce itself. This truth procedure of politics however is directly linked to the truth procedure of love (of the neighbor). To be precise, this relation must be understood in a dialectical sense: It is not about a unilateral sublation (*Aufhebung*) of one aspect in favor of the other, also, there is no hierarchy here; instead the two truth procedures frame a dialectical movement that yields a third term, namely humanity. So, no matter if communism is perceived as the given fact of the *demos* or the procedure in which the *demos* becomes what it is, in any of both cases it always refers to humanity. At the basis of the political idea of communism/democracy lies the devotion of human be-

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95 Ibid., 33f.

96 Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 14.

97 Cf. Rancière, *Dissensus*, 37–40. In thesis eight Rancière states that "*[t]he essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one.*" (ibid., 37) The thesis deals with the same problem we have already encountered in Badiou's analysis of the 'problem of immigration.'

98 Nancy, *Truth of Democracy*, 30.

99 Ibid., 54.

100 Badiou, *Philosophy and the Event*, 20. This is a paraphrase of Marx and Engels; cf. Marx, Engels, *Werke (MEW)*, Bd. 3, 35.

ings to humanity, i.e. the idea of the human–soul, the life principle. Thus, it is the breath of man that eternally lifts and lowers — dying off and resurrecting. At the basis of the political lies the perpetual love of the human being for the other human being as itself. The truth of democracy is that it refers to the human–soul. And in doing so, the idea of democracy establishes what we can call the *soul of politics*. This might be why Gilbert Keith Chesterton can confidently state that "[t]he democratic contention is that government (helping to rule the tribe) is a thing like falling in love […]."[101]

Abstract

DEMOCRACY AND THE SOUL OF POLITICS.
RETHINKING A THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN THE LIGHT
OF BADIOU, NANCY, MARX, AND RANCIÈRE

In accord with Jean–Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou the article argues for an understanding of the idea of democracy as a "truth procedure" that is instigated by the event of the encounter of at least two persons or peoples. When Nancy states that democracy is "spirit," "breath," and "sense" he implicitly links democracy to the idea of the soul. As life principle of the human being the soul instigates a truth procedure which brings humanity into being as an idea that exceeds any concept of citizenship bound to a state or nation. In association with both Giorgio Agamben's reading of Karl Marx and Jacques Rancière's concept of politics the article concludes with the statement that the idea of democracy refers to the soul of politics which is the idea of humanity.

KEY WORDS: 1968, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Democracy, Event, Karl Marx, Jean–Luc Nancy, Politics, Jacques Rancière, Soul, Truth Procedure

101 Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2004), 39. In fact, Chesterton offers a perfect explanation that helps to understand the equivalence of Nancy's and Badiou's idea of communism/democracy. Chesterton knows two principles of democracy. "The first is this: that the things common to all men are more important than the things peculiar to any men." (Ibid., 38) "And the second principle is merely this: that the political instinct or desire is one of these things which they hold in common." (Ibid., 39) Just like Nancy, Chesterton makes use of the term 'desire' to name the true ('common') aspect of democracy. Hereby, he is referring to the idea of humanity in the particular way that led us to the idea of the human–soul as the soul of politics. The following quote states this clearly: "The sense of the miracle of humanity itself should be always more vivid to us than any marvels of power, intellect, art, or civilization." (Ibid.) It is the procedure, the 'desire' both Nancy and Chesterton speak of, that brings the common into being in the first place. Hence, a true *demos*, i.e. a true democracy, is a truth procedure.