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In the wake of the numerous translations of Badiou’s works that have appeared in recent years, including the translation of the second volume of his major work, *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event II*, there has been a marked increase in interest in the philosophical underpinnings of his oeuvre. The papers brought together in this volume provide a range of incisive and critical engagements with Badiou’s philosophical heritage and the philosophical problems his work engages, both directly and indirectly. Our aim is to offer a balanced assessment of the ways in which Badiou responds to various philosophical thinkers, arguments and traditions, and of the arguments that he employs to do so.

The volume is divided into three sections: I. Philosophy’s Mathematical Condition; II. Philosophical Notions and Orientations; and III. Philosophical Figures. The first explores the philosophico-mathematical underpinnings of Badiou’s oeuvre. The next engages with a number of key philosophical concepts and orientations that provide a critical context for an engagement with Badiou’s work. And the third offers in-depth analyses of some of the key thinkers that constitute a large part of Badiou’s philosophical heritage.

This present, introductory chapter explores a number of Badiou’s remarks which explicitly treat the relation of his work to the discipline of philosophy more generally, and gives an overview of the ground that will be covered throughout the collection. We will also here make a few general comments about the importance, for Badiou, of philosophy’s ‘mathematical condition’.
Badiou and Philosophy

As is well known, in his first *Manifesto for Philosophy*, Badiou argues that philosophy has certain extra-philosophical ‘conditions’ which are required for it to take place. These conditions, which are of four types, are the ‘generic’ or ‘truth procedures’ resulting from major upheavals or events in the fields of science, politics, art and love. The specific role of philosophy is to propose a unified conceptual space for – or, as Badiou also puts it, to think the ‘compossibility’ of – its contemporary conditions (MP 33–7). In so doing, philosophy is able to seize upon and elaborate, in novel ways, those new possibilities of existence which are nascent in its external, evental conditions.

At the same time, however, still following Badiou’s *Manifesto for Philosophy*, philosophy since Descartes has *internally* maintained certain ‘nodal concepts’ which organise the thinking of these external and diverse conditions within the same conceptual space. These nodal concepts are, for Badiou, being, truth and the subject (MP 32; see also SM 117–18). Of course, these concepts have their specific correlates in each case, depending on the particular philosophical system under consideration. In Badiou’s own philosophy, as is well known, these correlates include notions such as the State, the event and fidelity. And as Ed Pluth and James Williams show in Chapters 6 and 7 of this volume, certain conceptions of materialism and time also have a decisive role to play in Badiou’s philosophical system. What is crucial in any case, as Badiou argues, is that the deployment of the philosophical concepts of being, truth and the subject is grounded in certain events having occurred in the domains of science, politics, art and love (MP 38, 79–80). In other words, philosophy’s external conditions somehow clarify and orient the task of philosophy, even in the concepts which philosophy internally deploys.

What, then, are the contemporary, conditioning events whose compossibility Badiou feels himself obliged to think, and how exactly do they bear on the philosophical concepts of the subject, truth and being? Firstly, with political events such as May ’68 and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as well as with the advent of a new discourse on love in Lacanian psychoanalysis, Badiou declares that we have seen the emergence of a new kind of dialectics whose terms – that is, the political or amorous *subject* – need not refer to a given or objective essence, such as a class or a sexual essence.
This is a crucial point for Badiou, many of the details of which are examined here in the chapters by Nina Power, and Justin Clemens and Adam Bartlett. Secondly, with the artistic event associated with the poetry of Hölderlin, Mallarmé and Celan (among others), Badiou arrives at the idea that truth—here, poetic truth—need not entail a reference to an object. Finally, in the order of science and the matheme, the event which is the development of set theory from Cantor to Paul Cohen has given us the concept of an ‘indiscernible’ or ‘generic multiplicity’ (that is, a multiple falling under no particular determinant), allowing us to rigorously think the truth of the being qua being of any given multiple as pure multiplicity ‘without one’ (MP 79–96). The importance of this last event for Badiou’s philosophy is examined throughout the collection, but most particularly in the papers comprising the first section.

So how do the nodal concepts of philosophy organise the thinking together of these events, even as these events clarify the meaning of the concepts of being, truth and the subject? Firstly, it is by declaring that a truth has no need of the category of the object because truth is itself an indiscernible or generic multiple which, as the result of an infinite procedure, will have been ‘subtracted’ from all exact designations and their corresponding discerned multiples. Secondly, it is by arguing that such a ‘truth procedure’ is founded upon the affirmation of an ‘undecidable’ event which comes to supplement a given multiple-situation. The infinity of multiples comprising this given situation are then ‘verified’ as being connected in some way to the supplementary event, which in turn leads to the ongoing production, within multiple-being itself, of the truth of this event-supplemented situation as a purely generic multiple. Finally, it is by affirming that while truth has no necessary relation to a given object, it is inseparable from a subject: the subject being that which verifies the connection of the infinity of multiples comprising a situation to the supplementary event and, in so doing, must be thought of as a finite fragment of this infinite generic procedure (MP 95–6, 108). It is in this schematic way that Badiou’s philosophy thinks the compossibility of the truth procedures which have their origin in the aforementioned contemporary events in the domains of science, politics, art and love.

All this is not to say, however, that by affirming the dependence of philosophy on extra-philosophical conditions the specificity of philosophy collapses. Indeed, Badiou makes it clear in Manifesto
that insofar as philosophy must systematically think the com­pos­sibility of all four of its very disparate conditions, it cannot be 'sutured' to or identified with any particular one of them (MP 65–6). Moreover, as Badiou explicitly states in the introduction to Being and Event, philosophy circulates not only between its conditions, but also between these conditions and its own history (BE 3).¹ The independence of the discipline of philosophy is thus also due to the relationship it maintains with its own history. In fact, it is clear from a brief glance at the table of contents of any of Badiou's major works that significant portions of his oeuvre are dedicated to analyses of numerous venerable philosophers and the concepts and themes they addressed. Plato, Descartes and Hegel are singled out by Badiou, in typical exaggerated fashion, as 'the only three crucial philosophers' (LW 527). But as Brian Smith and Graham Harman convincingly demonstrate in their contributions to this volume, philosophers such as Sartre and Heidegger were also indispensable for Badiou.

But two further things also follow from Badiou's assertion that philosophy is inseparable from its own history and concepts. Firstly, as he makes clear in texts such as Metapolitics and Logics of Worlds, citing Althusser and Sylvain Lazarus, it follows that the 'effects' of philosophy's external conditions on philosophy in some sense remain internal to philosophy (M 54–5; LW 518–19). And secondly, it follows that philosophy should, at least in principle, be able to discuss these internal, conditioned effects in specifically philosophical terms. Indeed, with regard to this last point, Talia Morag argues in Chapter 8 that Badiou could enter into a productive dialogue with contemporary neo-pragmatists about the philosophical importance of sets. And in Chapter 13, Jon Roffe, among other things, laments the philosophical discussion that could have taken place between Deleuze and Badiou on the questions of 'multiple being' and the relationship between mathematics and ontology.

Some twenty years after the publication of the first Manifesto for Philosophy, Badiou published his Second Manifesto for Philosophy. He argues that the first Manifesto was concerned above all to assert the existence of philosophy against the attempts to declare its 'death' by exclusively 'suturing' it either to science (analytic philosophy, positivism), politics (dogmatic Marxism), art (Nietzscheans and Heideggerians) or love (Levinasians, Lacanian 'anti-philosophy'). By the time of the publication of the Second
Manifesto, however, Badiou thinks that philosophy’s ‘inexistence’ is no longer the whole problem. The problem now is that philosophy is ‘everywhere’. Philosophy has become ubiquitous, but it has also become servile, assimilated with ‘conservative morality’ and the uncritical defence of ‘democratic dogma’ (SM 67–9). Asserting the existence of philosophy will thus no longer simply amount to thinking the systematic compossibility of all four of its conditions in the manner outlined above (MP 65). It must also involve a certain ‘de-moralising’ of philosophy, which is to say that philosophy must become a little ‘reckless’, ‘corrupt the youth’ and destabilise dominant opinion (SM 69–71). In other words, the primary mode of philosophy must become the polemic if philosophy is to avoid being merely another means of legitimising the legal and ethical status quo.²

Of course, Badiou thinks that philosophy’s commitment to universal truths is its own distinct means of de-moralising itself (SM 71–2). Indeed, it is clear that that fidelity to a truth which is always in excess of the status quo is inevitably conflictual. But surely philosophy’s polemical attitude must also be carried into the domain of philosophy itself, in order to avoid the consolidation of new, philosophical status quos. Moreover, a point which is relevant to this present volume, perhaps philosophy’s combative attitude must also be brought to philosophical commentary, if only to prevent uncritical scholarship mistaking itself for the elaboration of new possibilities for thought.

So it appears that we can now draw upon a number of the points examined above in order to contextualise this project, in terms Badiou would approve of, as a critical and, at times, combative examination of Badiou’s relation to, impact on and relevance for the discipline of philosophy. The collection as a whole is thus characterised by the way in which it brings together a number of critical studies of Badiou’s relation to various philosophers (Althusser, Deleuze, Heidegger, Lautman, Marx, Plato, Quine, Sartre), philosophical concepts (being, events, freedom, the infinite, the subject, time, truth) and philosophical movements or orientations (communism, Marxism, materialism, neo-pragmatism). The volume also examines Badiou’s relationship to a number of thinkers who, while not themselves philosophers (at least in the standard sense of that term), have nevertheless had major impacts on philosophical thought: the psychoanalyst and ‘anti-philosopher’ Lacan, but also mathematicians such as Cantor, Cohen,
Grothendieck, Eilenberg and Mac Lane. Indeed, the significance of mathematical thought for Badiou's philosophy cannot be underestimated, and so we have devoted an entire section to examining philosophy's 'mathematical condition'. Some general remarks on this topic are thus also warranted here, by way of introduction.

**Philosophy's Mathematical Condition**

Mathematics has a dual function in Badiou's philosophy. On the one hand, mathematics plays the central role in the determination of Badiou's ontology. And on the other hand, mathematics has the privileged status of being the paradigm of science and of scientific enquiry in general, and is therefore instrumental in the determination of science as a truth procedure.

Science, including mathematics, proceeds by following experimental lines of enquiry that are established by new discoveries. What differentiates mathematics from science is that it is only in mathematics that a problem can be solved unequivocally. Badiou maintains that, insofar as thought formulates a problem, it is only in mathematics that it can or will definitively be solved, however long it takes. He notes that the history of mathematics is littered with examples of breakthroughs that resulted from proving or disproving conjectures first proposed by the Greeks more than two thousand years ago. What this means for Badiou is that mathematics does not acknowledge categories such as the unthinkable or the unthought, which he characterises as spiritualist because they exceed the resources of human reason, or those according to which we cannot resolve problems nor respond to questions, such as sceptical categories. Science in general, on the other hand, struggles in this respect, and is deemed by Badiou not to be reliable on this point. What is distinct about mathematics as a science is its abstract axiomatic foundation. And he argues that it is this foundation that provides the infrastructure for the characterisation of being qua being. According to Badiou, 'mathematics teaches us about what must be said concerning what is; and not about what it is permissible to say concerning what we think there is.'

Badiou considers Cantor's invention of set theory to be the archetypal event that allows mathematics to henceforth and retrospectively be understood as the science of being qua being. The much debated proposition from *Being and Event*, that 'mathematics is ontology' (BE 4), is a philosophical idea that is conditioned
The general ontology that Badiou develops in *Being and Event* draws upon a number of subsequent developments in mathematics that show felicity to this event, namely the Zermelo-Fraenkel axiomatisation of set theory and the open series of extensions of these axioms, including in particular those by Kurt Gödel, who introduced the notion of constructible sets, and Paul Cohen, who developed the method of forcing and generic sets. Tzuchien Tho examines the implications of this Cantorian event and the problems it poses for Badiou in Chapter 2.

The characterisation of mathematics as ontology has a direct bearing on how Badiou understands the nature of the relation between science and mathematics. For example, he considers physics to be 'the investigation of matter, the very concept of matter', and he argues that 'the more you decompose the concept of matter into its most elementary constituents, the more you move into a field of reality which can only be named or identified with increasingly complex mathematical operations' (E 130). Badiou endorses the fact that in nearly all scientific theories, the structures of physical systems are modelled or described in terms of mathematical structures. Mathematics is generally considered to be applied in this way when the scientist postulates that a given area of the physical world exemplifies a certain mathematical structure. However, Badiou goes further than this. Rather than there being an analogical relation between the structure of the physical world and the mathematical theory that allows it to be modelled or reconstructed, Badiou considers mathematics to actually articulate being itself. Mathematics doesn't just provide a description, representation or interpretation of being. Mathematics itself is what can be thought of being simpliciter. It is for this reason that Badiou maintains that axiomatic set theory is the science of being as pure multiplicity, or of 'the presentation of presentation' (BE 27), that is, of the presentation of what is presented in a situation. What this means is that Badiou figures mathematics itself as that which guarantees the access of the natural sciences to presented reality.

With the proposition 'mathematics is ontology', Badiou consigns the task of ontology to mathematics, and in so doing liberates philosophy from the burden of the Heideggerian question of being. However, this doesn't liberate philosophy completely from dealing with the problems associated with the Seinsfrage, but rather recasts the role of philosophy in this respect from its historical preoccupation with ontology to the task of metaontology. Sean
Bowden looks at some of the dialectical implications of this shift from ontology to metaontology in Chapter 3, and Simon Duffy examines the importance of Plato to Badiou for making this move in Chapter 4. One of the tasks of philosophy as metaontology is to articulate the relation to being that is displayed by the truth procedures operating in the different generic procedures. Because mathematics, as the basis of science, itself belongs to one of these four generic procedures, philosophy must remain attentive to those truth procedures in mathematics that follow experimental lines of enquiry and that continue to develop new articulations of the presentation of being qua being. This line of research is evident in a number of Badiou’s subsequent texts, including *Numbers and Number*, where Badiou draws upon the development of surreal numbers to extend the universe of ordinals up to the reals, and in *Logics of Worlds*, where Badiou attempts to address his dependence on set theory in *Being and Event* by deploying a category-theoretic presentation of set theory, namely topos theory. Yet just how successful Badiou is in respecting the implications of the experimental lines of enquiry that mathematics opens up for the presentation of being qua being remains an open question.

Category theory is the programme in mathematics that has established itself as an alternative power of unification in mathematics that challenges the dominant role set theory has traditionally played in this respect. Although category theory does appear to be the historical continuation of set theory, the concept of ‘categorisation’ is not a technical refinement of the concept of set but rather represents a profound conceptual change in mathematics. Category theory allows you to work on mathematical structures without the need to first reduce them to sets. Despite this, Badiou’s deployment of category theory in *Logics of Worlds* restricts itself to topos theory, which is the category-theoretic presentation of set theory. This narrow deployment of category theory betrays Badiou’s work as being both overly bound to its early set-theoretical underpinnings, and as being quite limited in its exploration of the full richness of what category theory has to offer for the presentation of being qua being. The extent to which this can be understood to pose problems for Badiou’s work is explored by Anindya Bhattacharyya in Chapter 5.

The Cantorian event, the dialectic, Plato and Category theory – these are the issues that orient the papers on Badiou and mathematics in the first section of this volume.
Badiou: Critical Connections

As noted at the outset, this volume is divided into three sections: 'Philosophy’s Mathematical Condition', 'Philosophical Notions and Orientations' and 'Philosophical Figures'. Each section, in turn, is comprised of four chapters.

In the first group of chapters, in his piece 'What Is Post-Cantorian Thought? Transfinitude and the Conditions of Philosophy', Tzuchien Tho begins by examining the role of Cantor in Badiou's thought. Tho provides an account of what would constitute a post-Cantorian context of thought, and of how Badiou's work can be understood to be post-Cantorian. On the one hand, Cantor's development of the transfinite for mathematically fixing the coordinates of the concept of the infinite represents a significant development in the history of mathematics. On the other hand, however, this work has far-reaching ontological implications. Through Cantor's provision of a transfinite multiplicity, the metaphysical reliance on unity to render the multiplicity of being intelligible and consistent could be overcome with a discourse on multiplicity that is uncoupled from a horizon of unity and totality. The formal sense of the infinite derived from the mathematical legacy of Cantor's work represents a definitive shift from the dialectic between the one and the multiple. What is at stake in this problematic is the very basis of Badiou's mathematical ontology, and Tho's work provides a clear account of the contours of this problematic and of how Badiou negotiates them.

Sean Bowden's chapter, entitled 'The Set-Theoretical Nature of Badiou's Ontology and Lautman's Dialectic of Problematic Ideas', reconstructs the nature of Badiou's 'debt' to the French philosopher of mathematics, Albert Lautman – a debt to which Badiou alludes in Being and Event but never explains in any detail. Bowden shows that Badiou's assertion that set theory is ontology depends upon what Lautman would call a 'dialectic of problematic Ideas' – a line of thought which runs counter to more standard accounts of Badiou's metaontology which rather focus on the importance of the 'doctrine of conditions'. Following the work of Lautman, Bowden argues that Badiou's set-theory ontology is grounded insofar as it resolves a series of 'ontological problems' which can be expressed in the form of 'dialectical couples' such as the one and the multiple, Nature as poem and Nature as Idea, the finite and the infinite, and the continuous and the discrete. Bowden
demonstrates how the Zermelo-Fraenkel axioms (which are, for Badiou, the 'laws of being') together resolve this series of opposed notions. In concluding, Bowden also indicates some of the potential problems of Badiou's Lautmanian heritage, including the idea that Badiou is left without a unified conception of being, since being is said in one way for the ontological situation in its dependence on a prior dialectic of problematic Ideas, and in another way for what the ontological situation, so determined, can say of situational being in general.

In ‘Badiou’s Platonism: The Mathematical Ideas of Post-Cantorian Set Theory’, Simon Duffy examines the importance of Plato to the mathematical basis of Badiou’s ontology, and how Plato is instrumental in determining how Badiou positions his philosophy in relation to those approaches to the philosophy of mathematics that endorse an orthodox Platonic realism. Badiou’s Platonism bears little resemblance to this orthodoxy. Like Plato, Badiou insists on the primacy of the eternal and immutable abstraction of the mathematico-ontological Idea. However, Badiou’s reconstructed Platonism champions the mathematics of post-Cantorian set theory, which itself affirms the irreducible multiplicity of being. In effect, Badiou reorients mathematical Platonism from an epistemological to an ontological problematic, a move that relies on the plausibility of rejecting the empiricist ontology underlying orthodox mathematical Platonism. To draw a connection between these two approaches to Platonism and to determine what sets them radically apart, Duffy focuses on the use that they each make of model theory to further their respective arguments.

Rounding out this section, Anindya Bhattacharyya investigates what is at stake for Badiou’s ontology in the shift from set theory, in Being and Event, to the theory of categories and topoi in Logics of Worlds. ‘Sets, Categories and Topoi: Approaches to Ontology in Badiou’s Later Work’ shows that while Badiou remains committed to the declaration that ‘mathematics is ontology’, the contrast between set-theoretical and categorical ‘foundations’ of mathematics is a stark one. The strategy that Badiou adopts to bridge the gap between sets and categories is to make use of topoi, which are the categorical generalisation of sets. However, this still leaves Badiou’s ontology indirectly anchored in the ‘foundational’ ontological questions presented in set theory. Bhattacharyya suggests that Badiou’s ontology can be radicalised further by stripping
it of its residual attachment to classical set theory, and that this will allow one to maintain Badiou’s subordination of philosophy to its mathematical condition while radically transforming the content of the mathematical ontology that condition prescribes.

The following section, ‘Philosophical Notions and Orientations’, commences with Ed Pluth’s chapter, ‘The Black Sheep of Materialism: The Theory of the Subject’. Pluth argues that there are multiple senses of materialism at work in Badiou’s philosophy, only some of which are justified. The sense of materialism crucial to Badiou’s later work is that materialism equalises or levels down what might otherwise be construed as distinct regions and orders of being. At first glance this would appear to expose Badiou to the criticism of being a monist, and Pluth endorses this criticism by arguing that Badiou’s attempt to use matter as a name for being in *Theory of the Subject* represents a monistic stumbling block for his position at the time. However, Pluth also finds within the same text a more promising line of reasoning, according to which the primary category of a materialism need not be matter but rather the ‘conceptual black sheep’ of materialism, namely the subject itself. Pluth provides an account of the theory of the subject as presented in the *Theory of the Subject*, and of why Badiou feels that a theory of the subject is required for the development of an adequate materialist philosophy. In doing so, Pluth mounts a defence of what some consider to be the overly religious character of some of the language that Badiou uses to thematise the subject and its relation to truth.

James Williams’ contribution explores and then critiques Badiou’s approach to time in both *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*. In ‘A Critique of Alain Badiou’s Denial of Time in his Philosophy of Events’, Williams objects to the account of time bound up with Badiou’s idea of fidelity to eternal truths. For Williams, eternal truths are fictions, and the world’s only character is that of becoming. So it follows that, for him, subjective commitment to eternal truths entails a threefold denial of: the passing quality of truths, the passing quality of the world and worldly things, and ordinary and valuable modes of temporal existence bound up with this world of becoming. In the sacrifice of becoming to eternal truths, Williams thus sees a potential for violence – if not direct and necessary violence, then at least a ‘violence of consequences’. Badiou’s eternal truths are potentially, for Williams, ‘lethal fictions’.
In ‘Doing Without Ontology: A Quinean Pragmatist Approach to Badiou’, Talia Morag identifies two mutually exclusive roles that set theory plays in Badiou’s philosophy. One that is straightforwardly metaphysical is concerned with the question of the creation of new kinds of objects. The other Morag identifies as implicitly pragmatic and is related to questions about what kinds of objects there are. By pursuing a discussion of the latter in relation to the texts *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*, Morag aims to demonstrate on the one hand that Badiou can contribute to contemporary neo-pragmatism, insofar as the new Badiouian picture of reality can actually give content to contemporary pragmatist theses about the nature of sets. On the other hand, Morag aims to show that, from a pragmatic point of view, that is if we begin our ontological enquiry not with mathematics but instead with our explanatory practices, then Badiou’s philosophy can be released from what she characterises as its inflated ontology.

Finally, Nina Power’s contribution to this volume, ‘Towards a New Political Subject? Badiou Between Marx and Althusser’, brings to light a set of tensions which define Badiou’s ongoing work on the political subject. Following Power, Badiou occupies a narrow theoretical ground between Communism and Marxism, between Althusserian anti-humanism and the humanism of the early Marx, between an acknowledgement of the historically unique potential in the current state of global capital and an affirmation of transhistorical communist invariants, and between a commitment to a purely ‘generic humanity’ and the necessity of naming the political subject for practical purposes. Power traces the difficult line that Badiou feels himself forced to tread with regard to the political subject. On the one hand, she shows how Badiou’s Communism dehistoricises Marxism using, in part, Althusser’s critique of historical materialism and associated critique of the subject as a mere effect of ideology. But on the other hand, Power argues that Badiou, contra Althusser, never relinquishes a more substantive notion of the subject as ‘generic humanity’. The question remains, however, as to how we are to think this political subject in concrete terms when its concept has been emptied of all content.

The third and final section of the collection examines Badiou’s relation to a number of philosophical figures who have been central to the elaboration of Badiou’s oeuvre. Justin Clemens’ and Adam J. Bartlett’s article tracks Badiou’s complex engage-
ment with Lacan from *Theory of the Subject* through to *Logics of Worlds*, showing that having worked through Lacan's particular brand of 'anti-philosophy' was crucial for Badiou. They explicate a number of decisive instances where Badiou's thought was informed as much by its proximity to Lacan's as by the effort to overcome it in specifically philosophical directions. The issues they address include: the question of the subject and its relationship to the articulation of truth; the doctrine of philosophy's extra-philosophical 'conditions'; philosophy's relation to 'anti-philosophy' as well as to sophistry; the question of 'the localisation of the void'; the relationship between the matheme and love; and the formal theory of the body developed in *Logics of Worlds*. In each of these cases, Clemens and Bartlett show how Badiou engages with Lacan in a nuanced and sympathetic way while also revealing certain impasses in his thought – impasses whose resolution take Badiou beyond Lacan without simple repudiation.

Following on from this, in 'Badiou and Sartre: Freedom, from Imagination to Chance', Brian A. Smith examines the importance of Sartre for the formation of Badiou's thought. As Smith shows, Badiou remains faithful to Sartre as a philosopher of decision, sharing his commitment to the relationship between freedom and decision. At the same time, however, it is demonstrated how Badiou, in his attempt to re-found the political subject, pushes beyond the Sartrean conception of the subject or for-itself as the substantial ontological ground of change and free action. For Badiou, change and freedom – and indeed the subject itself – rather depend upon something which is in excess of given, ontologically stable situations, namely the event. Smith traces the contours of Badiou's explicit and implicit engagement with Sartre from *Theory of the Subject* through to *Being and Event*, examining in detail Sartre's varying accounts of freedom, Badiou's critique of Sartre's notion of the group, the use Badiou makes of Lacan to get beyond Sartre in *Theory of the Subject*, and the final rigorous formulation of the relationship, to be found in *Being and Event*, between the situation, the event, decision, freedom, the subject and group action.

In 'Badiou's Relation to Heidegger in *Theory of the Subject*', Graham Harman examines Badiou's admiration of Heidegger as one of the central thinkers of our time in connection with his early work, *Theory of the Subject*. Harman investigates the points of congruence and tension between these two thinkers,
specifically the extent to which Badiou can be said draw upon the main Heideggerian thesis of the ontological difference, and the adequacy of this engagement. As to whether Badiou’s interpretation of the ontological difference in Heidegger is correct, Harman concludes that despite being unorthodox, Badiou’s instincts are basically correct. Heidegger emerges as a key ally in Badiou’s deviation from both Hegel and Lacan, and a key figure for the subsequent developments in Badiou’s thought.

Finally, in ‘One Divides into Two: Badiou’s Critique of Deleuze’, Jon Roffe sheds new light on Badiou’s provocative reading of Deleuze in *The Clamor of Being*. Contrary to many of the responses to this work, both positive and negative, Roffe points out a number of facts which have not previously been discussed. Firstly, *The Clamor of Being*’s major claim – that Deleuze is a philosopher of the One – is not so much intended to be a criticism of Deleuze as to present a point of contrast between the two philosophers. Secondly, the only substantial critical point that Badiou pursues in *The Clamor of Being* bears on Deleuze’s formulation of the relation between the virtual and the actual. In short, Badiou reads Deleuze as introducing an indefensible notion of a ‘virtual image’ in order to cover over a flaw in his account of the virtual-actual relationship in *Difference and Repetition*. As Roffe shows, however, Badiou’s reading of Deleuze on this point fails to take into consideration the mathematical, Kantian and Maimonian account of the virtual-actual relationship to be found in *Difference and Repetition*. Furthermore, Badiou reconstructs the concept of the ‘virtual image’ in *Difference and Repetition* with reference to Deleuze’s discussion of the ‘virtual image’ in the much later text, *The Time Image*. As Roffe demonstrates, however, what is named by the term ‘virtual image’ in each of these works is very different, meaning that Badiou’s main critique of Deleuze in *The Clamor of Being* ultimately fails.

Overall, what emerges from these essays is a critical snapshot of Badiou’s relationship to, impact on and importance for the discipline of philosophy. Contrary to the popular image of Badiou as a radical and even iconoclastic figure, he appears here as a thinker engaged, whether directly or indirectly, with some of philosophy’s most central and time-honoured figures and concerns. It is hoped that the many critical lines of enquiry opened up by the studies comprising this volume can be pursued more fully elsewhere, and to productive effect, to the benefit not only of Badiou studies, but also philosophy’s open future.
Notes

1. See also on this point, Oliver Feltham's 'Translator's Preface' to *Being and Event*, where he writes that, for Badiou, 'philosophy must remain mobile by circulating between a plurality of its conditions and its own history' (BE xix).

2. For an excellent discussion of this point, see Oliver Feltham's entry, 'Philosophy', in A. J. Bartlett and Justin Clemens (eds), *Alain Badiou: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2010), pp. 22–3.
