

The Insubordinate Multiple: A Critique of Badiou's Deleuze

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L'histoire des hommes est la longue succession des synonymes d'un même vocable.

Y contredire est un devoir.

René Char

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis.

Jonathan Roffe

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Abstract

The published work of Alain Badiou includes a varied and fascinating series of engagements with that of Gilles Deleuze. These engagements run from outright polemic ('Le flux et le parti: dans le marges de *l'Anti-Oedipe*') to assiduous summaries and contrasts ('L'événement selon Deleuze'), but are capped by the 1997 *Deleuze. Le clameur de l'être*. This latter text presents a sweeping characterisation of Deleuze's project as committed to thinking the fundamental unity of being as such, in contrast not just with the orthodox reading of Deleuze, but also many of Deleuze's own explicit statements to the contrary, in which he presents himself as a philosopher devoted to the theme of multiplicity.

This thesis presents the argument that Badiou's reading of Deleuze, though striking, is fundamentally misplaced. It does so by examining in close detail Badiou's arguments for this reading, bringing it into contact with the relevant detail of Deleuze's own work, in particular his *magnum opus Difference and Repetition*. Further – and in accordance with Badiou's own demand – this critical examination situates Badiou's account of Deleuze in the context of his work at the time of this crucial engagement, namely *Being and Event*. *In nuce*, the argument presented here is that Deleuze is indeed a philosopher of difference, that his characteristic claims about the nature of being, the virtual and the event do not commit him to a philosophy of the One as Badiou claims. *The Clamor of Being*, however provocative, cannot stand as a justified reading of the Deleuzian corpus.

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