

**ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**TOWARDS THE ETHICS OF MARXISM: INVESTIGATION OF THE
PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MARX, LACAN AND BADIOU**

M.A. THESIS

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Department of Political Studies

Political Studies Programme

Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Aydan TURANLI

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**MARKSİZMİN ETİĞİNE DOĞRU: MARX, LACAN VE BADIOU
ARASINDAKİ FELSEFİ İLİŞKİNİN İNCELENMESİ**

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To the Communards of 1871

FOREWORD

This thesis is written for a contribution to Marxist theory. In this thesis the relation between Marxism and ethics handled. For answering certain questions about ethics and Marxism, we need to determine the subject understanding of Marxism. Classical Marxism has its own subject understanding but in this thesis I am offering to refer Jacques Lacan and Alain Badiou for a new definition of subject. Many parts of the thesis focus on the concept of historical change. So this study can be seen as prestudy for a further investigation which focuses on understanding how historical changes occur.

Writing this thesis took too much time. That's why I want to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Aydan Turanlı for her patience and precious contributions. I should also emphasize that by her guidance I could understand the relation between philosophy of language and subjectivity. Before, I was trying to grasp subjectivity within Marxist context. But after taking her courses and guidance I think I improved my understanding about subjectivity as it can be seen in the thesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
FOREWORD	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiviii
SUMMARY	xv
ÖZET	xvii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ETHICS AND MARXISM	3
2.1 Consequentialism / Utilitarianism and Deontology	3
2.1.1 Consequentialism / utilitarianism	3
2.1.2 Deontology	7
2.1.3 Applied ethics	9
2.2 Human Nature and Estrangement / Alienation	11
2.2.1 Estrangement / alienation	11
2.2.2 Human nature	15
3. PSYCHOANALYSIS, LACAN AND MARXISM	25
3.1 Lacan's Psychoanalysis and Basic Concepts	29
3.2 Marxism and Lacanian Psychoanalysis	38
3.2.1 Social abstractions based on nothing	39
3.2.2 How ideology operates and the advent of subject	43
4. BADIOU'S PSYCHOANALYTIC ETHICS AND MARXISM	51
4.1 Event and the Subject of Badiou	51
4.2 Ethical Action, Truth and the Ethics of Alain Badiou	62
4.2.1 Ethical action of the immortal	62
4.2.2 Ethics of Badiou	68
5. CONCLUSION	77
REFERENCES	81
CURRICULUM VITAE	85

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 3.1 : Lacan's tree orders.....	35
Figure 3.2 : The One's place	36
Figure 3.3 : Plentitude and The Lack.....	36
Figure 4.1 : The performative action	52
Figure 4.2 : Two Procesuss'.....	74

TOWARDS THE ETHICS OF MARXISM: INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MARX, LACAN AND BADIOU

SUMMARY

Marxism and ethics generally thought as two distinct realms. As it is known, Marxism emphasizes the limitation of subject by the historical and economical boundaries. This means subject cannot freely chose this way or that way. Rather she can give decisions in accordance with the conditions which are given by the historical context. Moreover it is known that Marxism emphasizes that the superstructure is –in the final analysis- determined by the economic structure. This means that any cultural habit, any moral value and so on are determined by the economic conditions. This is a very rough assessment but we can say that –for instance- in capitalist society any ethical norm which is not compatible with capitalism cannot be prevailing norm. In this sense Marxists, usually find discussing about ethics unnecessary.

But if we investigate the relation between historical changes and subjective intervention, I think that we can reach to ethics of Marxism. If we check Marx's own studies, we see that he gives importance to specific moments such as Commune of Paris. This is important because such moments cannot be defined by referring to the existing norms and values. Namely, such authentic moments creates its own norms. Thus we can determine ethics for the change of the existing norms with the new ones. Namely we cannot determine any universal ethics but we can define ethics of Marxism which focuses on changing the world.

Then it seems plausible to apply Lacanian psychoanalysis and the ethics of Alain Badiou. Lacan's understanding of subject may provide us a subject which is included in the structure while cannot be totally determined by the structure. That is to say Lacan can help us while defining a subject which is located on the inefficiency of the structure.

After defining such a subject we can refer to Badiou's ethics. His concepts such as Event, Truth and Immortal Subject can provide us a compatible theory for ethics of Marxism. As we will discuss in the thesis, these concepts can explicate the specific moments which totally change existing norms and prevailing ethical approaches. Then we can find some ethical criteria for the process of change. Namely we can create an ethics which fallows Marx's famous 11th thesis.

MARKSİZMİN ETİĞİNE DOĞRU: MARX, LACAN VE BADIOU ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu yüksek lisans tezinde iki temel soru ele alınacaktır. İlk olarak ‘Marksizm’de felsefi anlamda etik bir boyut söz konusu mudur?’ sorusuna yanıt aranacaktır. Ele alınacak diğer soru ise ‘Eğer ki Marksizm’de etik bir boyut mevcut ise Alain Badiou’nun etiği Marksizm dahilinde midir?’ sorusudur. Söz konusu etik olduğunda Marksist teori genellikle zayıf olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu durumun makul sebepleri olmakla birlikte eğer araştırma sonucunda Marksizm ve Badiou’nun etiği arasında paralellikler bulunabilirse; Marksizm için bir etik inşasına katkıda bulunulmuş olacaktır. Yani bu araştırmanın amacı Marksizm için bir etik yaklaşım yaratılmasına katkı sunmaktır. Marksist etik yerine Marksizm’in etiği tabirinin seçilmesinin elbette ki bir anlamı vardır. Bu tabir Marksist düşünceye uygun bir biçimde, tüm zamanlar ve mekanlar için geçerli bir etik teorinin yerine alana ve döneme bağlı bir etiğin mümkün olabileceğinden hareket ile Badiou’nun teorisinden esinlenerek seçilmiştir.

Çalışma üç ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci ana bölümde ana hatları ile Marksizm ve etik ilişkisi ele alınmıştır. Böylesi bir ilişkinin ele alınabilmesi için belirli bazı sorulara yanıt aranmıştır. Örneğin etiğin söz konusu olabilmesi için öznel bir karar verme şansının bulunması gerekir. Marksizm insanı özne olarak ele alır ancak bu özne bilindiği gibi tarihsel ve ekonomik yapının sunduğu imkanlar uyarınca öznedir. Yani, Marx insanın toplumsal altyapısal koşullar tarafından sınırlandırıldığını öne sürerken özne tarifine de bir kısıtlama getirmiştir. Dolayısı ile Marx her ne kadar başlarda insanı aydınlanmanın ve hümanizmin değerlendirdiği biçimde yani rasyonel kararlar verebilen -vermesi gereken- bir bütünlük olarak tarif etmişse de sonraları tarihsel ve ekonomik sınırlamanın önemini ortaya koymuştur. Çok erken dönemleri -1844 öncesi- geride bıraktıktan sonra Marx tutarlı bir biçimde tarihsel yapı tarafından belirlenen ve onu belirleyen bir uğrak olarak özne anlayışına ulaşmıştır. Ancak bu yaklaşım her ne kadar insanı tarihsel/ekonomik belirlenimci ve iradeci yaklaşımlar arasındaki bir boşluğa, bir geçiş bölgesine yerleştirmiş olsa da tezde de gösterileceği üzere geliştirilmesi gereken bir insan kavrayışıdır.

Tarihsel ve ekonomik yapının insanı sınırlandırması düşünüldüğünde Marksizm’in klasik anlamda bir etik teori geliştirmesi beklenemez. Elbette ki örneğin feodalizmin ekonomik bir yapı olarak kendisine uygun olmayan üst yapısal değerleri ortaya çıkartmaması gerekir. Yani feodalizmde kendisine uygun bir kültür, insan anlayışı, gelenekler bütünü ve de tabi ki etik bulunacaktır. Aynı etiğin kapitalizmde de geçerli olması beklenemez. Hele ki özel mülkiyetin hakim olduğu bir toplum ile üretim araçlarının ortaklaşa mülkiyetine dayanan bir toplumun etik yaklaşımlarının aynı temel ilkelere dayanması mümkün değildir. Şöyle ki kapitalizm şartlarındaki insanlık Marx’ın türsel varlık dediği; yaşamını, toplumunu ve doğayı, hayatının nesnesi haline getiren, kendisini gerçekleştirebilen varlık olmaktan uzaktır. Çünkü ekonomik yapı insanı insanın en otantik parçasından yani emeğinden kopartmaktadır. Yani insan emeği aracılığı ile kendisini gerçekleştirecekken, kapitalist özel mülkiyet sistemi nedeni ile emeğinden kopartılmış ve tabiri caizse organik bir makineye dönüştürülmüştür. Kapitalizm farklı boyutları ile yabacılaşmaya neden olmuştur. Dolayısı ile Marx için kapitalizm yabancılaşmış insan ilişkilerinden mütevellit bir toplumdur. Bu da elbette bize etiğin ister deontolojik olsun ister sonuççu ya da

faıdacı olsun isterse de uygulama alanında etik olsun, yabancılaşmış bir toplumda bir anlam ifade etmeyeceğine işaret eder.

Diğer taraftan eğer illa ki Marksizm'in etiğı dair bir değerdendirmesini yapmak gerekirse, etiğın mümkün olabileceğı bir toplumun asgari olarak iki şartı yerine getirmesi gerekir. İnsanlar arasındaki yabancılaşmış ilişkilerin ortadan kalkması, yani üretim araçları üzerinde toplumsal mülkiyetin hakim olması anlamında dayanışma etik bir toplumun ilk şartıdır. Tıpkı bir madalyonun iki yüzü gibi bu şartın tamamlayıcısı özgürlüktür. Yani insanların özgürce toplumlarının, emeklerinin kaderini belirlemeleri anlamında özgürlük ikinci asgari şarttır. Tabi bu iki şart Marx'ın eserlerinde etik şartlar olarak aranırsa bulunamaz. Bunlar daha ziyade Marx'ın türsel varlık tanımından ve özellikle Paris Komünü'ne verdiği özel önemi göz önünde bulundurarak, dolaylı olarak ortaya çıkartabileceğimiz şartlardır. Özellikle Paris Komünü'nün doğrudan demokrasi ve kolektif mülkiyet ilkeleri üzerine inşa olduğu ve Komün'ün komünist toplumun bir nüvesi olduğu düşünülürse, Marx'ın kendi eserlerinden bu iki değeri komünist topluma dair oldukları için etik değerler olarak değerdendirebileceğini öne sürebiliriz.

Bu yaklaşımda Marx bahsettiğim gibi her ne kadar insan üzerindeki yapısal sınırlandırmayı fark etmiş olsa da tarih Marx'ın eserlerinde çok karşılaşmadığımız farklı sorular somamızı gerekli kılmıştır. Şöyle ki, modern sanayi toplumlarında insanlar ve esas olarak da proletarya Marx'ın öngördüğü şekilde komünizme doğru ilerlememiştir. Sınıflı toplumu yıkıp özel mülkiyet düzenine son verip kendi hayat hikâyelerinin yazarları olmak yerine topyekûn bir altüst oluşa kalkışmaktan uzak durmuşlardır. İşte tam bu noktada insanı ele alırken Marksist yaklaşımı zenginleştirme ihtiyacı doğmuştur. Üstyapı kurumları olarak kültürel gelenekler, eğitim, ahlak ideoloji vb. anlaşılan altyapısal çelişkilerin üzerine dahi kurulu olsa devrimci bir sürecin ortaya çıkmasına engel olmaktadır.

İşte bu noktada Lacan'ın psikanalitik yaklaşımı insanı ele almada kanımca Marksizm için uygundur. Diğer taraftan Badiou'nun etiğini tartışabilmemiz için de öncelikle Lacancı psikanalizin Marksizm ile uyumlu olup olmadığına bakılması gerekir. Çünkü Badiou'nun etiğı Lacan'dan yoğun bir biçimde etkilenmiştir. Dolayısı ile Lacancı psikanaliz hem insanı ele almada hem de Badiou etiğı ile köprü kurmada bu tez için önemli bir konumdadır.

Lacancı psikanalizi önemli kılan özellikle onun dile verdiği önemdir. Dilin insan için kurucu bir pozisyonu vardır. Dolayısı ile Marx insanı tarihsel yapısal kontekstin içine yerleştirirken, Lacan bu yapısal konteksti dil olarak belirlemiştir. Dil karşısında öznenin bilinçdışı da olsa bir özerkliği vardır. Tıpkı Marx gibi Lacan da insanı yapının içerisinde, yapının sağladığı ufkun ötesine normalde geçemeyecek bir şekilde yerleştirmiştir. Tabi ki 'normalde' bu yapının ona sağladıklarından daha farklısını düşünemeyen onun dışına çıkamayan özne, anormal anlarda yani semptom anlarında tüm yapıyı değiştirebilecek edimlerde bulunur. Semptom anında tüm yapı baştan aşağıya değişir. Bu yaklaşım da bize herhalde yapısal çelişkiye sahip bir ekonomik düzenin bizzat çelişkinin bir ürünü olan özne tarafından tamamen bir yenisi ile değiştirilmesini hatırlatacaktır. Yani Marksist dille söylersek proletarya tarihsel özne olarak kapitalist semptom olarak tanımlayabileceğimiz sınıf çelişkisini tüm düzeni değiştirmek sureti ile ortadan kaldıracak öznedir. Bu benzerliklerin de ötesinde insanın dil ile ilişkisinden yola çıkılarak toplumsal bir devrimin aynı zamanda anlam dünyasının da değişmesine denk gelmesi gerektiğini iddia edebiliriz. Yani öyle spesifik anlar vardır ki, öyle değişim anları vardır ki bu anlarda insanın Wittgenstein'cı bir tabirle yaşam formu değişir.

İşte böylesi bir semptom anının düşünsel boyutta değişime yol açması, yeni bir sembolik düzen oluşturmaya, Lacan'dan hareketle Badiou'nun tanımladığı Olay ve Hakikat kavramlarına tekabül eder. Bu iki kavram, tez açısından son derece önemlidir. Badiou'nun Olay ve Hakikat kavramları öncelikle sembolik yapının yani anlam dünyamızı oluşturan yapının değişmesi anlamına gelir. Bu sembolik yapıya içsel bir çelişkiden kaynaklanan bir değişimdir. Mevcut bilgi sistemi, mevcut ansiklopedi bir yenisi ile Lacancı tabirle fantezinin kat edilmesi aracılığı ile değişir. Bu değişimi Lacancı psikanalizin de özneyi konumlandığı şekilde konumlandırmalıyız ki etik edimin sıradan bir edimden farkını görebilelim. Tezde önereceğim üzere etik edim sembolik düzene dik konumlandırılacak bir eksen etrafında oluşur. Yani tıpkı bir çarşafın herhangi bir noktasından burulduğunda tüm çarşaf yüzeyinin değişmesi gibi etik edim de simgesel anlam dünyasında burkulma etkisi yapan ve onu topyekun değiştiren, simgesel düzene dahil olamayacak bir eksen çevresinde oluşur. Bu eksene Austin'den hareketle performatif eksen adını verebiliriz.

İşte Badiou'nun etiği performatif eksen etrafında ortaya çıkan yeni Hakikate sadık kalmak üzerine kurulu bir felsefedir. Bunu kısa bir örnek ile açıklayalım; Copernicus Güneş merkezli sistemi ile kuşku yok ki döneminin Dünya merkezli anlayışını sarsmıştır. Onun düşüncelerinin bir anda tüm insanlar tarafından kabul gördüğünü düşünmek saçma olur. Her Hakikat gibi insanların en temel doğrularını kökten değiştirmek bir süreç meselesidir. Verili bilgi düzenine karşı Copernicus'un geliştirdiği sistem ilk olarak bir Olaydır. Yani mevcut ansiklopedinin onu tanımlaması mümkün değildir. Bu Olay yine Badiou'cu bir kavram olan Ölümsüz Özne tarafından benimsendiğinde Olay artık bir Hakikate dönüşür. Yani Copernicus'un düşüncelerinin döneminde taraftar toplamalı ve Olayı Hakikate çevirmesi gerekir. Ölümsüz Öznenin olmaması Olayın kısa sürede son bulmasına sebep olur. Örneğin Dünya'nın küresel olduğu eski Yunanda da bilinmekteydi hatta Dünyanın çapı Eratosthenes tarafından neredeyse tam olarak hesaplanmıştı. Bu bir Olay olsa dahi Ölümsüz Öznenin bu Olayı sahiplenmemesi Dünya'nın yüzyıllar boyunca düz sanılmasına sebep oldu. Dolayısı ile etik edim Hakikat'e sahip çıkmak yani ansiklopedinin değişmesine sebep olmaktır.

Bu yaklaşım dikkat edileceği üzere Marksizm'e uygundur. 11.tezde Marx'ın bahsettiği gibi esas olan dünyayı değiştirmekse, değişimi savunmak etik edim olmalıdır. Tabi ki her değişim topyekun bir değişim değildir. Mesela Nazi hareketi bir Olay'a benzese de yapısal bir çelişkiye tekabül etmediği için yalnızca bir simülarktır. Öyleyse değişim yukarıda da bahsedildiği gibi kurucu bir çelişkiden, kapitalizm şartlarında sınıfsal çelişkiden kaynaklanmalıdır ki performatif bir edim olarak tüm anlam dünyamızı değiştirsin

Yapısal bir çelişkinin çözümlenışı ve yeni bir düzenin kuruluşu olarak etik edim için Ölümsüz Öznenin Hakikate olan bağlılığının gerektiğinden bahsettik. Peki bu önerme bu tez açısından ne anlama gelmektedir? Marksizm dünyaya sınıfsal çelişki penceresinden bakar. Hatta tarih Marx'a göre sınıf savaşları tarihidir. Marx'ın yaklaşımı salt bir iktisat sistemi değildir; daha ziyade tezde de sıklıkla bahsedileceği üzere bir özgürleşme felsefesidir. Yani Marx'ın yaklaşımı siyasi ve bilimsel bir Olay'a tekabül eder. Klasik yaklaşımlardan ve burjuva reel-politikten son derece farklıdır. Bu anlamda etik edim bu Olaya sadık kalmaktır. Yani Marksist yöntemin kendisi bilimsel anlamda bir Olaydır, ona sadık kalınması Badiou'cu anlamda Hakikatin doğmasına neden olur. Diğer taraftan proletaryanın (Ölümsüz Özne) sınıfsal çelişki dolayısı ile sergilediği tarihsel eylemleri hatırlaması ve Paris Komünü gibi Olaylara sadık kalması da siyasi anlamda etik bir edimdir ve siyasi bir Hakikatin

doğmasına neden olur. Öyleyse Marksizm ve etik ilişkisi hakkında söyleyebileceğimiz en genel söz Lukàcs'ın da belirttiği gibi; sınıf bilincinin Marksizm'in ve proletaryanın etiği olduğudur.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, two main questions will be investigated. The first question is whether Marxism has an ethical dimension. If it is possible to observe ethical inclinations within Marxist theory, the second question will be whether Alain Badiou's Ethics is compatible with ethical dimensions of Marxist theory. Marxist theory is often found weak in terms of ethics, as will be explained below. If the connections, and parallel approaches between Marxism and Badiou's Ethics can be revealed in this thesis, an articulation of the ethical theory of Marxism can be accomplished. In this sense the target of this thesis will be to contribute to the foundation of an ethics of Marxism.

There are three main parts in the thesis. In the second chapter ethical approaches in Marxist literature will be discussed. Here some key properties or concepts from Marxist theory will be laid out. I will compare Marx's theory with ethical approaches such as deontology, consequentialism and applied ethics. These investigations will help us later for explaining Badiou's ethics. Then in an intermediate section, Lacanian theory will be explained and discussed. This intermediate section will help to explain Badiou's ethics since he uses Lacan's psychoanalytic theory as the foundation for his ethics. In the same section a related and important question will be also investigated: is it helpful to use Lacan's psychoanalysis for Marxist theory? Are there any points of Lacanian psychoanalysis that shed light on Marxism? Finally, in the third section, Alain Badiou's ethics will be discussed. In this section it will be showed how Badiou enhances his theory. I will focus on the concepts of Event, Truth and Immortal Subject of Alain Badiou. Explanations of his theory and a discussion of whether Badiou's ethics is compatible with Marxism, will be brought together. In this way we can have a more fruitful discussion, since the third section will serve as a conclusion that links Marxism and Badiou's theory using Badiou's psychoanalytic ethics.

2. ETHICS AND MARXISM

2.1 Consequentialism / Utilitarianism, Deontology, Applied Ethics

First we have to determine what we mean by ethics. In part 2.1, we will contrast Marx's position with consequentialism/utilitarianism and deontology. Later I will briefly mention some of Marx's objections to some terms related to ethics, such as human rights, liberty etc. I will assert that these philosophical categories are not compatible with Marxist theory.

In part 2.2, I will handle Marx's understanding of subject alienation/estrangement. I will also discuss the relation between historical structures and subjects. If we want to explore Marxist ethical tendencies we need to explore the subject of Marx. Only after this exploration may we begin to discuss if there are ethical inclinations in Marxist theory.

2.1.1 Consequentialism / utilitarianism

We can discuss consequentialism and utilitarianism together because utilitarianism can be defined as a form of consequentialism. Consequentialism is "the view that the merit of an action is determined by its consequences, and not, for example, by the motive that compels it, or the character from which it springs" (Scruton, 2008). This approach tells us to act according to the ends of the action. In a special condition, if in the end, we gain a kind of ethical intrinsic value like "happiness" or "pleasure", this becomes utilitarianism. On the other hand at the end of action we may gain different values rather than intrinsic ethical values, like wealth or liberty. And this may be called ordinary consequentialism. Under these conditions any kind of consequentialism orders us to act in all circumstances for reaching and increasing the end value.

The question is whether we can consider Marxist theory as consequentialist. One may assert that Marxism targets the happiness of people with communism. Similarly, if one believes that communism brings just distribution of wealth, freedom etc., it

becomes an ethically correct action to have a revolution and to move towards communism. However, Marxism cannot be reduced to any kind of consequentialism.

First of all, if we consider Marxism as a form of consequentialism we reduce the struggle for communism to simple *realpolitik*. In this sense we fail to grasp the aspect of praxis inherent in Marxist philosophy. Class struggle cannot be conceived as a struggle for coming to power. Rather it is the struggle for abolishing political power. It means any correct action on behalf of Marxism must be equipped with the class consciousness of the proletariat and this action, while changing the world, must itself change too. According to Marx, no communist can act as if he were a bourgeois politician; his political action must be attached to the proletariat's political action. It is one and same thing to mention the proletariat's class struggle and the communist actor's political act. This political action does not target any destination but of course reaches a point in the end. An act's existence is its end at the same time. That is, this political action refers to a change with regards to qualification. Action in Marxist theory is not a plain calculable action. If this is so, it is easy to see that one cannot calculate the ends of his act in such an authentic moment of action. One cannot calculate whether his action will bring wealth or happiness in the end, because the proletariat learns his capacity and his reality during the action. Therefore consequentialism is by definition insufficient for understanding an action defined as the realization of class consciousness. Lukacs clearly explains this point:

The Marxist theory of class struggle, which in this respect is wholly derived from Hegel's conceptual system, changes the transcendent objective into an immanent one; the class struggle of the proletariat is at once the objective itself and its realization. This process is not a means the significance and value of which can be judged by the standards of a goal which transcends it; it is rather a new elucidation of the utopian society, step by step, leap by leap, corresponding to the logic of history. This implies immersion in contemporary social reality. The 'means' are not alien to the goal (as was the case with the realization of bourgeois ideology); instead, they bring the goal closer to self-realization. It follows that there will be conceptually indeterminable transitional stages between the tactical means and the ultimate objective; it is never possible to know in advance which tactical step will succeed in achieving the ultimate objective itself. (Lukacs, 1919)

On the other hand Marx as a human being of course, takes the predictable results of some actions into consideration. For instance, he criticizes proletariat of Paris during the Commune experience in 1871. He thinks that if the Communards had captured the National Bank in Paris, the Commune would have survived. But this prediction is

a kind of daily political prediction. It does not mean that Marx was a consequentialist in a philosophical sense. Likewise, one can target an end and determine a range of facts for reaching that end. But it is clear that the envisioned act may not lead one to the previously targeted end. Especially in politics this point is much more complicated because there are many other factors that affect the conditions. For instance, we may act in a specific way to reach an end but other factors may prevent us from reaching that end. And much more importantly, from a Marxist point of view, to reach the targeted end may be possible only if the historical context is suitable for that end and for our means. That's why Marx's approach cannot be reduced to simple politics. Marx foresees possible inconsistencies between means, ends and the historical context, and then tries to enhance his theory on a historical base, and writes with Engels, in *The Holy Family* the following:

The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today. (Marx and Engels, 1845)

Here Marx explicates his aim; he tries to draw the limits of the role that subjectivity plays in history. In other words, he emphasizes the importance of the historical context. He shows that political actions have historical importance, and that changes with regard to social qualification are not dependent on the subjective calculations and decisions that focus on means and ends. This is why we cannot call Marx a consequentialist. We can interpret the same quotation in a very different way and assert that decisions and human actions as means, have no role in history. One may assert that a person is not a subject in history, but the above quotation refers only one maxim of Marxist theory. On the other side, in the following parts we will discuss the role of subjectivity in Marxist theory. Therefore we do not need to over-interpret this aspect of Marx's thinking.

If we turn to the critiques of Marx regarding Communards of Paris, we see that the points criticized by Marx are only supplementary points. For Marx the relevant point in that period was the Commune itself, and the way that the Commune rules. For the first time in history, the proletariat was proving that it was able to rule, that it was able to run a direct democracy and it was almost able to abolish private property. In other words, the proletariat was proving its own capacity and its capacity of changing

the social order with regards to its capacities. So Marx's critiques remind us of consequentialist reasoning, because it does not focus on the 'essence' of the action. Although the Commune failed by not capturing the National Bank, by losing time due to the elections, etc., Marx actually thought that the Commune won the Civil War by showing the path to a new world.

If we focus on a special form of consequentialism, namely utilitarianism, we see that Marx cannot be considered to be a utilitarian philosopher either. As mentioned above, a utilitarian approach asserts that if an action brings about intrinsic values such as pleasure or happiness in the end, then it is an ethically correct action. But in Marxist literature we cannot see such assessments. Moreover, even in passages about communism, Marx does not mention intrinsic values like happiness or pleasure.

For instance in *Grundrisse*, Marx writes that "Labour cannot become play, as Fourier would like" (Marx, 1857). This sentence means that the realization of the productive and creative capacity of man cannot be reduced to an activity that brings pleasure. Therefore communism, in Marx's view, is not a social order which provides *eudaimonia* or a kind of social hedonism.

Marx tries to define a kind of form of life which is practical, a form of life in which people exist as how they really are and realize themselves. This point will be examined in subsequent parts of the thesis, but for now, we can put forward that Marx would say that we cannot know whether people will be happy or not in communist society. This means there is a remarkable qualitative difference between Marx and utilitarian consequentialism. For Marx, the point is realizing human capacity whereas for an utilitarian, the point is gaining happiness or pleasure at the end of ethical action. If communism does not bring happiness or pleasure in the end, then an utilitarian may give up following Marxist thoughts. Or similarly, but from a different angle, under conditions of capitalism, one may assert that the ongoing social order is giving people happiness or pleasure. In such a circumstance, utilitarian and Marxist are at odds again. While the Marxist attends to communist struggle, the utilitarian does not. Marxism is not about happiness or pleasure, but is related to realizing human capacity/potential. In this sense we can assert that if any utilitarian connects with Marxism, he can see Marxism only as a means for his prior target. And this aspect of utilitarianism proves and mediately defines Marxism as a separate philosophical-political *ecole*.

2.1.2 Deontology

In case of deontological ethics we may assert that Marx cannot be defined as a deontologist either. It is reasonable to say that the early Marx is closer to deontology, but especially his theory of historical materialism prevents him from being a deontologist. In an article named "Divorce Bill," he compares "blind obedience to a super-moral and supernatural authority" to "conscious subordination to moral and natural forces" (Marx, 1842). In this very early study, we can clearly see a Kantian inclination. Here the term "conscious subordination" necessarily assumes a rational subject which can find an ethical rule without consulting an external divine authority. In other words he rejects externally imposed rules and defends the rational character of the human being. In this way ethics becomes the result of rational contemplation. In the same article he writes "Indulgence of the wishes of individuals would turn into harshness towards the essence of the individuals, towards their moral reason, which is embodied in moral relationships" (Marx, 1842). In this quotation, Marx defines moral reasoning as the essence of the individual whereas he opposes the indulgence of the wishes of individuals, just like Kant. So in early times, as R.G Pfeffer asserts, Marx might have had an inclination to deontology, since he conceives human beings in a way that is similar to Kant and Rousseau (Pfeffer, 2001, p.51-56). But this very early Marx changes rapidly as will be shown below.

Following Pfeffer's assertion, one may think that if Marx has Kantian tendencies, then he objects to capitalism due to the fact that the capitalist class treats the proletariat as means not ends. Actually we can read many terms in Marx's study as if they were written by a Kantian moralist. If we read all of Marx's literature with a moralist perspective we can attribute wrong meanings to his terms. For instance even in his masterpiece and late term work Capital, we see terms like "appropriating" or "despotism". These are obviously value-laden terms. If the proletariat as a subject is not a means but an end, then the capitalist must not force him to work under conditions of despotism and must not appropriate the surplus value that is produced by the proletariat. But such a reading can only be a misreading.

How should we read such value-laden terms? Marx's assessment of political economy tells us that the capitalist appropriates the surplus value, while organizing production under conditions of despotism in the factory. On the other hand this is the reality of capitalism. Moreover the term "appropriation" is meaningful only in terms

of surplus value. We can explain this with an analogy: consider the proposal “private property is theft”. The problem of this proposal is that theft necessarily can be defined only under conditions of a private property system. Theft already means the appropriation of private property by a second party. If we are using the term "theft" as an accusation, private property becomes a positive value that must be protected against theft. So while we want to criticize private property actually we affirm it. This problem arises from the fact that these two terms are meaningful only in the same order, namely capitalism. Capitalism cannot be judged by its own terms. It is the same for all other terms like "exploitation," "appropriation" and "despotic working conditions". In Marxist literature, even these terms are value-laden terms, and their main duty in the text is not insulting capitalism. Rather by such terms, Marx tries to explicate some points of capitalist economy. For instance when he uses “egoist” as a pejorative adjective, he does not mean that being an egoist is wrong. On the contrary, he is aware of that being an egoist is a reality of this social structure. Namely, it is a way for people to survive in capitalism. And Marx knows that this is a temporary character of people, because capitalism itself is temporary.

Marx was aware of the above points and he did not criticize capitalism like a deontologist. As we explained, at the very early stage of his thinking, he was influenced by Kant but right after he understood the historical limitations of subjectivity, he gave up this philosophical position. He often accusing capitalism from an ethical point of view. For instance he writes in *Value, Price and Profit*:

To clamour for *equal or even equitable retribution* on the basis of the wages system is the same as to clamour for *freedom* on the basis of the slavery system. What you think just or equitable is out of the question. The question is: What is necessary and unavoidable with a given system of production? (Marx, 1865)

We can find similar objections in different writings of Marx. As a general Marxist rule, if the economic structure determines superstructure in the final analysis, then it becomes meaningless to criticize capitalism with moral or ethical arguments. The above quotation at the same time implies that capitalism determines its own moral conditions and as we emphasized, we cannot judge capitalism with its own terms or values. That’s why Marx writes the following in a late article, "Notes on Wagner" :

The obscure man falsely attributes to me the view that “the *surplus-value* produced by the workers *alone* remains, in an unwarranted manner, in the hands of the capitalist entrepreneurs” (Note 3, p. 114). In fact I say the exact opposite: that the production of

commodities must necessarily become “capitalist” production of commodities at a certain point, and that according to the *law of value* governing it, the “surplus-value” rightfully belongs to the capitalist and not the worker. (Marx, 1881)

Deontology tells us to act according to some universal ethical principals like Kantian imperatives. In this sense, deontology is a mandatory guideline for acting. Similarly, consequentialism/ utilitarianism is also mandatory guideline for acting. This time ethics tells us to act according to one rule: to act according to the ends. Both of these ways necessarily demand spatio-temporally universal valid principals. And obviously such demands are by definition against historical materialism.

How then can we comment on value-laden terms in Marx? If he is not a classical moral philosopher then why does he use such terms? Our answer should be simple. I assert that (as in Marx’s critiques about Communards of Paris) these value laden terms are not about the ‘essence’ of his theory. Simply, Marx as a normal human being has moral values. Additionally, he shares the language and culture of his time. Therefore, my idea is that he uses these terms because his language and culture do not permit him to use different terms. And even if he accuses capitalism on behalf of the proletariat, this does not mean that he was a deontologist. Having a conscience does not make Marx a deontologist. He uses such value-laden terms only to express himself and his theory.

2.1.3 Applied ethics

In addition to deontology and consequentialism/utilitarianism we should briefly examine Marx’s position regarding some topics like human rights and justice. These terms refer to the practical side of ethical approaches. In daily life main ethical questions are discussed via such terms.

While handling these concepts, we see that a classic Marxist way concludes that bourgeois society constructed its own ethical understanding. For instance justice gains a new meaning in a capitalist context. Similarly, the concepts of right and liberty have their meaning in accordance with the capitalist order. On the other hand, when one is generating an idea regarding such topics, we expect him to reason objectively. But a Marxist approach cannot handle such concepts objectively, because according to Marxism, all of these concepts are marked with class antagonism according. The bourgeoisie assert that liberty, justice and human rights

have universally valid characters. For Marxism however, those concepts can be reduced to the liberty of the bourgeois class, the liberty of private property and the rights of the bourgeois class. Similarly a Marxist also must handle all of these concepts from a proletarian perspective. Such concepts may have meaning only if they make sense in terms of the proletariat and the class struggle. So Marxism does not handle such 'divine' concepts neutrally. Marx gives priority to proletarian interests and he is also aware that the bourgeois class is aware of its own class interests.

Furthermore, in addition to class antagonism, the above conceptions are also defined within some dichotomies according to the Marxist view. All of these concepts bear on separations between the civil and the political, the economic and the social, the individual and the community etc. Of course the main antagonism causes such dichotomous configurations, and then concepts like liberty, justice and human rights gain meaning within this dichotomous society. That's why from the beginning Marx had contemptuous manners towards the bourgeois understanding of ethics. For instance, regarding the rights of man, Marx writes:

None of the so-called rights of man, therefore, go beyond egoistic man, beyond man as a member of civil society – that is, an individual withdrawn into himself, into the confines of his private interests and private caprice, and separated from the community. In the rights of man, he is far from being conceived as a species-being; on the contrary, species-like itself, society, appears as a framework external to the individuals, as a restriction of their original independence. The sole bond holding them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic selves. (Marx, 1843a)

Similarly, one of the most important morals of bourgeois society, - liberty - is defined as such by Marx: "The practical application of man's right to liberty is man's right to *private property*" (Marx, 1843a). Marx and Engels maintained the same attitude against bourgeois ethics until the late periods of their studies. In 1864, in a letter written to Engels, Marx emphasizes that he was obliged to add sentences about duty, right, truth, morality and justice to the document which he prepared for the congress of the Workingmen's International Association as a draft for rules. He also explains that although he had to add these ethical concepts to the document, he tried to prevent these terms from harming the document (Marx, 1864). Here he explicitly avoids using the 'divine' concepts of ethics.

If we try to classify Marx's theory, we cannot put it into any classical moral philosophical group. It is known that there are only a few passages regarding ethics in Marx's studies. This creates an obstacle. Our own approach may cause another obstacle because trying to categorize Marxism with regards to ethics may be meaningless. But even if this is the case, I think that we can find good traces of ethics in Marx's thought. My main idea is that if we want to refer some ethical properties to Marx, we have to invent a new kind of ethics. If ethics tries to find the correct action for the subject, I think we cannot find the correct action without understanding what is meant by the subject. It is reasonable to assert that Marxism's most important point is to define a new relation between history and the subject. Therefore we cannot grasp the Marxist subject in the same way as other ethical approaches. That is to say, a new understanding of the subject necessarily demands a new kind of ethics. Therefore in the next section I will discuss how Marx handles the subject, and how his approach can be related to ethics.

2.2 Human Nature and Estrangement / Alienation

2.2.1 Estrangement / alienation

Marx and his followers were considering the future society of communism as the cradle of true human relations and true subjectivity. Even if depicting such a society might be exciting it cannot be genuinely Marxist or historical materialist. Of course we can make some predictions about the future, but our predictions should be based on the conditions of today for a historical materialist approach. That is, if Marxism tries to determine main problems of existing society, only after describing the ongoing contradictions of society can we have some predictions about a society which eliminates those contradictions. Only then can our predictions become a kind of reasoning instead of fortune telling. In this sense, I will first investigate the concept of alienation in Marxist theory. In this way we will find a good genesis for Marx's understanding of human nature.

It is usually said that the concept of estrangement/alienation is not found in Marx's later studies. This assertion seems true to a limited extent. As I will discuss below, the decreasing of usage of the term, does not prove that Marx changed his mind during his later studies. Brenkert asserts that Marx avoided using this concept as the "radical moralists" of the time were using the term (Brenkert, 1983). Brenkert's idea

can be criticized and we will assert that we can find the concept of alienation within his later studies too.

We are giving importance to the concept of alienation because only if we can explore it can we have some predictions about Marx's understanding of human nature. If we can see how Marx handles human nature then we may define some criteria for Marxist ethics. Concepts like alienation and human nature relate Marxist theory with ethics. Similarly if we handle human activities only as the activities determined by the economic structure, there can be no hope for emancipation. This means that if human beings are totally determined by the economy, then human beings cannot be defined as subjects. On the other hand, we know that it is not easy to find terms like "alienation" or "human nature" in Marx's later studies. His later studies are predominantly about economy. This situation creates the impression that there is no place for concepts like emancipation, alienation, subject etc. in Marx's theory. However, as we will show below, after 1844 Marx does not change his philosophical ideas. That is to say, although he focused more on economy, he never gave up working on the problem of the emancipation of the subject. Even though he used mainly economical terms he never became a determinist. Before examining Marx's philosophical path, we should determine what we understand by the term of alienation.

Most explanatory passages about alienation can be found in Marx's manuscripts from 1844. Alienation is a result of a process. It has different types. Surely all of those are related to the ongoing methods of production. In the first case, the worker alienates herself, her labor and working process. We should say that under conditions of capitalism human beings lose the connection with their most authentic product: labor. In the ideal form, at the end of the productive process, we reach a very precious product - the product by which we create and realize ourselves. So labor is the physical form of our potential. The relation between the worker and her labor is thus similar to the relation between an artist and her painting. With a painting, the artist expresses herself, realizes herself. Under capitalist conditions, since a worker does not produce for herself but for the capitalist, her relation with her labor is broken. Therefore she cannot determine the fate of her product. She does not have a say in the process of her labor and the future of her labor. Thus capitalism kills the creative productivity of workers by subordinating the proletarian's labor to the

process of generating surplus value. From this point on, creative productivity becomes routine in capitalist relations of production. We must also add that when the labor is separated from the worker, he also loses his species existence, because his creativity calls forth realizing himself as a species-being.

Marx explains what happens after man and his labor are separated and the results of this separation as below:

This fact expresses merely that the object which labor produces – labor’s product – confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. [...] Labor’s realization is its objectification. Under these economic conditions this realization of labor appears as *loss of realization* for the workers; objectification as *loss of the object and bondage to it*; appropriation as *estrangement*, as *alienation*. [...] Estranged labor turns thus: (3) *Man’s species-being*, both nature and his spiritual species-property, into a being *alien* to him, into a *means* of his *individual existence*. [...] (4) An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labor, from his life activity, from his species-being, is the *estrangement of man from man*. (Marx, 1844)

Concepts like alienation and human nature are considered negatively by the young Marx. Althusser and defenders of orthodox Marxism usually assert that there is an epistemological break between the young Marx and the mature Marx. But if we eliminate these concepts from Marx’s theory, the theory surely turns to a kind of descriptive science. On the contrary, Marx’s starting point was the emancipation of humanity. If we abandon these concepts, we have to admit that humanity is derivation of socioeconomic conditions. If the acts of human beings are derivations of socioeconomic conditions, then there is no hope for emancipation, because there is no room for subjective action. Moreover if humanity is the derivation of socioeconomic conditions then there is no room for ethics either, since there is no room for subjectivity. Therefore as we will discuss in the next part, Marx’s theory cannot be reduced to a simple science; rather it is a philosophy that targets emancipation.

But even if Marx preserves the main philosophical attitudes in his theory we can find some cornerstones that lead Marxist thinkers to ignore the aforementioned philosophical concepts. In reality, those cornerstones simply address the same issue using different tools. At this point we may underline the importance of the famous 11th thesis of Marx “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it” (Marx, 1845). Similarly in *German Ideology*, Marx

and Engels write: “Philosophy stands in the same relation to the study of the actual world as masturbation to sexual love” (Marx and Engels, 1846). So, Marx’s *Thesis on Feuerbach* and *German Ideology* become a corner stone for his general theory. After these two studies he handles the same issue – the emancipation of human beings – from another angle. Instead of philosophizing about emancipation, alienation etc., he tries to handle them objectively, by continuing to work on them in the context of science of economics. In other words, after grasping the importance of ‘changing the world’ he tries to make his philosophy objective. In order to do so, he moved towards political economy. That is to say, his tools for handling the matter changed, while the ‘essence’ of his study remains same. In this sense, we oppose the idea of Althusser that there is an epistemological break in Marx’s theory. Rather he starts constructing a kind of science that is derived from his philosophy.

As mentioned, the command ‘changing the world’ of the 11th thesis leads Marx to change the area of his study and focus on political economy, but we can still see the traces of the philosophical concept of alienation in his political economy. For instance, in *Comments on James Mill*, Marx shows how money – the medium of exchange – becomes a tool for the relations of capital. Under the distorted conditions of capitalism, the relations of capital dominate human relations via the “medium of money”. Money is not a medium of exchange anymore. This social alienation is explained by the money and God analogy. *Comments on James Mill* is written in 1844 and it belongs to the period of the young Marx. But we can find the same analogy regarding alienation in the later work *Grundrisse* also. Moreover, in his masterpiece *Capital*, the same, money and God analogy can be found to clarify the same concept – alienation. This time alienation is called “fetishism” and has a more sophisticated social character, related to the essence of the commodity. Marx writes in “*The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof*” in Volume 1 of *Capital*:

In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men’s hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities. (Marx, 1867)

Additionally in Volume 3 of *Capital* we can find reference to alienation once again. He writes in this very late term study as such:

This conception is so much the less surprising since it appears to accord with fact, and since the relationship of capital actually conceals the inner connection behind the utter indifference, isolation, and alienation in which they place the labourer vis-à-vis the means incorporating his labour. (Marx, 1894)

Here, I especially want to emphasize that handling of alienation in *Capital* Vol.3 is very similar to the *Manuscripts of 1844*. In both studies alienation is grasped as the result of the separation of man from her labor. Alienation is grasped as the result of an interference of labor and worker. Namely the worker gives her labor to the capitalist for producing commodities, and then her labor, after turning into a commodity stands against her as an enemy. Marx explicates this point in one of his most striking passages:

The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. [...] This fact expresses merely that the object which labor produces – labor's product – confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. (Marx, 1844)

Thus Marx's understanding of alienation is related to his understanding of labor from the beginning and is consistent and follows the same path. This means that from the beginning to the end, Marx's theory was a theory of emancipation.

2.2.2 Human nature

Even if Marx did not focus on issues like liberty, rights or ethical duties, this does not mean such issues were unimportant for him. Rather he thinks that under the conditions of an alienated or estranged society these rights become void. More generally, discussing ethics in a society which involves surplus value, exploitation, class contradiction, alienation and so on, was meaningless. Even so we can give a formulation of how Marxism approaches ethics. For now, we can formulate it like this: ethical society may be the one in which alienation/estrangement is eliminated and in which genuine subjectivity is constructed. In Marxism's view, communism, as a classless society, can be the only socioeconomic order which eliminates alienation/estrangement. In this sense communist society can be assessed as the one which provides the correct base for an ethical society. As we discussed, Marx claims

that there is alienation of human beings, a claim which asserts a kind of 'essence' from which man is alienated. If we can determine how Marx grasps human nature, then we can find some clues regarding his ethical approach. That is, if we can find some indispensable properties of the human subject in Marx, then we can predict the conditions of ethics for Marxism. Therefore now we should discuss human nature in Marx's studies.

Following R.G. Peffer, we can assert that at the beginning, the young Marx was writing his ideas as if he were a humanist. By the term "humanism," we mean an outlook "which emphasizes the human, as opposed to or at least in addition to the divine, as a centre of significance, a repository of virtue, a source of strength, purpose and discovery, and a principle of artistic, moral and political expression" (Scruton, 2008). According to this definition of the term, Peffer's idea is a reasonable assertion, because when we read Marx's very early (pre-1844) studies we see some passages where Marx handles man as an integrity, as a total subject, as the measure of everything. But at the same time in these very early studies, total the human subject was obstructed, and such a subject must be set free. For instance in his letter to Arnold Ruge in 1843, Marx defends man against dominance and writes: "Despotism's sole idea is contempt for man, the dehumanized man [...]" (Marx, 1843). Of course any discourse which focuses on dominance, leads us to a kind of democratic program. That's why in the same letter he offers us a democratic state: "freedom [...] only this feeling, [...] can again transform society into a community of human beings united for their highest aims, into a democratic state" (Marx, 1843). Similarly in another letter Marx was explaining his ideas as such: "Our whole object can only be – as is also the case in Feuerbach's criticism of religion – to give religious and philosophical questions the form corresponding to man who has become conscious of himself" (Marx, 1843). Therefore we can conclude that the early Marx was considering man as a totally rational human being - in other words a subject - who is responsible for the results of his actions. However this subject was under the domination of a despotic social order. Therefore human beings must firstly get rid of these despotic conditions and the social order must be transformed to a democratic order, a social order which coincides with human beings' conscious nature.

However, right after these very early writings Marx starts to approach human nature within a socio-economic context. And at this stage he gives one of his most influential studies: *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. According to this study human nature's main properties are represented by the concept of "species-being". Species-being is depicted as the result of history and it can be grasped as the conscious subject of the entire material world. By his actions, the species-being becomes responsible for the whole human race. Thus we may say that, Marx tries to define a human subject integrated with nature and the human race, a subject which makes all history his object. By giving shape to the material and social world this human being becomes a real subject and becomes species-being. But under conditions of capitalism human beings cannot be defined as species-being. As might be expected, the inhibition of man generates alienated humanity. In other words, under conditions of capitalism mankind cannot realize his potential, He survives, but he cannot freely create. So now we can see how Marx defines species-being in his *Manuscripts of 1844*:

“[...] conscious activity is man's species-character. [...] Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity. It is just because of this that he is a species-being. Or it is only because he is a species-being that he is a conscious being, i.e., that his own life is an object for him. [...] Estranged labor reverses the relationship, so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life activity, his *essential being*, a mere means to his *existence*.” (Marx, 1844)

Additionally before exploring the concept of 'species-being', in the former paragraphs of the same part, Marx discusses man within a reciprocal relation with external nature. Moreover he grasps nature as the “*inorganic body*” of man. Thus our claim finds its foundation. At this stage Marx defines an integrated subject that consciously acts on behalf of the whole planet and on behalf of the entire history of humanity. That is, the history of the material world and the history of the social world generate man as the subject, but due to the ongoing economic order's distortion, this integrated subject cannot emerge. If there exists only an alienated form of the human race under capitalist conditions, one could not make any ethical demands of alienated humanity. Only after the distortion of social life is eliminated might ethics be possible.

We can see that starting from 1844, economic structure gains importance in Marx's studies. He loses his humanist tendencies and then understands how the economic

order gives shape to human life. But we have to note that in *Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx still does not give priority to the role of economic conditions. *A fortiori*, he tries to explain how man loses his liberty and subjectivity while attending to the relations of production. Thus it is better to say that in 1844, Marx begins to explicate the dialectic relation between human beings and economic structure and in this way he constructs his most authentic study. This time, contrary to the humanist stage mentioned above, as Marx addresses concepts like exploitation and alienation together (both of which are caused by the mode of relations of production) he offers us communism instead of democracy as the way of emancipation. Therefore we can say that Marx follows a path from anti-dominance to anti-exploitation. That's why he reaches communist society as the solution for the problems of the contradictory social order of capitalism. As discussed in 2.2.1 of this study, Marx maintains this authentic line until the end of his life. In his later studies he seems to be giving priority to economic issues; my idea is that he actually tries to find scientific roots for his philosophy. So we cannot assess him as if he is an economist. For instance his aim was not to point out the crisis of capitalism; rather he tried to show how the crises of capitalism will bring freedom to humanity. In other words he tries to grasp concepts like 'human emancipation', and 'alienation' in terms of political economy. He tries to reach a less speculative ground for his ideas. That's why he writes *Grundrisse* before his masterpiece *Capital*. As is well known, in *Grundrisse* we can find philosophical concepts like alienation much more than in the other late term studies, because in *Grundrisse* Marx tries to integrate his philosophical studies and his political economy studies.

As discussed above, after Marx moved away from humanist tendencies, he also developed a non-essentialist approach to human nature (here by the term 'essentialist' we mean an outlook which defines some basic characteristics which are shared by all human beings and which are valid in all circumstances and at all times). My claim is that, instead of defending essentialist ideas, Marx tried to define a kind of potential that can be fulfilled whenever the social conditions are suitable. In other words, becoming a species-being is an inherent capacity of all mankind for Marx.

To explain this point, once again we have to focus on the definition of species-being. "...he is a species-being that he is a conscious being, i.e., that his own life is an object for him" (Marx, 1844). In Marx's view, consciousness is very much intertwined with

creativity. Actually this creative subjectivity separates man from animal. For Marx an animal is embedded into its life activity but a human being makes life her object. Moreover, “man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom” (Marx, 1844).¹ That is to say, man’s real life activity is creative production. In this sense by freely producing/creating, man realizes himself. What follows from this is that one of the crucial points about Marx’s subject is the concept of creative productivity, which means realizing the potential of man. So it is reasonable to claim that if creative productivity is absent from ongoing relations of production, Marx grasps it as a kind of potential or capacity which can be realized after the distortion of the social order is eliminated.

Somehow we have to explicate the concept of potential/capacity of human beings, since it may be taken to mean a kind of essentialism. Regarding this concept Hilliard Aronovitch makes a good definition:

Self determination... is the free and the conscious shaping of the conditions of one’s life, which makes possible the further free and conscious shaping of oneself through the development of this or that specific capacity ... the capacity for self determination or positive freedom is fundamental in that without it one is not in a position to deliberately achieve or even aim at anything else. (as cited in Pfeffer, 2001, p.134)

Aronovitch’s definition seems workable but we must remember one point: the capacity that Marx tries to explain is the capacity that generates other - secondary - capacities. This is parallel to Aronovitch’s definition but we should not understand "capacity" to be an endowed property of human beings. Rather it is the result of material and social histories. Socially and evolutionarily, mankind somehow developed such a capacity. Here again we reach a second crucial point. This capacity, namely the capacity of creative productivity is the result of the history of humanity and the history of community life. Starting from the first hominid’s emergence on the earth, humanity developed the material base for such a capacity. This is the external and material limit of human consciousness. So we can accept that creative productivity is the derivation of human history, and therefore it is limited by the historical situation of mankind.

¹ We can find a very similar definition in *Capital* Vol. 3 regarding creative activity in freedom.

Another important point is the subjective role of man in history. According to Marx's approach, history and the human subject are in a reciprocal relation. We should be careful about two extreme points regarding this issue. First, history does not determine everything. Defending such an idea results in historical determinism. Second, a human as a subject does not totally determine the direction of history. A human being as a subject gives shape to history only under the conditions that are provided by a historical moment. In other words, a subject acts on a historical stage, and then effects this historical stage. Then history gives humanity another stage to act upon. Therefore, while we are reviewing the relationship between subject and history, we must not confer total power to one or the other of these two sides. Marx clearly explains this point in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. (Marx, 1852)

This famous quotation prevents us to defend any extreme point. Any determinist understanding may assert that human subjectivity does not stand in opposition to economic structure. This assertion seems parallel to the anti-essentialism of the materialist understanding of Marxism. Such an approach in Marxist theory, of course, excludes the subjectivity of human beings and in that case ethics becomes impossible. On the other hand, the nature of human beings is marked with change and development according to Marx as was discussed above. That's why Marx cannot be conceived as an essentialist. The potential that may reach species-being does not necessitate any essence. So although Marx is sometimes seen as belonging to the humanist tradition, when he mentions human nature, he means a dynamic structure which is in a reciprocal relation with social conditions.

If we turn back to subjectivity once again we see that Marx defines a kind of subject which is situated in a historical gap. When the social order begins stumbling, then man subjectively gives direction to history. If we expound this matter in the case of capitalism, Marx basically defends such an idea: capitalism is structurally based on a class contradiction. This contradiction will possibly be the last class contradiction in the history because for first time in the history, the proletariat can take political power and abolish the class antagonism, the concept of political power and private

property. Marx observes the proletariat's ongoing struggles and sees that the proletariat, differing from previous oppressed social classes, has the capacity to act with class consciousness. In this sense the political act of the proletariat has a very special role. First, in terms of a social contradiction, its subjectivity may give direction to history and second, as the proletariat's political act eliminates the cause of class contradiction - namely private property - it may generate 'species-being'. (That's why Marx and Engels give so much importance to the Paris Commune. The direct democracy of the Commune and the abolishment of private property, are the two important points were the manifestation of the 'species-being' for Marx.)

In addition to the distinctive properties of Marx's understanding of human nature mentioned above, we must also emphasize another important point. Marx's understanding of human nature resembles Aristotle's understanding of human nature. Both of them believe that human beings can realize themselves only within a community or society. Therefore man is actually a *zoon politikon* as Aristotle says. Marx defines a human being within a social context in parallel with Aristotle, while criticizing Feuerbach: "Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations" (Marx, 1845). That is to say, in addition to being creative and productive, human nature has a social dimension as well. The key to this dimension is embedded in man's relations with his community. In history all the social orders were defined by class contradictions, and as a result social relations were distorted. Even though communities in history have some properties of solidarity, those communities were still suffering from the contradictions of the socioeconomic order. In this sense they were not real communities for Marx. For Marx, in a real community there is harmony instead of contradiction or instead of private interest. Moreover, for the existence of species-being, real community is a kind of necessary condition. This means that as a result of relations in a real community, man can realize himself. In other words man can realize himself only in correct relations with other people via solidarity. Regarding this point Eugene Kamenka gives a very fruitful explanation by giving example of an artist and a worker:

In so far as he is an artist, he sees other artists not as hostile competitors, but as men whose work assists and inspires his work, whose artistic motives kindled and continue to strengthen his.[...] It is true not only of the artistic producer, but of anyone seized with the productive

spirit. The activities of other producers are to him a source of encouragement, not a threat of competition. He is stimulated by them; he is assisted by their methods and their discoveries; he seeks to emulate, and not to destroy or expropriate, their results. (Kamenka, 1962)

Now we can briefly focus on the social order of ‘species-being’. The social order of species-being can be communism as we explained before. Communist social order is introduced as emancipation by Marx. What should we understand by the term of communism? Marx explains it as such:

This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man – the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. (Marx, 1844)

We see in this quotation that communism as the solution of the ongoing contradictions of society may lead humanity to establish the correct form of human relations, and within these relations correct subject - namely species-being - can arise. Only such a human being can be ethical. Then we can conclude that ethics can be defined as related to society but not according to individuals for Marx.

Although we find some passages like the one above which depicts communism in Marx’s studies, he in fact does not define precisely the future society that eliminates exploitation and alienation. So we cannot understand the ethical framework of the communist society easily in his studies. If we follow Marx’s reasoning, the ethical values of a communist society can be known only by the people of communist society. Roughly, if the economical-structural conditions determine the superstructure of the society, then the super-structural values of communism can be explored only under the economic conditions of communism. This is of course a very rough assessment, but in the final analysis, determining the ethical understanding of a future society can be a kind of fortune-telling. Therefore Marx was reasonable when he avoided drawing the exact picture of communism. But lastly as a clue, here we can give the description of an un-alienated person in a communist society with Leon Trotsky’s words:

It is difficult to predict the extent of self-government which the man of the future may reach or the heights to which he may carry his technique. [...] More correctly, the shell in which the cultural construction and self-education of Communist man will be enclosed, will develop all the vital elements of contemporary art to the highest point. Man will become

immeasurably stronger, wiser and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise. (Trotsky, 1924)

After short assessments about Marx's understanding of human nature and communist society now we can outline the preliminary criterion for the ethics of Marxism. First of all, as we discussed above human beings have the capacity to become species-beings. The main characteristic property of species-being is creative productivity. Creative productivity means being able to produce, work, and create freely. That is to say the creativity of species-being is directly related to freedom. Thus our first criterion can be freedom. We must also add that creative productivity is possible only where there exist correct relations of production. Correct relations of production bring about correct human relations. In other words, if the objective contradictions of society are eliminated then people encounter correct subjective relations. Correct human relations form an authentic social form: community. Community and species-being are very much intertwined. On the one hand community provides a base for the emergence of species-being; on the other hand species-being gives shape to community through his subjective character. In community the relations of people are based on solidarity and harmony instead of private benefits. Then it is clear that our second preliminary criterion for Marxist ethics is harmony/solidarity. Once again we can mention that the relation between our two criteria, freedom and harmony/solidarity, are just like the two sides of same coin. Our criteria construct the same concept: 'species-being', which is responsible for ethics.

According to our preliminary criteria for Marxist ethics, we should also depict how the ethical subject actualizes these criteria. It is obvious that any Marxist approach to ethics cannot ignore social context. That is to say, ethics cannot be separated from the historicity of the world and historical development of mankind. Marxist ethics cannot be the sum of transcendental imperative regulations but it can be a kind of life form.

"This view has been expressed in this way: 'The moral law ... has to be expressed in the form, "be this", not in the form, "do this" ... the true moral law says "hate not", instead of "kill not" the only mode of stating the moral law must be a rule of character.'" (Brenkert, 1983)

In the Marxist context, such a rule of character can flourish only after emancipation. Marx's study from the beginning tries to show how human beings can become species-being. How can human beings become genuine subjects, how can they shoulder to shoulder rule their own lives, rule their own societies and rule external nature, instead of surviving as alienated victims of economic structure? Therefore, the Marxist response to the questions of ethics can be defined as an activity that tries to transform transcendental ethics into an immanent ethics that is rooted in practical social life, and this transformation must be based on activities that arise from freedom and solidarity.

3. PSYCHOANALYSIS, LACAN AND MARXISM

According to the second chapter of this study, the Marxist position seems reasonable for solving the emancipation problem. If humanity moves towards communism, at the same time it moves towards an ethical society in which human beings realize their potentials and develop themselves freely without any economic or political obstacle. But during the 19th and the 20th century, Marxist predictions all but failed. As Marx foresaw, during its history, capitalism had many economic crises. But regarding emancipation, people of developed western countries did not move towards socialism and communism. In other words even though there was a theory which was heralding emancipation, people preferred staying alienated and regretted becoming *species-beings*. Moreover, in Soviet Union the experience of socialism turned into a big failure regarding liberty, nature and economics. Therefore “in the history of Marxism, the reference to psychoanalysis played a precise strategic role: psychoanalysis was expected to “close the gap” by explaining why, despite the presence of “objective” conditions for the revolutionary transformation, individuals willingly persisted in their enslavement to the ruling ideology”(Žižek, 1998).

Our idea is that while Marx was labeling man as subject, his approach to man was not sufficient. Although Marx places the subject in a gap between historical socioeconomic structures and rational will, he considers human rationality as a mono-block plenitude. That means that, for classic Marxism, human beings were rational and this property was enough to handle them as subjects. But Freud’s approach to subject showed that Marxism had to re-consider the subject. According to Freud’s approach, human psychology was not an integral whole, rather it was split into three id, ego and superego. Therefore Marxism was in trouble because Marx’s subject consisted only of rational human consciousness. Moreover not only Marxism but also ethics was in trouble, because there were some points, some activities of human psychology of which we are not aware. If some of our activities are unconsciously displayed, then how can we judge human beings with regard to ethical criteria?

At this point, Freudian approaches in psychology become a revolution in many fields. Before the Freudian revolution in psychology, Marxists were focusing only on the pacifying effect of bourgeois ideology. They were not handling the split structure of human psychology. They were trying to grasp how the bourgeois ideology works on the proletariat, but they were not trying to understand how the proletariat responds to the attacks of the bourgeois ideology. To understand how human beings are participated in the structure of the bourgeois ideology, we have to know how man relates to his environment. That is, in order to understand how ideology effects people, we have to know how people react against ideology or how they identify with ideology. That is to say we have to grasp what human subjectivity is - if there is such a thing.

Therefore questions like how subjectivity occurs, how a subject relates to ideology etc. must be answered in order to talk about ethical claims. Bourgeois ideology may really have a pacifying effect on the revolutionary subject, but the point I want to emphasize has to do with the subject itself. If we want to see how bourgeois ideology works, we have to clearly understand human psychology as the topic of our investigation.

The splitting of the human subject's psychology into three poses a problem; until Freud, the human subject was being handled as a unity. In other words, the idea was that human beings were possessed of a unique rational consciousness. The split subject concept of Freud conflicted with any understanding of man that grasps subjectivity based on essentialism. That's why at first glance Marxism did not show interest in Freud and psychoanalysis. Lacan asserts that Marxism's disinterest in psychoanalysis was a result of its humanist and essentialist character (as cited in Chiesa, 2009, p:552). Lacan's idea is open to discussion because although Marx was grasping the subject as a rational unity, he was placing subjectivity in a gap between historical-structural determinism and voluntarism. But the split subject matter remains important for the Marxist ethics because such an idea changes the understanding of the subject.

Continuing with Ian Craib's very good definition will help us to understand the position of Freud in his time. The history of mankind is at the same time the history of being affronted. From the early ages to modernity human beings lost their exclusiveness. Galileo showed that the earth was not at the centre of the universe,

Darwin showed that all the living things were somehow relatives, and human beings were constructing only one branch of the tree of life; Marx marked a new epoch by asserting that history gives shape to humanity and lastly Freud showed that man was not able to control even herself (Craib, 2008, p.39).

In this way, science – as distinct from any mythical understanding or religious understanding - derived knowledge from an unknown whole. The darkness of the world is well illuminated step by step but there always remained some residual unknowns. The darkness of the world was "*Real*"², in other words it was the object of both mythical, religious and scientific processes. Here psychoanalysis took human psychology as its unknown object. In other words the *Real* of psychoanalysis was human psychology. At this moment psychoanalysis had a breaking point or confusion, because handling human psychology – the *Real* - scientifically, was destined to fail. Freud was trying to grasp human psychology by staying within the realm of science. As a medical doctor he believed that his split schema for psychology (id-ego-superego) was going to be discovered by modern biological and neurological investigations in the near future. Such an approach to psychology was problematic. Science by definition tries to derive knowledge from an unknown object. On the contrary the *Real* of human psychology cannot be reduced to knowledge. Darkness is the character of the *Real*. That's why Lacan points out that sciences were handling the *Real* as formal cause whereas psychoanalysis had to treat its *Real* as a material cause. Science reduces the *Real* to the explanations of the laws of science but the split character of the subject, and the realm of the *Real* had to be investigated by its own method (Chiesa, 2008, p.558). As psychoanalysis accepts the *Real* with its own rambunctiousness, the only way to have intercourse with such a complex, under-recognized concept was through psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis accepts the status of the *Real* as it is, whereas science tries to explore all the points of psychology and does not accept any category like the *Real*. Although in the end psychoanalysis also produces knowledge, it separates itself from classical science. Psychoanalysis is aware of that its object - the *Real* - is always capable of getting out of hand. It cannot be fully explored because the nature of the *Real* prevents this. Moreover, the split structure (according to Lacanian psychoanalysis) indicates that the subject is possible only as a result of the tension between the *Real* and a

² *Real* is a Lacanian concept for the definition see part 3.1 of this thesis.

symbolization process. In this sense psychoanalysis was materialist because this method grasps its object in its own 'objective' conditions. Žižek's passage below briefly explains what I mean about the materialist character of the psychoanalytic approach:

True *materialism* does not consist in the simple operation of reducing inner psychic experience to an effect of the processes taking place in 'external reality' – what one should do, in addition, is to isolate a 'material' traumatic kernel/remainder at the very heart of 'psychic life' itself.(Žižek, 2000, p.118)

If we turn to the breaking point of psychoanalysis, we may say that it is due to the confusion of Freud. As Malcolm Bowie claims, Freud was very much affected from biology. Although psychoanalysis is not a kind of biology, Freud believed that psychoanalysis and biology would intertwine in the future(Bowie, 2007, p.13). Therefore, Freud was trying to grasp a chaotic structure by reducing it to the terms of science as mentioned above. On the other hand Lacan strongly opposed the Freudian approach. He was offering a more dynamic and even chaotic status for the subject, one which is related to structure of subconscious and language. Lacan retained basic Freudian approaches in his theory, but as distinct from Freud he was trying to handle the formation of subject within an inter-subjective process. That's why he emphasized the importance of language much more than Freud. Lacan's approach was materialist, because his object (human subject) was an inter-subjective social object.

Additionally, in this way, psychoanalysis was offering a method to Marxism for having intercourse with its own *Real*. Instead of becoming a science of economics and accepting the symbolic structure of economics, it should handle its *Real* in a way that resembles psychoanalysis. The nature of class struggle can be seen as the *Real* of Marxism. For instance the symptoms of class struggle cannot be reduced to the science of economics. Social symptoms like mass revolts cannot be fully understood nor can they be symbolized (and cannot be involved in the old system of symbols). Determining the objective conditions of a revolt is insufficient to explain a subjective rebellion. As we discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, Marxism has to avoid becoming a science of economics. Rather Marxists have to approach Marxism as a philosophy of emancipation. That's why Lacan thinks that the Marxist procedure of

producing knowledge tries to grasp its own *Real* within the realm of an old Cartesian paradigm.

Now for a further investigation we should first examine Lacanian psychoanalysis closely. In the following short investigations of part 3.1, we will grasp what the psychoanalytic subject is. I will discuss the process of the formation of the human subject in the same part. After these explanations, in part 3.2, we can check whether the subject of psychoanalysis is a suitable concept for Marxism. I believe that Lacan's method and his terms can be illuminating while discussing Marxist topics. What is more, these same concepts of Lacan can be effective for grasping the nature of subjective acts (which are crucial for Badiou's subject) against the existing social order. In this sense the discussion that follows below is crucial for understanding Badiou. Without such an explanatory part, Badiou's ethics cannot be understood, and if we fail to understand Badiou, we cannot grasp the link between his ethics and Marxism.

The following part will be a link between the 4th Chapter and the 2nd Chapter of this thesis. If we see that Lacanian approaches are suitable for Marxism, then it is reasonable for us to accept Badiou's theory of subject. Then, in the 4th Chapter it will be meaningful for us to discuss whether Badiou's ethics can be the ethics of Marxism or not.

3.1 Lacan's Psychoanalysis And Basic Concepts

Lacan's opposition to Freud regarding his biological approaches, leads Lacan to grasp man within a social context. Man is a biological form but not only a biological form. Therefore it is not reasonable to reduce human psychology to instincts or other biological impulses. Of course the Freudian superego or Oedipus complex are related to society but Lacan's aim was much more related to language. When he asserts that "the unconscious is structured like a language" he shows that he is focusing on the constitution of the speaking subject in relation to other people (as cited in Craib, 2008, p.218). And thus he provides a materialist base for the investigation of psychoanalysis. He tries to explore the subject in its own conditions and asserts that all the social sciences had to be re-defined as sciences of subjectivity. Of course the subject is the subject of psychoanalysis, namely the subject of unconscious.

The formation of the Lacanian subject will be clarified with a concepts. We have to examine the concepts of "Mirror Stage," "Desire & Desire of the Other," the "Oedipus Complex," the "Name of the Father" and the "Big Other" together.

Mirror Stage: In the Mirror Stage, infants aged six to eighteen months begin to distinguish their image in a mirror for the first time; this is the first time that they see themselves as unified individuals. At the same time an infant begins distinguishing others. This period is called the mirror stage in Lacanian terminology. Even from this initial concept we can see that individuation is not a process which has physiological or innate organic properties. Rather it is based on the differentiation between 'me' and 'others'. In this way the 'Ego' should be understood as the category of objectifications. In this process an infant objectifies himself by differentiating himself from others.

Desire & Desire of Other: Regarding desire, Lacanian Psychoanalysis employs the same logic as the mirror stage. Infants somehow learn how to desire and what desire is. In this sense the term "desire" cannot be an instinctive, innate property of the infant. We learn how to desire step by step. We can easily see this situation in daily life. Sometimes in daily social life, some products become very popular. Some songs, some fashion trends etc. are enjoyably consumed by almost everyone. But when the same product loses its popularity, consumption ends. This social phenomena shows that 'I' desire like the others 'desire'. That's why Lacan thinks that desire is always Desire of the Other.

Oedipus Complex, Law, & Name of the Father: In the Oedipus Complex, desire becomes a fundamental concept for the formation of the Lacanian subject. Children at the ages of five or six construct their desires based on the relationship with his/her mother. In psychoanalytic theory, the authentic relation between child and mother is broken by the interruption of the father. In this sense the child considers the father as a rival. As he or she sees father as a threat, the child tries to understand what his or her mother's object of desire is. The child then tries to be the object that the mother desires. (Mentioned 'object of desire' is called phallus in Lacanian theory which in Lacan's later studies is called 'objet petit a') In the normal course of development, the father puts an end to the oedipal desire of the child. Or rather the child accepts that he or she cannot become an object of desire for the mother and gives up his or her struggle. This acceptance is called castration. We must note that at the end of

castration, the child actually accepts the law of the social order. In this sense when a child gets over the processes of the mirror stage, the Oedipus Complex and castration, he or she gets into a social order which is organized by the Law. By accepting castration, the child understands that the Law also leads to the desire of mother. So at this point, the father is not the biological father nor is he the father as an individual. Rather it is the 'name of the father' which causes castration. In this process father becomes the representative of the Law.

The child must come to see that the whims of the mother are themselves ordered by a Law that exceeds and tames them. This law is what Lacan famously dubs the name (*nom*) of the father, trading on a felicitous homonymy in French between *nom* (name) and *non* (the "no!" to incestuous union). [...] This body of *nomoi* is what Lacan calls the big Other of the child's given sociolinguistic community. Insofar as the force of its Law is what the child at castration perceives to be what moves the mother and gives the father's words their "performative force" (Austin), Lacan also calls it the "phallic order. (IEP)

In Lacan's psychoanalysis, Freud's concepts of id, ego and superego are interlocked and they change their forms based on language. We should also add that for Lacan, history is the result of the unsuccessful evolution of the human being. As human beings did not successfully adapt to nature, a linguistic animal became possible. Human beings had to develop social life based on language due to their unsuccessful adaptation. That is to say, human beings have developed subjectivity within a social context by means of language. Without the context which is provided by language, the subject cannot be possible. In this sense Lacan's model for psychoanalysis is anti-essentialist and materialist (Chiesa, 2008, p.561). Thus we should assess Lacanian approaches in the same way that Žižek approaches materialism. Lacanian psychoanalysis is materialist, because it handles the subject in its own conditions. It does not reduce the subject to a biological formation and takes the social nature of human beings into consideration.

Language and Subject: In one of his most famous proposals, Lacan says that 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. We need to understand what he means by this proposal. We need to find the relation between the subjectivization process and language. I have already mentioned that the subject or individual emerges in a social context step by step. Here it is explicit that a child becomes an individual only after getting into a symbolic order, and only if he or she has already learned the laws of that symbolic order can he or she can be a speaking subject. In this sense Lacan's

approach is very much similar to the later Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. After psychoanalytic stages are passed, one can get into the social context and rules of the language. Only in context can he or she can objectify himself or herself.

For the main structure where the objectifications are done by the subject, Lacan uses Saussure's system of signifiers. This means that the system of signifiers constitutes a decisive structure in the language. That is to say, language has decisive parts and indecisive parts. Language is the sum of these two functions. Therefore we must also discuss another point regarding the Lacanian understanding of language - the indecisive part. the indecisive part of language is the part which causes all of the structural changes. The decisive part of language is the place where the 'ego' is defined. As mentioned above, the decisive part in the system of signs allows one to distinguish herself as 'I'. By contrast, the indecisive part of language is the place of the unconscious subject; it is the place of real subject. The indecisive cannot be determined by the decisive part of the language. This means that the indecisive part in certain conditions causes changes in the decisive parts of the symbolic system. In other words, symbolic structure is open to changes which are caused by the indecisive parts of language. The indecisive part of language can be defined as the performative part, because it is able to change the symbolic system of the subject. This part of language is the part which is able to shake the system of the ego. In this sense, while decisive parts of language bring to mind constative usages of language, the indecisive part of language brings to mind performative usages of language. Lacan's understanding of the subject can be clearly summarized as below:

Lacan articulates his position concerning the subject by way of a fundamental distinction between the ego or "*moi*"/"me" and the subject intimated by the shifter "*je*"/"I." The subject is a split subject, Lacan claims, not only insofar as—Freud dixit—it has consciousness and an unconscious. [...]When Lacan says the subject is split, he means also that, as a subject of language, it will always evince the following two levels. The first is the *ego*, or subject of the enunciated. This is the self wherein the subject perceives/anticipates its imaginary unity. [...]But this is to be distinguished from a second "level" of subjectivity: the subject of the *enunciation*. [...] The subject of the unconscious is the subject of the enunciation, Lacan insists. (IEP)

According to this explanation, once again we can see that subject of psychoanalysis cannot be determined nor defined by the existing symbolic order. In this sense while the subject is born into a communication system and into social context, it actually

goes beyond this symbolic order. From the beginning to the end, the subject attempts to be included into the symbolic order. While he is being included in the symbolic order he also constructs himself by means of social context. We have to keep in mind that there is always some residual which could not be included into the symbolic order. This residual is a kind of pre-symbolic and indefinable existence. Pre-symbolic existence of residual can be the result of unsuccessful adaptation of the human animal to nature. If man had adapted to nature successfully, there would be no need for any symbolic system. Human beings would be embedded into their life activities like all other animals. If human beings were adapted to nature very successfully 'the residual' would constitute the whole of human psychology. Namely, man would have survived as an 'in itself' being. This means that we all still have some 'in itself' parts in our psychology to a certain degree. That's why a subject cannot be reduced to the order of ego; it can't be reduced to simple data or knowledge as I explained previously. There is always tension between the symbolic order and the 'in itself' character of 'the residual'. From this point we can move towards the topology of the speaking subject in the eyes of Lacan.

The Real: The *Real* is the focus which cannot be involved in the Symbolic. A baby's first experiences before having speaking ability or in ancient times, the facts of nature that could not be symbolized, can be examples of the *Real*. As Lacan says the *Real* is impossible, therefore death always represents the *Real*, because it is impossible to symbolize the death as an experience (Žižek, 2008, p.247). Thus we can understand that the *Real* is a category which cannot totally be defined. But it is a necessary category for the constitution of the subject. Culture, language or social processes always try to capture the realm of the *Real*. But as the *Real* cannot be captured, it always comes to the stage and shakes the existing symbolic structure. For social contexts, catastrophic moments that destroy all cultural codes can be marked as the return of the *Real*.

In case of man, we can understand by term "*Real*", the pre-individual or pre-symbolic part of human psychology. It is a kind of animalistic existence which is similar to the Freudian id. However the *Real* cannot be suppressed like the id of Freud. For the whole life of an individual, the *Real* is always there. Sometimes it becomes more easily observable in cases of mental illness. In "normal" cases, it

continuously sends 'messages' whenever it has difficulties about accommodating itself to the symbolic order.

The Symbolic: I can say 'me' in the realm of Symbolic. The formation of 'me' begins in the realm of the *Imaginary*. But 'me' is possible in the linguistic, grammatical and cultural structure of the Symbolic. Moreover, the subject is constructed and split by the Symbolic (Žižek, 2008, p.250). The symbolic is a kind of web or system, which is constructed by signifiers. Here the point is that if a signifier is alone it has no value. Signifiers have to be together and construct a web (Nasio, 2009, p.50). Of course the web of signifiers are meaningful if there is a social context. That is to say, whenever we say 'system of signifiers' we are actually talking about a social context.

The Imaginary: Images are the tools of the *jouissance*. (Jouissance is similar to the Freudian concept of libido.) An image is not a completed figure. Rather it presents itself to us as a clue, such as a color, a line of a smile, a voice of a melody etc. Jouissance changes its own place, rolls around, by way of fragmentary images (Nasio, 2009, p.52). The imaginary is constructed at the *mirror stage*. This is the stage in which the first identifications begin and forms the 'me'. Slavoj Žižek, in *The Ticklish Subject*, quotes from Hegel's *Jenaer Realphilosophie* in order to explain what we should understand by the term "imaginary":

The human being is this night, this empty nothing, that contains everything in its simplicity – an unending wealth of many representations, images, of which none belongs to him – or which are not present. This night, interior of nature, that exists here – pure self – in phantasmagorical representations, is night all around it, in which here shoots a bloody head – there another white ghastly apparition, suddenly here before it, and just so disappears. One catches sight of this night when one looks human beings in the eye – into a night that becomes awful. (As cited in Žižek, 1999, p.29-30)

The imaginary is a kind of interface where the images float. When human beings enter into social contexts, in other words when they are included in the symbolic order, the imaginary functions like a tool box. Using the images of the imaginary, leads to a correlation or an overlapping between the symbolic order and the subject. Thus the subject can exist in the symbolic order.

The relation of symbolic, real, and imaginary can be represented with the Borromean knot depicted in Figure 3.1. The point is if any part of one chain is broken then the whole system falls apart. So these three structures are very much intertwined.

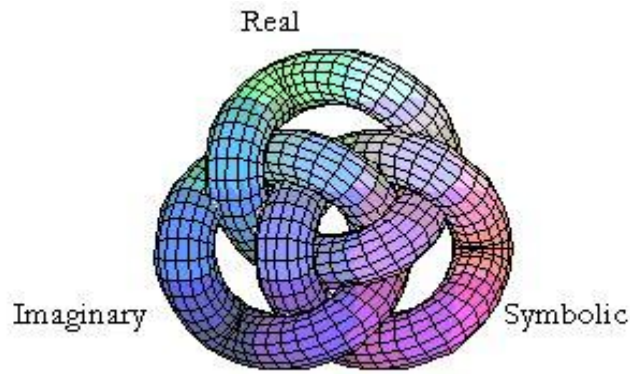


Figure 3.1 : Lacan's three orders.

One and Its Place: "One" is a special signifier. It can be considered as the master signifier. This signifier has a crucial role in Lacanian psychoanalysis. We may say that, the decisiveness of the symbolic order is actually achieved by the master signifier. From a different viewpoint, "One" can give meaning to the world in light of the master signifier. We can compare the role of the master signifier with the role of the last word of a sentence. As it is known, unless the last word is uttered, the sentence does not gain any meaning. Therefore the last word determines the exact functions and meanings of all of the previous words in that sentence. In other words, it determines the decisiveness of the sentence. All other words float in the sentence, until the last word - the master signifier, plays its role. In this example, the uttered sentence represents the context. The last word provides the decisiveness of the context. In social affairs we may understand the role of the master signifier by an analogy. If we put a colorful glass in front of a source of illumination, the objects in the room are seen in the color of the colorful glass. Like a master signifier, a colorful glass gives color to all of the objects in the room. In this sense, the master signifier plays a contextual role in terms of the other elements. For instance for a communist, terms like 'liberty', 'labor', 'democracy' gain idiosyncratic meaning, because the master signifier 'communism' determines their meaning in the context of communism.

The indecisive part of language causes structural changes in the language. Additionally, we observed that the *Real* cannot be captured and it always comes to the stage and shakes the symbolic structure. This matter is directly related to the replacement of the master signifier with a new One. I mean that the *Real* has a catastrophic effect and it changes the master signifier of a symbolic order. This

means that a new One as a signifier, moves from an unconscious chain of signifiers to the surface, to the order of utterances. In the order of utterances, it settles to its place and begins to determine the decisiveness of the symbolic order. So the *Real* acts performatively and changes the One of the symbolic order. Then we can say that the *Real* has a performative function, whereas the Symbolic has a constative function.

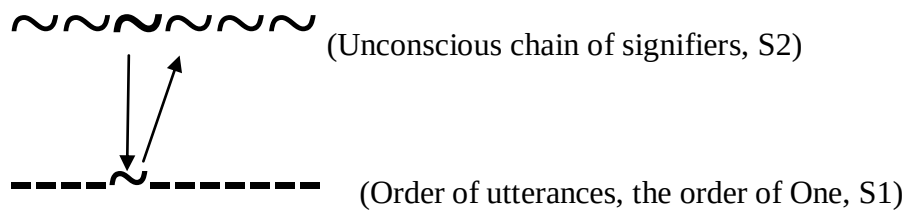


Figure 3.2 : The One's place.

As shown in Figure 3.2, the unconscious, by means of the *Real*'s performative character, occurs at the same time in the chain of signifiers and in the order of One. Therefore the entire structure, always includes the unconscious.

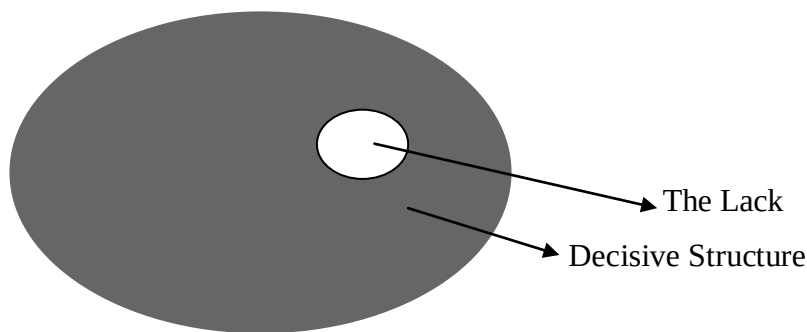


Figure 3.3 : Plentitude and The Lack.

Figure 3.3 explains the One's place and its role from another angle. The master signifier – the One - is located at the place of lack on the symbolic order. If we think of the structure as fullness, without a lack, it does not gain any meaning. We can grasp this point by trying to think an eternal fullness and a total nothingness. Both trials provide the same weird and meaningless experience. So Lack gives the stability or meaning to the whole structure. In this sense the One is a signifier which does is not signified but at the same time determines the structure by its absence. That's why we can mark it as master signifier. The One's place is a focus, which can be

explained only negatively as it cannot be symbolized in the symbolic order. And this status of the One's place shows that it is the surfacing place of the *Real* at the same time.

Beginning from the Imaginary, the subject tries to give meaning to such a lack. To be established, the subject needs to compensate the main lack. Therefore the subject creates an object for desire which compensates the lack in the symbolic structure. This is a fantasy object as we discussed previously in talking about the Oedipus complex. The subject cannot give meaning to the un-symbolized lack, and creates a fantasy, the subject can construct itself only by such a fantasy; in this way it feels in safe against the *Real*, against the meaningless lack. So an object of desire (*objet petit a*) is a founder fantasy, a necessary plus object which compensates the void of the whole structure. We must remember that fantasy does not conceal the subject's struggle to be the 'mother's object of desire'. More explicitly, the fantasy does not conceal the child's innocent incestuous desire. Rather fantasy conceals the deficiency of the symbolic system. That is, the child's incestuous desire and its prohibition by the Law, is the folding screen which leads one to form a subject. And by this folding screen one cannot see the deficiency of the psychological system. Moreover, we can see that the founder fantasy of a human being conceals the existence of the *Real* of her psychology.

Here we may ask the question where is the *jouissance*? As has been shown, there is no Freudian suppression process in the above explanation, because there is no subconscious, although there is unconscious. So we see the *jouissance* as a kind of "energy" in the dynamism of the structure of signifiers. There is no suppression because the unconscious is always at the surface, in the form of the signifiers. Therefore starting from the birth to the end, the speaking subject is exposed to the symptoms. This proposal means that while the *Real* continuously shows itself, it does not do so with the realm of lack, it performatively occupies the entire symbolic order, it disturbs the decisive symbolic order and when it retreats towards its own place, a new symbolic order is born.

The above definitions give us an idea about the formation of the Lacanian subject. As we see Lacan's theory is very much intertwined with philosophy of Language. It is also very much related to social context. Correspondingly, his theory always allows for performative subjective acts. His theory basically shows that subject is possible

because of the incoherence of the social context. Therefore any idea put forward that a decisive social structure totally determines the subject is invalid for Lacanian theory. That is to say, Lacan's understanding of subjects enables a philosophy of emancipation. Moreover we can assert that his theory also enables us to investigate ethics for the subject. Against Foucault, Žižek explains the position of the subject in relation to social structure and Power:

In other words: what effectively eludes the controlling grasp of Power is not so much the external In-itself it tries to dominate but, rather, the obscene supplement which sustains its own operation. (Žižek, 1999, p.257)

This position of the subject shows that, the social context or power which represents existing the social order, or linguistic context, or whatever it is, is far from totally controlling the subject. It cannot control even itself. Then Lacanian concept of fantasy explains that, fantasy conceals the inadequacy of the whole structure.

3.2 Marxism and Lacanian Psychoanalysis

Marx's political economy and Freud's psychoanalysis were deal with similar concepts. Society was in a contradictory state and human psychology was also in a contradictory state. In Marx's theory class struggle was the main conflict of society and in Freud's theory, the id's attacks and social order were in contradictory positions. So in order to understand the sustainability of the systems, Marxists were trying to grasp ideology and Freud was trying to define the superego.

Moreover the scientific object of Freud, namely the human psyche, was being effected from the social context and social context was the field of Marx. Reciprocally, Marx was trying to grasp objective laws of History, but at the same time human beings were creating history. So these two approaches were being intertwined. Without social context Freud could not grasp human psychology. Similarly the investigation of how human beings are affected by ideology or the investigation of how they attend to ideology, was possible only after exploration of the subject. Therefore Marx's theory could be completed by Freudian studies. If Freudian research can be included in Marxist theory of ideology, then Marxism can become an integrated theory. Only after that Marxism can grasp the root of the matter as Marx writes in *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*:

“[...] theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself.” (Marx, 1843b)

For a materialist integration of two theories, Lacanian psychoanalysis is much more effective than Freudian studies. Lacan’s linguistic approaches include the real materialist base for grasping the human, since it introduces language to understanding the nature of the human being. The establishment of man is possible only with language; this is the real material base of man as she is formed in social context. By taking the formation of man into consideration, we may see how ideology is being established and how it works. So we will try to observe the Lacanian concepts in Marxist theory and reciprocally we will investigate whether there are Marxist terms in Lacan’s theory. Thus we may define a Lacanian subject in Marxist theory and check the ethics for such a subject.

3.2.1 Social abstractions based on nothing

Slavoj Žižek in his book *Sublime Object of Ideology*, tries to answer a question which was previously asked by Sohn-Rethel. The question is whether a form of thought which is external and prior to thought is possible (Žižek, 2008a, p.9-16) Actually it is possible. A form, which cannot be defined ontologically as thought, but that has the same form with thought, is possible. Sohn-Rethel’s discovery was that ‘the exchange abstraction is *not* thought but it has the *form* of thought’ (as cited in Žižek, 2008a, p.13). The necessity of a universal unit for exchange was prior to the universal unit concept of all sciences and external to cogitation. Sciences use abstract units to overcome scientific difficulties. Money has the same ‘abstract unit’ status. This priority and externality of the form of exchange to thought was an awkward experience for philosophy. Because this experience shows philosophy that the form of thought was already “on an external stage”, the reality of the form of thought was out of thought; a kind of symbolic was out there. According to Žižek, philosophy was also possible only by “blindness” to this external stage (Žižek, 2008a, p.14). In short, the “scandal” was that philosophical contemplation was possible only with an unconscious external symbolic order that is prior to and external to the *cogito*. In Žižek’s words this awkward situation can be defined as such:

Philosophical reflection is thus subjected to uncanny experience similar to the one summarized by the old oriental formula ‘thou art that’: there, in the external effectivity of the exchange process, is your proper place; there is the theatre in which your truth was performed before you took cognizance of it. The confrontation with this place is unbearable because philosophy as such *is defined by* its blindness to this place: it cannot take into consideration without dissolving itself, without losing its consistency. (Žižek, 2008a, p.14)

Following this quotation we can put forward that the symbolic as an ‘external’ formation is one of the necessary conditions of thinking philosophically. This is parallel to the ideas that are explained in 3.1 of this thesis. But there is one more point which is crucial in this quotation. This point is the blindness of the philosophy to its own situation. Philosophy and cogitating, insists on being blind. What’s more, we can say that cogitation is possible only by ignoring blindness which is cogitation’s own founding condition. Here we are faced with an awkward property of cogitating or knowing. We are trying to define a new kind of knowledge which completes Donald Rumsfeld’s famous ‘philosophical classification’ regarding knowing. Rumsfeld was defining three types of knowledge or knowing forms and those were: known knowns, known unknowns, unknown unknowns (Rumsfeld, 2010). But now we are faced to unknown knowns. And this unknown knowledge about our cogitating is a founding principle as I mentioned.

Here by the term ‘unknown knowns’ actually we are defining the status of the unconscious. We know something about our cogitating but we need to forget this knowledge to be able to cogitate and to be able to philosophize. Regarding this founder blindness, the important point is that it is not about any suppressed data. Rather blindness is about the foundation process of cogitation. In psychoanalytic terms we can say that in a dream this disregarded knowledge is not embedded in the content of the dream, but is rather in the form of dream and in the process of the dreaming. We can grasp this more explicitly by an analogy: the message of the unconscious cannot be found in the movie but it can be found in the screening process of the movie or in the order of the scenes of the movie. Therefore the content of the movie is not suppressed. On the other hand the thing suppressed is the fact that you were in a cinema. If you do not forget that you were in a cinema hall and if you do not abandon yourself to the movie you cannot experience the pleasure of the movie. That is to say forgetting or ‘suppressing’ the fact that you were in cinema is a founding compound of watching a movie.

Now we can better understand Sohn-Rethel's "scandalous" discovery. If we keep reasoning with regard to money, we can see what is suppressed in the process of exchange. Money's material is a special material; it is an idealized material and its worth is independent of its real material worth. Namely, money as a symbol does not symbolize the actual worth of a piece of paper or of a few grams of metal but it symbolizes another worth. Through this property of money, the exchange process as a kind of abstraction becomes absolutely external to cogitation. This phenomenon can be easily observed in daily life. People actually know that money is a piece of metal or a piece of paper but if they take this point into consideration exchange becomes impossible. That is why even exchange is not a thought, but rather has the form of thought. Then we can say that exchange as a result of social abstraction, bears on a suppression which is anchored in exchange's own occurring process. This suppression, suppresses the money's actual material worth, the actual social abstraction, and the creation of the same abstraction. So we can find the Lacanian lack/void here in the exchange process. The void of the exchange process is formed around the fact that it was based on a fictive valuing, on a social abstraction. Therefore, exchanging has the form of thought but a special kind of thought, unconscious thought.

In the case of Marxist theory we can use the same approach. Marxist theory also focuses on processes. For instance, Marxism does not assert that capitalists are unfair with regard to wages. The working process is based on a wage system in a capitalist economy. In this system if we focus on the problem of whether the wages were fair or not, we make a mistake. To recall the cinema analogy, focusing on fairness of the wages in capitalist economic order, is like focusing on the so-called secret message given in the movie. But as we discussed, the real secret is not in the content of movie, but the fact that we were in the cinema hall. Instead of focusing on the fairness of wages, we need to ask a new question: why does labor in capitalist economy get the form of a wage? In other words what is the secret of capitalist way of economy, why in this economy do we encounter the labor in the form of a commodity? We already discussed this point in Part 2.1 of this thesis in a different context. Now if we examine the quotation once again we clearly understand the parallelism between Lacanian method and the Marxist way of analyzing capitalist economy:

To clamour for *equal or even equitable retribution* on the basis of the wages system is the same as to clamour for *freedom* on the basis of the slavery system. What you think just or equitable is out of the question. The question is: What is necessary and unavoidable with a given system of production. (Marx, 1865)

Here Marx does not care whether the wages are fair or not. Rather he focuses on the form of economic operations. It is explicit; for Marx if there is any secret, it can be in the form of the economy. Similarly, Lacan also focuses on the form of dreams to explicate the message of the unconscious as was mentioned above. Therefore there is nothing secret behind the meaning of the scenes of our dreams and there is no experience of injustice which is covered by the capitalist ideology. We can summarize this as follows: the point for a proletarian is not the cost of her labor, it is unimportant whether her salary is be more or less, 'fair' or 'unfair' (the counterpart of this point in psychoanalysis is the content of the dream). The point is that in this form of economy, her labor necessarily takes the form of a commodity. So this proletarian while struggling for a 'fair' wage, misses the important point and accepts the form of the economy. Therefore using the actual life ideology, causes the proletarian to forget the lack of economic structure which is on the very surface. Namely, struggling for wages in daily life becomes a kind of escape. Even though the proletarian may perceive that there is a problem in the form of the economy, she keeps working under same conditions.

We can give one more example for this superficial lack/secret. If we turn to the Marxist definition of "fetishism" in *Capital* Vol.1, we can see a similar situation:

There it is a definite social relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. [...] therefore, the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things. (Marx, 1867)

All people know that "social relations between things" is impossible. There is nothing to do with this knowledge for the ideology. Here we need to check the practical side once again, because the source of social abstraction is on the practical side. In daily life social relations are based on wealth. But the wealth, or let us say money, is based on the acceptance mentioned above. Money is valuable only by a social abstraction; otherwise it has no value. Additionally its value is possible within a social context, in our time, within capitalist relations of production. Here fetishism

is not a magical influence but the abstraction of money from social relations. This abstraction is done out of thought. It is done by the economic order, in practice. In this way money gets a value that seems as if it is an immanent property of the money, a property which appears to be independent of the economic order. So once again even if people know that money has no material value, it must be forgotten in practice. Therefore fetishism is not the relation between things, it is the conducting of social practices by a fallacious social abstraction which is external to thought. The fallacious character of this abstraction, which is necessary for the symbolic (for the ideology), is the *Real* of the ideology.

3.2.2 How ideology operates and the advent of subject

We can handle the ideology with same method. It is usually and wrongly considered as a kind of false consciousness. Or it is thought of as a kind of curtain which covers reality, namely a curtain that covers (for instance) exploitation. If we see ideology as the sum of misdirecting thoughts, beliefs, traditions that mask the real problems of society, then how can we make ethical claims to people? If people, surviving in a capitalist economy, are under the misdirection of bourgeois ideology, how one can charge people with living in an unethical way? On the other hand, is it possible to live an ethical life under the conditions of a misdirected ideology? Similarly, we can ask a much more radical question: If we are living under a misdirected ideology, is it still proper to judge human beings as subjects? I think the function of ideology can better be grasped with a Lacanian approach, because I think in this topic Lacanian approach can be supplementary to a Marxist understanding of ideology.

As it is explained in 3.1 the symbolic order is formed around a void focus (*Real*) which cannot be symbolized. Therefore the symbolic needs to continue as if there is no *Real* or as if there is no focus which is there by its absence. So ideology introduces social reality as a kind of escape from the *Real* of symbolic order.

[...] in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel (conceptualized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as 'antagonism': a traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized) The function of ideology is not to offer us a point of escape from reality but to offer us the social reality itself as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel. (Žižek, 2008, p.45)

Žižek gives the example of bureaucracy; people know that bureaucracy is not all-powerful. We all know it, but the bureaucracy is possible only by accepting that it is all-powerful. The limitations of bureaucracy must be forgotten in practical life. Therefore the symbolic system of bureaucracy is formed around its limitations, around a kind of lack. Here ideology maintains the fantasy in practical life. Thus the ideology is not at the side of “knowing”, it is at the side of practice. In this sense, the ideology leaves the form of false consciousness and turns to false practice. The authority of bureaucracy is actually based on nothing. It is only a necessity; it does not bear on absolute rational principles. This is the *Real* of bureaucracy, and the ideology lets us proceed in practice as if its authority has some universally valid claims (Žižek, 2008, p.34).

That’s why ideology is not a false consciousness. Rather ideology can be a kind of formation just like the symbolic order of Lacan. Ideology does not misdirect people in the familiar sense. But by this belief (ideology misdirects us!) people wage war on the ideology (in the worst case people think that the ideology was a bad concept). This idea has a presupposition, namely that there are rational human beings on one side and the ideology of capitalists which deceives people on the other. In the wake of this presupposition, the impossible antagonism of the whole structure goes unnoticed. Here ideology is grasped as an enemy but this hostility causes us to overlook the inadequacy of ideology.

The result of this approach is very fruitful. It shows that we cannot win a war against ideology, because ideology is a foundational fantasy of the capitalist symbolic order. Such a struggle against ideology still remains in the realm of ideology. Instead of trying to annihilate it, we must change it. We already know that an ideological order is formed around a void. This means that as a symbolic order it has a contradictory side. So we can re-establish ideology only by focusing on this contradictory point. Thus the symbolic-ideological order can be shaken and a new symbolic order can be formed only after focusing on the lack inherent in this ideological order. This is the way we ‘traverse our fantasy’. We cannot demolish ideology, but it can be ‘traversed’, it can be changed.

Once again we can refer to an example. One of our postmodern times’ motto - especially in the youth movement- is 'be yourself!', and of course individualism is inherent in this motto. One can easily consider this motto as a kind of libertarian

slogan, because it can be formulated as such: against the dominant ideology, be yourself; against the reactionist ideology of family, of education and of religion just be yourself! But when you break all these effects of ideology you may reach nowhere, because the motto 'be yourself' has meaning only within this existing ideology. In this way one tries to liberate himself from the reactionist character of dominant ideology and tries to break it down, but he misses the impossibility, the lack that is inherent in the existing dominant ideology.

In short, extreme individualization reverts to its opposite, leading to ultimate identity crisis: subjects experience themselves as radically unsure, with no 'proper face', changing from one imposed mask to another, since what is behind the mask is ultimately *nothing*, a horrifying void they are frantically trying to fill in with their compulsive activity or by shifting between more and more idiosyncratic hobbies or ways of dressing, meant to accentuate their individual identity. (Žižek, 1999, p.373)

Is this not similar to Marx's approaches? Marx's understanding also investigates the advent of new social order but he never rejects the necessity of capitalism for the real advent of communism. For instance, for the advent of communism, Marx does not offer any coup d'état which is made for annihilating the existing economic order. Rather he handles the economic system's inherent lack or its inadequacy and in all of his theoretical studies he focuses on this issue. As discussed in parts 2.1 and 2.2 he also does not investigate ethical reasons for the advent of a new society, because he searches the reasons of communism within the existing capitalist society. He always tries to explore the main contradiction of the society and tries to grasp how the contradictory status of the existing order will be solved. So his approach to the existing order cannot be compared to any youth movement's rebelling political acts. He does not try to annihilate 'order' but he heralds the change of the capitalist order to the communist order.

At this point we can give a current example of traversing the fantasy concept. As is known Microsoft Corporation was charged with being a monopoly and split by a court order. Marxism and the Lacanian approach offer a very strong insight regarding this issue. As Žižek reasonably advises here, the correct Marxist attitude which can traverse the fantasy can be socializing Microsoft Corporation, instead of splitting it by court order (Žižek, 1997). When you try to prevent Microsoft from being a monopoly, you choose reasoning in the realm of the state or in the realm of an ongoing ideology; but if you choose to socialize Microsoft, you change the order of

things. Socializing Microsoft does not kill the order, it replaces it with a new one, and in this way society traverses the fantasy and removes the symptom.

In terms of ethics then, the Lacanian approach reaches an important point. Ideology as a kind of symbolic order lets us form ourselves as individuals. This is the same process with the castration process which is foundational in the formation of a child. By accepting the symbolic law, (which was enacted by the name of the father) we form ourselves. With regard to ideology, it means that ideology is not a kind of mis-director but the realm in which we form ourselves. Applying the same ideology to the concept of daily life means that we miss the lack that is inherent in its structure. If ideological symbolic order is itself inadequate then it means it is always open to change. The subject is possible in the symbolic order of ideology due to the inadequacy of the symbolic order. Thus we can say that when the ideological symbolic order is suspended due to its own inadequacy, at some special moments, the subject can play its ethical role during the change. In other words and in Lacanian terms, subjects become possible by traversing the fantasy.

That is to say there is a subject in Lacanian theory which becomes visible at some important sequences. At these moments in psychoanalytic cure, the analysand reshapes his symbolic order. The Analysand encounters the *Real* of his psyche, at the same time that the *Real* shakes the whole symbolic order. This is the moment in which the symbolic order is suspended, and makes the subject possible. This approach shows that the Lacanian subject is located on a gap, on a void in the symbolic.

Of course this approach to the subject is parallel to a Marxist analysis of social order. Against any humanist approach, Marxism locates the subject in the inadequacy of economic order. If we apply the same Lacanian logic to the issue of the subject, we can reach an important point. Although Marx's approach differs from humanism he also accepts the subject as the real actor. To grasp this point firstly we should accept that Marx cannot be thought of as a determinist; in his theory there is always place for a subject. For instance in *The Holy Family* Marx and Engels writes as below:

History does nothing, it “possesses no immense wealth”, it “wages no battles”. It is *man*, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; “history” is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve *its own* aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims. (Marx and Engels, 1845)

On the other hand it is known that Marxism emphasizes that in the final analysis economic structure determines the superstructure. But is this determination absolute? If the answer is yes, then there is nothing to do for emancipation; but if the answer is no, the determination of an economic base is not absolute. In any case the subject matter seems problematic. How can the proletariat as a historical subject be possible? We should apply Lacanian logic in order to grasp this issue.

Now the discussion about the social abstraction discussed in the previous part of this thesis can be improved. We can see a similar concept of void in Lacan, in the nature of all capitalist systems. As is known, exploitation in capitalism is the result of surplus value production. This is the Lacanian '*objet petit a*' of the capitalist structure. As discussed in part 3.1 *objet petit a* is an imaginary psychic object which is imagined by a person in order to compensate for the lack of a symbolic order. Without the *objet petit a* one cannot endure the catastrophic effect of the *Real* which cannot be symbolized. So he always designates an object of desire in order to rescue the symbolic system. We can compare the *objet petit a*, with the fake rabbit which is used in greyhound races. The dogs can never catch their *objet petit a* –rabbit-, but they keep running, resulting in a race. So the function of surplus value in capitalism is parallel to the fake rabbit of the greyhound races. We can open it, but it is never possible to catch the absolute profit in capitalist economy. No capitalist can stop trying to increase profit rates, because in that case, that particular capitalist falls outside of the greyhound race. Therefore he needs to increase profit and increase the degree of exploitation.

This, then, is the homology between surplus-value the 'cause' which sets in the motion the capitalist process of production –and surplus-enjoyment, the object cause of desire. Is not the paradoxical topology of the movement of capital, the fundamental blockage which resolves and reproduces itself through frenetic activity, *excessive* power as the very form of appearance of a fundamental *impotence*- this immediate passage, this coincidence of limit and *excess*, of lack and surplus- precisely that of the Lacanian *objet petit a*, of the leftover which embodies the fundamental, constative lack?(Žižek, 2008, p.54)

The *objet petit a* of the capitalism, surplus value, refers to the lack of its structure. The increasingly prevalent process of producing surplus value is the way capitalism survives. Otherwise capitalism logically cannot reach a peaceful point and all its consistency disperses. This is one side of the lack in the capitalist order.

There is another side of the lack of capitalist order. Capitalist pays the wage for a certain time to the proletarian, then within that certain time the proletarian produces more value than he received from the capitalist. Moreover, if he gets the exact equivalent of his working hours, the capitalist cannot profit. This is the core of capitalist exploitation. But this process has catastrophic results for the society; firstly for more production more proletarians come together in one factory. The emergence of the surplus value brings the proletariat together as a social class. Therefore, according to classical Marxist view, the relations of production cause the forces of production to be strengthened more and more until the moment that the relations of production cannot endure anymore. This is the main idea of class struggles. So we can note that the contradiction between the relations of production and the forces of production, is another appearance of the same inadequacy of the capitalist order which cannot be symbolized in the capitalist ideology.

But once again, the inadequacy of the system is missed out by ideology as such: all the proletarians know that they produce much more value than they get. They can see how the capitalist exploits them, but in practice they have to forget this point. They act in their actual life as if there is no exploitation. They act as if their labor was already a commodity. Moreover, we need to add to this point the contradiction between the relations of production and the forces of production. This contradiction has a founder function in the capitalist economy because it causes surplus value and vice versa. So ideology causes people in practice to behave according to an abstraction that asserts that workers' labor is a commodity; in capitalism under normal conditions, workers get the exact equivalent of their labor as their wage. The entire judicial system determines this abstraction as valid when it is actually void. Capitalism once again organizes the practical social world by an abstraction which is actually fetishist. Ideology once again provides a run away from the *Real* of the structure to the reality of daily life.

We can keep reasoning regarding the capitalist economic system and reach to the point where the Marxist subject emerges. As mentioned above, the contradiction between the relations of production and the forces of production, generates the “impossible core”, the *Real* of the capitalist economy. It is impossible because a system which is structured around a contradiction can never reach a balanced, peaceful status. Its existence is marked with the contradiction. So, one can predict that there is place for the historical subject, the proletariat. Therefore Marx's

historical subject, the proletariat, is the result of the capitalists systems own lack. Like the Lacanian subject, the Marxist subject also becomes visible at moments of change. The lack of the order can cause all of the symbolic regulations to be temporarily suspended, and at such specific moments, the proletariat can play his ethical role in history, as the social abstractions are abolished. In other words, the lack which is immanent in the structure, while making out the order and power, also provides the emergence of the resistance to the power and constructs the subject (Newman, 2006, p.216-225).

If we consider any determinist idea which asserts that ‘there can be no subjective act but only determination of structure’ this seems contrary to Marxism and the psychoanalytic approach. Similarly any idea put forward that ‘the subject is a derivation of the symbolic, it is only a role given by ideology’ seems contrary to Marxism and the psychoanalytic approach. For instance take the famous statement of Louis Althusser: “[...] *all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject” (Althusser, 1970). Such a formulation of the subject definitely assesses the subject as a derivation of ideology. The subject has nothing to do if we accept this formulation. And of course such an approach does not give any hope for emancipation. However, I want to emphasize that neither the subject of Marxism nor the subject of psychoanalysis is such a desperate subject. We can put it like this. Any idea that defends the subject as a derivation of ideology refers to the order of the ‘enunciated’ in Lacan. On the contrary, Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis refer to the order of ‘enunciation’ while discussing the subject. In his brilliant essay Mladen Dolar formulates this important point as below (Dolar’s formula mentions only the subject of psychoanalysis but we can surely use the same formula for the subject of Marxism.)³:

...the subject is precisely the failure to become the subject, that is, the psychoanalytic subject is the failure to become an Althusserian one. For Althusser, the subject is what makes ideology work, for psychoanalysis, the subject emerges where ideology fails. (Dolar)

Basically we showed that Lacanian terms can clarify some points in Marxist theory. We can define many more concepts in Marxist theory from a Lacanian perspective. For instance the Commune of Paris seems like an attack of *Real* on the symbolic

³ Also see the discussions in 4.1 and Figure 4.1 of this thesis.

order of the time as the proletariat, for the first time in history, abolished the classes and established a direct democracy. It was an impossible idea within the symbolic order of that time. In this sense the impossibility of communism in a capitalist paradigm can also have a positive meaning in Marxist theory from Lacan's perspective. Within 3.2 part of this thesis we will not discuss the intervention of historical subject. Until now we discussed how the historical subject occurs in Marxist theory and which points should we focus on in order to see the real subject, how ideology operates and how people attend this operation. I tried to explicate the advent of historical subject of Marxism with the basic terms and approaches of Lacan. We reached a point that asserts that a subject is possible, even if there are economical and ideological structures that have a determination capability. Additionally it is shown that Lacanian terms are quite compatible with Marxist theory.

So for now we can stop investigating the parallels between Marxism and Lacanian Psychoanalysis. In next part we will focus on the Ethics of Alain Badiou to see whether we can find a relation between Marxism and his ethics, which has its roots in psychoanalysis. We will discuss to what extent his ethics is compatible with Lacanian psychoanalysis and Marxism. If we can find significant correlations between these three theoretical approaches then we may conclude that Alain Badiou's ethics can be the complementary ethical dimension of Marxism.

4. BADIOU'S PSYCHOANALYTIC ETHICS AND MARXISM

In a broad sense the ethics of Alain Badiou is based on the concept of fidelity. While enhancing his ethics he uses Lacanian psychoanalysis as his base. His theory defines a subject through psychoanalysis. However his subject is not an individual person; it is not only in the realm of psychoanalysis. Rather it is a social subject which is on stage at historical moments. Therefore we can say, Badiou tries to solve the problem of the subject in history. He tries to analyze some special moments in history when the subject shows itself and causes ethics to emerge. In this part, we will examine whether his use of Lacanian concepts is compatible with Marxism or not. We will check whether the emergence of Badiou's subject and his handling of ethics are helpful for the establishment of Marxist ethics or not. In the first part we will investigate the formation of event and subject. In the second part we will consider his ethics of militant political processes, depends upon his understanding of event and subject conceptualizations.

4.1 Event and the Subject of Badiou

Firstly we need to understand how the subject of Badiou rises? As we did while handling Marx's historical subject and Lacan's subject, we should define Badiou's subject and discuss its compatibility with the prior ones. It is mentioned above that the subject in Badiou's theory is not a single individual but a historical and social one. In his theory, the subject is always there but sometimes becomes visible in history. We should define it like this: the subject is structurally always there, and there is always place for Badiou's subject in the social structure, but this subject very rarely becomes historical. Parallel to Marxist theory Badiou offers the following remarks:

Every real dialectical process entangles a structural contradiction and a historical contradiction, *affecting the same terms*. The second is anchored in the first. This anchorage [...] is the nodal point of the question of the subject. (Badiou, 1982, p.25)

Thus we see that Badiou tries to explore ‘the new’ within ‘the old’. Namely, he focuses on how the new forms occur in the existing forms. Therefore his subject can be defined as a kind of mediator that leads to historical changes that are at the same time results of structural contradictions. In other words, in Badiou's theory, the structural inevitableness of historical changes are realized by the subject. This conception of subject is quite compatible with Marxist theory. As discussed in previous chapters, Marxism also understands historical changes as the result of dialectical integrity of subjective action and structural inevitableness. Badiou, while defining the impasse of the structure, also emphasizes that the subject must ‘pass through’ the impasse of the structure⁴, and thus the subject causes a structural change that at the same time means causing a historical change. Here, Badiou goes one step forward and tries to explicate his theory with the terms of Lacan. How Badiou uses the categories of Lacan can be summarized as follows. The *Real* of Lacan corresponds to the practice or actual realm of politics in Badiou's theory. History in Badiou's theory corresponds to the symbolic of Lacan. The imaginary corresponds to the realm by which the ‘projection of the political real into the symbolic fiction of History’ is provided (Badiou, 2010, p.252). Thus we can simply say that if there are certain changes in the symbolic structure (History) they are achieved by the excess of the *Real* which is located at the place of the void, of the same symbolic order.

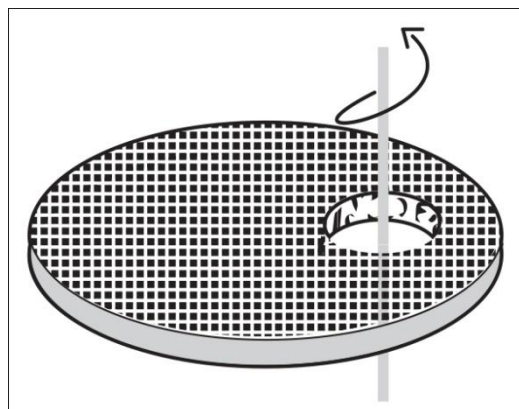


Figure 4.1 : The performative action.

Now, I will investigate the phenomena of historical/structural change and Badiou's understanding of the subject understanding using Figure 4.1 which is improved for this thesis. We can easily understand the issue by examining the figure above. Here

⁴ It is easy to see that ‘passing through the impasse of the structure’ associates with Lacan's concept of ‘traversing the fantasy’.

the black part of the figure shows the decisive part of the whole social structure. This is the symbolic order, the place where history is located. We should note that when Badiou refers to symbolic order, in addition to history, he attributes different names to the same decisive part. For instance for Badiou algebra, knowledge, encyclopedia, state, situation, repetition terms, even if they entail different nuances, refer to the same part of the structure. Then, we should understand that symbolic order for Badiou, is similar to its original meaning in Lacan's theory, and refers to the existing norms and regulations of existing society. Further we can say that it represents the way of our thinking and 'form of our life'.

The lack is the *Real* of the symbolic order as was already illustrated in Figure 3.3 in the third chapter of this thesis. As it is seen in Figure 3.1, the place of the *Real* is empty because the *Real* cannot be defined in terms of the symbolic. But this nothingness of the *Real* is a founding condition for the formation of the symbolic order. In the case of social life the *Real* corresponds with the founder contradiction of social order. As we discussed in the third chapter, in Marxist terms, the *Real* is the place of contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production. It is the place of contradiction between labor and capital. Then what does it mean to say that 'the *Real* cannot be defined in terms of the symbolic'? Clearly it means that we cannot solve the above mentioned founder contradiction within the symbolic order of capitalism. Capitalism can be possible only if there is a contradiction between labor and capital. But here the term 'founder' has a more complicated meaning than the usual meaning because the founder contradiction spreads to whole structure. As discussed in the third chapter, ideology functions as if there is no such void in the social structure, on the practical side of the life. Ideology presents itself as a complete rival, and in this way people keep living in the existing social conditions. Ideology presents practical life as a kind of escape. (See part 3.2.2 of the thesis). This situation causes false practice rather than false consciousness. As a result of false practice, the founder contradiction continues to exist in all parts of social life.

To understand the relation of the founder contradiction to the whole of the social structure, we can compare this point with the symptoms of an illness. A symptom of a serious illness may be a cough or high fever. Recovering these symptoms does not recover the *real* illness. We see the traces of this real illness in all of its symptoms.

Similarly, all kinds of contradictions in the social structure are somehow related to the main contradiction of the same structure.

We can give some actual examples regarding this point; for instance the idea of ‘unpaid labour’ in feminist theory is a good example. This term highlights the main contradiction between capital and labor and reflects on the contradiction between man and woman. Similarly we can see the real contradiction of the economic system in ecological issues. The profit necessity of capital causes ecologic crises. In cases of the conflicts between imperialism and oppressed nations, we can find capitalist contradictions once again. These brief examples show that the main contradiction of social life spreads into all other secondary contradictions of the society. This idea does not eschew secondary contradictions; rather it suggests that in order to ‘traverse the fantasy’ (using Badiou’s terms for passing through the impasse of the structure), one must find the lack or *Real* of the existing order which also reaches secondary contradictions and then must reorganize social life by taking this void into consideration.

Now we can go on interpret Figure 4.1 and go one step further. I will call the vertical axis shown in the figure as the performative axis of the structure. As can be seen, the axis is located in the middle of the *Real*, because it is the axis around which the historical changes occur. If the black-white color interface rotates around the performative axis, the rotation changes the symbolic order and the entire structure. If we determine two points in the symbolic order as $A(s1)$ and $B(s1)$, we see that any rotation around the performative axis causes the coordinates of point $A(s1)$ and point $B(s1)$ to change. Thus new coordinates can be symbolized as $A(s2)$ and $B(s2)$. Moreover, any rotation changes the whole structure including the distance between two points. This means that the social relation between two points changes after the rotation. That is to say, after a rotation, a new symbolic order arises. The mentioned rotation is caused by the excess of the *Real*, which has a structural source. Clearly we can say that the excess of the *Real* forces the symbolic to change and this causes torsion. Similar to the right hand rule in physics, torsion’s direction is not horizontal but vertical.⁵ That is why Badiou handles such a movement as the topology of the structure. We label symbolic structure including movements that are bounded to the

⁵ The multiplication of two vectors gives a third vector. Third vector’s direction is vertical to the surface which involves multiplied vectors.

limits of the symbolic, as the algebra of the structure. On the other hand we label torsion and structural changes that exceed the limits of that symbolic, which are caused by the excess of the *Real*, as the topology of the structure. With Bruno Bosteels' words we can sum up this point as follows:

Badiou, referring in particular to Lacan, posits that the real is not only a point that stands in a position of being the vanishing cause, or of the empty place, for desire as lack of being, but also a knot or node for the subjective forcing of a new consistency that would stand in excess over this empty place and thus would destroy its law. Algebraic is the side of the real as vanishing cause; topological is the side of the real as emergent consistency. (Bosteels, 2011, p.205)

This shows that the changes that cause us to pass through the impasse of the structure, namely changes that really change the form of our life, occur around the vertical axis. But as we mentioned above, there are some other movements in the structure that we relate to algebra. We realize that there are two types of changes; the modifications in the already existing order and the total change of the existing order. Now we can name the total structural change of the order as an Event which is a very important term in the ethics of Badiou. It is predictable that the aforementioned types of changes are located at different levels. At this point, we can see the parallel between Badiou's levels of changes and the two levels of Lacanian subjectivity mentioned in part 3.1 of this thesis: the level of the enunciated and the level of enunciation. So we can say that if any change - or let us call modification - remains in the existing order, it belongs to the constative level, whereas an event which changes the entire structure belongs to the performative level. Thus just like Lacanian subject we need to focus on the performative level – in Lacan's theory the level of enunciation - in order to find the subject. Of course here it is easy to see that by using Lacanian terms, Badiou reaches the point that Marx indicates with his 11th thesis: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it." (Marx, 1845)

For Badiou, the subject is located in a gap between old structure and new structure. Here once again just as it is in Marx's theory, we need to draw the borderlines of a historical change. Regarding this issue we can maintain that structural contradiction or structural inevitableness of historical change is the necessary condition for historical change. But this is not enough. We also need a sufficient condition for historical change. The subject is the sufficient condition for historical change. So just

like in mathematics and logic, we can define the determination of structure and the effect of the subject together in one term: the necessary-sufficient condition of historical change.

As mentioned, we see that the subject is the agent that carries historical change. So we can see where the subject is in Figure 4.1. The black-white interface around the performative axis is the place of the imaginary. In the place of the imaginary we will place the Badiou's subject. Now we see from the figure that if the subject forces the structure around the performative axis, if it creates a torsion on the vertical direction, the subject creates an event. This is the procedure by which the subject projects the *Real* into the symbolic. The subject acts as a mediator. But here we must immediately note that the subject cannot voluntarily create an event. As can be seen in the figure, the subject can create a rotation around the vertical performative axis if and only if it is located at the place of the *Real*.

There is only a particular kind of animal, convoked by certain circumstances to *become* a subject – or rather, to enter into the composing of a subject. This is to say that at a given moment, everything he is –his body, his abilities –is called upon to enable the passing of a truth⁶ along its path. (Badiou, 2002, p.40)

This quotation should not be misread. The subject is not a tool that allows truth to be revealed. In this passage, it seems as if Badiou is degrading the subject to a derivative of structure, but this is not true. For him “the subject-support is inescapably divided between the part of itself that is subjected to repetition (since it is placed) and the part that interrupts, blocks and brings about the non-repeatable” (Badiou, 2009, p.142). In other words, just like Marxist theory says, historical changes can be the result of a structural contradiction. This is the necessary condition for historical change. However, the subject cannot be reduced to a derivative of this condition. Rather, the subject is the sufficient condition.

In another context Badiou formulates this point as follows: “There are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths” (Badiou, 2006). This means that in the name of materialism we must not forget the subject. Clearly, bodies (our material existence), languages (our structural condition for symbolic existence and thinking ability) are necessary to explicate our social existence and historical changes. But

⁶ The definition of truth will be given in the next part. For now we can consider it as a concept related to the subject of an event.

during those changes we need to take subjective operation into consideration in order to be a consistent materialist. This is a crucial point, because we used the same approach in the second chapter. We asserted that Marxism cannot be reduced to science of economics, because Marxism is understood as philosophy of emancipation in this thesis. This means that economics (parallel to Badiou's 'bodies and languages') is not enough, we also need to define the performative axis of the social body in order to understand social existence. In Marxist terms, we need to define the political actor which acts according to the 11th thesis of Marx. Or in terms of the psychoanalytic subject of Lacan, we must emphasize that the symbolic structure is not the only determiner, there is also the subject of enunciation, the subject of unconsciousness.

It again becomes useful to refer Figure 4.1. As can be seen, the imaginary is black-white, indicating that the imaginary is not a decisive part like the symbolic place. This black-white irregularity⁷ also shows that it is not determined by the symbolic. How then does the subject occur? We already explained that if there is a rotation around the vertical axis in Figure 4.1, an event occurs and this event can be possible only through a subjective intervention. But how does this subject suddenly become visible on the stage of history? It is better to say that during the torsion of the vertical direction the subject forms itself. We can give a good example of how the subject occurs by referencing Sophocles' Antigone:

Antigone effectively risks her entire social existence, defying the socio-symbolic power of the City embodied in the ruler (Creon), thereby 'falling into some kind of death' (i.e. sustaining a symbolic death, exclusion from the socio-symbolic space). For Lacan, there is no ethical act proper without taking the risk of such a momentary 'suspension of the big Other', of the socio-symbolic network that guarantees the subject's identity: an authentic act occurs only when the subject risks a gesture that is no longer 'covered up' by the big Other. (Žižek, 2009, p.313)

As discussed above, the subject, by breaking down the existing order creates itself. It is same in Antigone's situation. It breaks the rules, norms and becomes a real subject. In Lacan's theory, the analysand in a psychoanalytic cure breaks her problematic psychic order, she traverses the fantasy and forms a new order, and thus the cure provides healing. In Badiou's theory it is almost the same. The subject, by traversing

⁷ We should remember 'Hegel's night' mentioned in part 3.1 of this thesis.

the impasse of the order, creates a new order. This act is itself subjective. As can be understood from these discussions, event and subject must be discussed together. These two terms reciprocally explicate each other.

We need to explicate one more important point about historical changes and subjective intervention. In the above discussions, the imaginary is defined as the realm by which ‘the projection of the political *Real* into the symbolic fiction of History’ is accomplished. This statement means that the subject historicizes an event. The consequences of an event are carried into a new symbolic order by subjective intervention. This point is important, because with such an approach we reach a point which asserts that history should not be conceived as an objective array of affairs. This proposal requires qualification. It is true that all history can be interpreted from the perspective of an existing era, by understanding time’s symbolic order. In addition to this determination, we must discover how an event changes history, because it is the event that tenders history as linear due to the subjective projection mentioned above. In this sense examining history as an objective linear process is not correct; rather we can say that in each era history changes. This situation is also the result of events, because history is subjectively interpreted. Understanding all of history as an objective linear process may lead us to interpret history as a process which already targets a newly formed historical era. In this sense the historical array may be wrongly grasped as a teleological process. On the one hand we must see that an event retrospectively changes history and on the other we must not forget that we are not dealing with a kind of mystical procedure. That is to say, firstly we must not refer any teleological aspect to history. We must remember that every event causes us to interpret the past with the event’s concepts and as a result it may lead us to reach a teleological, objective linear understanding of history. Secondly, we must not forget that there is of course a historical array of affairs which must be interpreted on another level.

We can explicate this point with examples. For instance, it is true that there have been two world wars in the twentieth century. This is a fact, we cannot deny it. No event cannot change this fact; in all eras of history it will be accepted as correct knowledge. As a result of the First World War, there was a revolution in Russia and the Soviet Union was founded. This is also another fact. At this point, if we think teleologically that the foundation of Soviet Union was the goal of history, we make a

wrong interpretation. We must think that revolution was a possibility and it happened. It happened because subjective torsion was strong enough to bring about the revolution. Regarding the critique of the teleological approach we should once again refer to Marx. In his *German Ideology* he writes:

This can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history, e.g. the goal ascribed to the discovery of America is to further the eruption of the French Revolution. Thereby history receives its own special aims and becomes “a person rating with other persons” (to wit: “Self-Consciousness, Criticism, the Unique,” etc.), while what is designated with the words “destiny,” “goal,” “germ,” or “idea” of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction formed from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises on later history. (Marx and Engels, 1846b)

Then in what sense does an event determine the past? An event changes the meaning of the past.⁸ For instance take the concept of ‘race’. Even if this is a negative example it is effective. In the past, for instance in the medieval period, race was not a strong concept. After the French Revolution, nationalism became a strong political movement. In the long term it gained importance especially in nations that achieved their national unity very late, like the Germans or the Turks. History became the history of ‘races’. The long term result of the event of the French Revolution was that the meaning and function of ‘race’ changed, and the term gained strength. Here the subject projected the political *Real* into the fictive symbolic of History and changed the sense-making about the past.

Badiou’s handling of an event places emphasis on revolutions. Here the term “revolution” is not necessarily a political one. If any structure - social, economic, symbolic etc. - is being replaced by a new one then it shows the properties of revolution. In this sense an event’s main distinctive property can be its impossibility. Or we can say that an event is impossible.⁹ Although this sounds contradictory it is actually consistent. In the above paragraphs it is asserted that the ‘*Real* cannot be defined in terms of the symbolic’. The proposal the ‘event is impossible’ should be handled similarly. If we try to grasp an event from the symbolic, we cannot give meaning to an event. If we try to grasp an event in terms of algebra, repetition, situation etc. we surely fail, because an event is meaningful only in a context which

⁸ See the discussions in 3.1 about ‘One’, the master signifier.

⁹ We should remember Lacan’s famous thesis: ‘There is no such thing as a sexual relationship’

is faithful to the new order. Bruno Bosteels quotes from Badiou's *Logic of Worlds* and writes about this point in the following manner:

We can draw a transcendental maxim: if what was worth nothing comes, in the guise of an eventual consequence, to be worth everything, then an established given of appearing is destroyed. (Bosteels, 2011, p.109)

This definition explains what the statement of 'an event is impossible' means. It is impossible because it is nonsense in its existing context. Existing norms, or in Badiou's terms the existing encyclopedia, cannot give any meaning to an event. Therefore an event provides a new answer to the question: "How will I continue to think?" (Badiou, 2002, p.50). That is why we asserted that an event changes the form of our lives.

So now we should ask, in what forms we can encounter an event? In other words what types of events there can be? Badiou thinks that we can find events in science, in love, in politics and in art. In each of these fields, we can find sequences, during which the subject occurs and re-forms the existing order. We should emphasize that philosophy follows the events that occur in these fields. An event that occurs in these fields is open to the criticism of philosophy; that is to say an event, while giving shape to a new symbolic order and making out a new way of thinking, gives shape to philosophy as well. For instance, in the matter of ethics, we can say that after an event, meta-ethics handles the consequences of the event and determines new approaches to ethics. Thus the impossibility of an event gives way to new understandings in philosophy and in ethics. Clearly an event opens a new era. In this sense we should assert that such an approach is quite compatible with Marx's approach to ethics, as asserted in the second chapter.

As mentioned, according to Badiou there can be four realms that are open to events. We can give examples to each of these events as follows:

Let us call this *supplement* an *event*, and let us distinguish multiple-being, where it is not a matter of truth (but only of my opinions), from the event, which compels us to decide a *new* way of being. Such events are well and truly attested: the French Revolution of 1792, the meeting of Héloïse and Abélard, Galileo's creation of physics, Haydn's invention of the classical music style... But also the Cultural Revolution in China (1965-67), a personal amorous passion, the creation of Topos theory by the mathematician Grothendieck, the invention of the twelve-tone scale by Schoenberg... (Badiou, 2002, p.41)

As we see, actually there are four types of events. In each case the *Real* exceeds the symbolic. Consequently in each type of event, the existing norms and symbolic order are abolished. For instance, regarding politics, we see that politics can no longer be understood as realpolitik but it becomes *Real* politics. Although it is not mentioned in the quotation above, the Commune of Paris can be defined as an event. As we discussed in the second chapter, for the first time in the history, the Commune showed that the proletariat could abolish the private property system, abolish the state and form a direct democracy. This event led theoreticians to think about new possibilities that were previously considered impossible. For instance in the early 1900's, due to the strikes of the proletariat, many political theoreticians thought that the state had already died (as cited in Schmitt, 1932, p.59). Thinking such an idea was impossible before the Commune of Paris. That's why Badiou says, 'an event is the creation of new possibilities.' (Badiou, 2010, p.242)

Regarding art, we see that the invention of some special forms, leads an artist to create his art object in new forms, using new methods. In science we can see events more explicitly; Copernicus' heliocentric space theory surely compels us to think about space and the earth in a new way. The geocentric theory is abolished by this theory. Regarding personal amorous passion, we once again see that one does not act 'rationally', does not consider the social norms etc.

With this approach we can conclude that politics cannot be the science of the possible, but it can be the art of the impossible. That's why Badiou's theory is parallel to Marxism, because Marxism cannot be understood as an science of economics either. It is not simple realpolitik but it is philosophy of emancipation. If politics is about change of the existing order, if vectorial direction of *real* politics is vertical then for Badiou politics can be the art of impossible. Impossible becomes possible by the event and event assigns duty to philosophy. Thus "philosophy seeks to define a conceptual space in which the thought-practice of emancipator politics actually becomes thinkable in the present" (Bosteels, 2011, p.24).

If the *Real* politics occurs at very rare historical moments, we should note another characteristic of Badiou's subject: the subject is immortal. Here immortality of course does not mean a kind of mythological property. This understanding parallels Lacan's understanding of subject. If we recall Antigone we can see that the subject is possible if it is symbolically dead. Namely, it is immortal because it is possible only

after it exceeds the finitude of the symbolic order. If we consider this point in social context, being a historical subject means to be historically immortal. For instance, the proletariats of the Commune of Paris are immortal, because by breaking their time's symbolic order they created a new way of thinking. And this way of thinking has come to light many times in history: during the 1917 Russian Revolution, during a short sequence in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in 1968 in France, during the Cuban revolution etc. Thus what is immortal is not an individual subject, but rather a subject in which an individual can be included. In all types of events (love, art, politics, and science) the subject must be understood as a collective. Even in love a subject is not one person. Two individuals become one in an amorous passion. In this sense, Badiou's subject is neither reflexive nor transcendental but it is collective, immortal and of course performative.

4.2 Ethical Action, Truth and the Ethics of Alain Badiou

4.2.1 Ethical action of the immortal

Badiou's subject is neither reflexive nor transcendental but it is collective, immortal and of course performative.

In the previous part we defined the Badiou's subject. We explained that a subject is a necessary condition for historical change. We also explained that the subject is the immortal which acts performatively.

In the previous part while giving the example of Antigone, we gave a quotation from Žižek's *The Ticklish Subject*.¹⁰ Now I want to return to that quotation and emphasize the ethical.

For Lacan, there is no ethical act proper without taking the risk of such a momentary 'suspension of the big Other', of the socio-symbolic network that guarantees the subject's identity [...] (Žižek, 2009, p.313)

In this quotation the emphasis is on the ethical act. The ethical act as we defined it can be found on the performative axis. This means that the ethical act changes the existing structure. On the other hand, the ethical act is the action which creates the historical subject at the same time. The subject is historical, because by the

¹⁰ See page 57.

performative act, while changing the structure, it historicizes itself and becomes immortal.

In the previous part, we examined the concept of the event in Badiou's theory. Now we should define the concept of truth. Badiou's subject is possible only at special times and under special circumstances. He calls such moments "events". However the event is only the start of the *truth process*. Event can be understood as the moment at which the social context or symbolic order of time has fallen apart. Thus the event is the moment at which the Lacanian *Real* is at stake. It is obvious that the symbolic cannot be eternally destroyed. A new symbolic order must be constructed around a new void, around a master signifier – the *One*. The new symbolic order and the new social order can be possible only through *fidelity*. This means that individuals at a certain moment attend to the body of an historical Subject (the Immortal). If the subject is a genuine Subject, this re-defines the symbolic order. Re-defining the symbolic order during an event means constructing a new *truth*. This entire process can be defined as the *truth process*. The *Real*'s attack on the symbolic order, changes the main signifier – the *One* - of the symbolic, by the fidelity of the Subject to the truth process. At the end of truth process, people are compelled to decide the *new* way of thinking.

Badiou explicitly gives the definition of revolution. That's why he gives the Commune of Paris as the example of a truth process:

Moreover, let's say that the Commune is a strong singularity because it proposes to thought a rule of emancipation, and is relayed –perhaps against the grain- by October 1917 and, more specifically by the summer of 1967 in China, and May 1968 in France

And note that there exists no stronger a transcendental consequence than that making something appear in a world which had not existed previously. (Badiou, 2010, p.219-220)

The notion of revolution is quite compatible with Marxist dialectic. As we understand from Badiou's truth process, the subject is not an idealist self-evident identity that changes the world. Rather it is located on the breakage of the structure. In other words, the void or the immanent contradiction of the status-quo, causes the subject's emergence, since the event is the *Real*'s invasion of the symbolic. Therefore, emancipatory theory does not point to any heaven outside the symbolic order; it does not contain any Utopian socialist property. In this sense Badiou's event conceptualization is compatible with the dialectical materialist thesis of the unity of

opposites, because it locates the contradiction – which causes the subject's emergence - in the structure.

We explained that an event creates new possibilities, new ways of thinking, new forms of life. But it is explicit that these new existences need fidelity. These new concepts need followers. Thus, the subject who supports a new formation, a new existence etc., provides the subjective part of a truth. We can say that a truth is a concept which includes the event and the subject.

I shall call 'truth' (*a truth*) the real process of a fidelity to an event [...] It is thus an *immanent break*. 'Immanent' because a truth proceeds *in* the situation, and nowhere else –there is no heaven of truths- 'Break' because what enables the truth-process –the event- meant nothing according to the prevailing language and established knowledge of the situation.[...] I call 'subject' the bearer of a fidelity, the one who bears a process of truth. [...] we might say that the process of truth *induces* a subject. (Badiou, 2002, p.42-43)

Although it is long, the above quotation summarizes the positions of event, subject and truth. Thus we can understand that an event may be temporary but the subject's ethical action, namely the subject's fidelity to the event creates truth and truth becomes permanent. We can use the example of the Copernican revolution once again. Copernicus's discovery not only created an event, but also created a need for a subject. Some scientists followed Copernicus's ideas and they showed fidelity to Copernicus's new approach. At the beginning, Copernicus's ideas were not widely accepted. But the subjective fidelity to the new scientific approach created the performative/ethical action that changed the knowledge of the time. In this sense, the fidelity of the subject made the subject immortal.

Now we see that first ethical action is the action which changes the existing order, knowledge, situation etc. So when followers of a real event create truth, they act ethically. This idea is surely parallel to Marx's 11th thesis. And as we discussed in previous chapters this approach takes its source from Lacan's concept of 'traversing the fantasy'. In Badiou's terms, 'passing through the impasse of the structure' is an ethical activity because it creates the new order, it changes the existing situation.

There is an important point that we need to discuss. It is that the order of an event is distinct from the existing order. And it is emphasized that performative direction is the direction of ethical action. Then it is clear that the ethical action differentiates itself from ordinary actions which exist within the limits of the existing situation. In

part 3.1, Lacan's two levels are explained: enunciation and enunciated, and in part 4.1, it is once again explained that these are performative and constative levels. In a short article, Simon Critchley tries to explicate the status of ethical behavior. Although his approach seems consistent with my approach, I must emphasize one point. Critchley claims the following:

[...]the moral statement implies an approval of the fact that x is good, whereas I can be quite indifferent to the chair I am sitting on. If I say, for example, that it would be good for parrots to receive the right to vote in elections, then my saying this implies that I approve of this development. Practical reason is in this way distinct from theoretical reason. In Badiou's terms, the order of the event (*l'événement*) is distinct from the order of being (*l'être*). (Critchley, 2000)

Here although he grasps that there are two different levels, Critchley's example is not suitable for defining ethical actions in Badiou's approach. If we follow Critchley's reasoning, giving approval to any ethical claim is itself an ethical action. Giving approval to 'the voting claim of parrots', of course can be considered as a performative action in philosophy of language or in linguistics. Giving approval is a speech act. That is true. But if someone gives approval to the idea that 'the voting rights of women must be legislated away', can we still assert that he is acting ethically? One may give approval to such an idea and giving approval to such an idea is a speech act too. But in Badiou's sense this cannot be understood as an ethical act. First of all, an ethical act in Badiou's theory must be grasped together with the concept of event. Namely, it is not a simple speech act. Rather it is an act which changes the existing social order. It changes the norms. We might say there is a kind of analogy between a speech act in philosophy of language and an ethical act in the philosophy of Badiou. We can grasp his ethics by referring to the performative aspect of language. In Lacan there is a similar analogy. When Lacan asserts that sub-consciousness is structured like a language, he tries to explicate how sub-consciousness works. He does not say that sub-consciousness is language, rather he said it is structured like a language. In this sense, any ethical action cannot be reduced to a simple speech act that gives approval to any ethical claim. When we say that an ethical act's direction is on the performative axis, we make an analogy. The difference between an ethical act and any simple act that remains in the realm of existing norms is parallel with the difference between two aspects of language: the performative aspect and the constative aspect.

Moreover, we should ask whether ethical action as defined by Badiou includes a kind of reasoning process. One may consider an ethical claim and then she may give approval to it or deny it. Such situations bring to mind reasoning processes. However, as we discussed previously, an event responds to the question ‘how am I continue to think?’ It changes the way of thinking. Therefore there is no place for reasoning, because it changes the reasoning process. An event demolishes the accustomed modes of reasoning. As mentioned, the subject is not an individual, it is a historical category to which individuals attend. To understand Badiou’s ethical act we can remember the famous evaluation of Marx and Engels once again:

The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do. (Marx and Engels, 1845)

In this quotation we see that changing the existing order according to a real event is not related to reasoning. A proletarian does not join the class struggle as the result of a reasoning process. She attends to movement because she attends to the category of the historical immortal subject; this subject is result of the deficiency of the system.

At this point we can give a good example previously given by Žižek. He examines the case of Mary Kay Letourneau who was a 36 year old primary school teacher. She had fallen in love with one of her 14 year old students. Most people found Mary Kay’s relationship with her student unacceptable. Interestingly, while conservatives were thinking that Mary Kay was corrupt, liberals were thinking that Mary Kay had a mental illness. Here, without giving details, I will give Žižek’s brilliant conclusion regarding Mary Kay’s case.

‘How could she have done it, not thinking about the catastrophic consequences of her act? How could she not only put at risk, but effectively abandon and renounce, everything that formed the very substance of her life - [...]’ Is not such a suspension of the ‘principle of sufficient reason(s)’, however, the very definition of the *act*. [...] When she later reasserted her unconditional *fidelity* to her love [...], we have a clear case of someone who, after most succumbing to the pressure of her surroundings, overcomes her guilt and regains her ethical composure by deciding *not to compromise her desire*. (Žižek, 1999, p.388)

In Mary Kay’s case we can see what the ethical act is. As it is emphasized above any ethical act is not about reasoning. This is the point which is overlooked in Simon Critchley’s essay. We cannot handle ethical action as we are handling a simple speech act. If Mary Kay had thought rationally, she would act according to the norms

of her society. Although she knows that her love was very dangerous for her social status, she did not give up loving. As stated in the previous part, we can see events in four realms: love, art, science and politics. I guess Mary Kay's love was a very good example of an event. When such an amorous event meets with fidelity of subject, we can understand what Badiou means by a truth.

Both liberals and conservatives found Mary Kay's situation unacceptable. The conservative objection is understandable, because Mary Kay's relation was unacceptable from the standpoint of existing norms. However, if we handle the liberal objection we will reach an idea previously discussed in this thesis. Liberals thought that Mary Kay had a mental illness. They asserted that she had bipolar affective disorder. My point is that liberals, although they seem fair, they act conservatively using science. We can compare this point with my previous assertion about Marxism. In this study I argue that Marxism cannot be reduced to a science of political economy. Rather we should think of Marxism as a philosophy of emancipation. In Mary Kay's case, liberals by appealing to science, miss the amorous event. In other words, liberals tried to reduce the amorous event to a kind of scientific knowledge. That's why they could not understand Mary Kay's ethical act. Similarly, Marxism should not be reduced to simple scientific knowledge. That is to say, any ethical act in Badiou's theory cannot be reduced to simple data, to simple knowledge, or to constative science. For instance, we may assert that for all people, falling in love results from hormonal changes. That is scientifically true. However knowing that love is about hormones, cannot stop someone from falling in love. No one thinks about hormonal changes while complimenting each other. That is to say, in political issues, in art, in science, in love, the truth and the subject cannot be 'constatively' explained. For example, we can say that economical crises are the main reasons for disorders. Sociologically we can produce knowledge about such disorders. But such constative approaches are not enough to understand revolutions, which are political performative ethical acts. This is because:

...such an act involves its own inherent normativity which 'makes it right'; there is no neutral external standard that would enable us to decide in advance, by a simple application to a single case, on its ethical status. (Žižek, 1999, p.388)

4.2.2 Ethics of Badiou

Now we can focus closely on Badiou's ethics. So far, in the fourth chapter we defined what an event is. Then we explicated the subject's relation to an event. We stated that truth is a concept which is the result of an event and a subjective fidelity. We also asserted that an ethical act can be an act which performatively changes the existing situation, the existing order. At each step we found similarities with Badiou's approach and Marxism. Considering these points we can investigate closely how Badiou makes inferences.

Badiou's study of ethics begins with a critique of the ethical ideology which provides a base for the ethics of human rights. According to Badiou, there are basic presumptions about human rights. First it is accepted that there is an identifiable kind of victim subject. Secondly, it is accepted that politics is for ethics. Third Good is derived from Evil, or Good is non-Evil. Finally human rights are defined according to non-Evil (Badiou, 2002, p.9).

Badiou rejects the victim concept of today's prevailing ethical ideology and identifies three main principles for his ethics as below:

Thesis 1: Man is identified by his affirmative thought, by the singular truths of which he is capable, by the Immortal which makes of him the most resilient [*résistant*] and most paradoxical of animals.

Thesis 2: It is from our positive capability for Good, and thus from our boundary-breaking treatment of possibilities and our refusal of conservatism, including the conservation of being, that we are to identify Evil –not vice versa.

Thesis 3: All humanity has its root in the identification in thought [*en pensée*] of singular situations. There is no ethics in general. There are only –eventually- ethics of processes by which we treat the possibilities of a situation. (Badiou, 2002, p.16)

Three theses are inter-related. The most important point of Badiou's ethics is the occurrence of truth. Truth determines the ethical act. From this point of view it is easy to comment on the three theses above. Truth in the first thesis is defined as the source of Good; it is singular because it occurs in specific moments and under specific conditions. The singularity of good comes from the singularity of truth and the specificity of event. For instance the truth of the Commune of Paris is - as already discussed - a very special moment in history. By referring to such a singular truth, one can be identified. Here identification means for the individual, attending to the

body of the Immortal Subject. By suspending all existing norms, by suspending the law of the Father, by suspending the authority of Big Other, the subject becomes identified. In this way the individual this way attends to the body of the subject.

According to first thesis, good is not non-evil. Namely, good is not a derivation of Evil. Then second thesis following this idea, asserts that human beings have the ability to grasp good and act on behalf of good. This ability shows itself in history and in the events of different fields. 'Refusal of conservation' in the second thesis clearly indicates the truth procedures and the events that change existing situations. As a result we see that ethics is related to this ability of the subject. Contrary to the ethics of our present understanding of human rights, in this thesis we see that one can ascertain evil by understanding good, and not the other way around.

The third thesis is a finishing thesis. As we discussed in the second part, the *Real* always attacks the symbolic. It is the inexpressible part of the psyche. In contingent times the *Real* attacks and changes the existing configuration of psyche. If its invasion becomes permanent, a symbolic order or a new way of life cannot be formed. That is to say if the invasion of the *Real* becomes permanent a new Law cannot be determined. Therefore the *Real*'s invasion must recede. New rules and a new symbolic order must be established. In the social context we every attack of the *Real* must recede. That is to say, an event must change the existing ways of thinking. However, in order for an event to survive, new ways of thinking must be determined. These conditions mean that if ethical action is about changing situations and existing norms then it is not possible to defend any universal ethics. After the formation of new configurations, we know that the inexpressible part of a new configuration will not stop attacking. In this sense, the process of configuration changes always repeats itself. It is an endless process, and every order will have a *Real*. And it will always cause new events and new truth processes. Thus in different times and in different contexts, different types of ethics will be formed. So we can not define any universal ethics but we can define the ethics of different fields and different times, because ethics is about the truth of a singular sequence. In this sense, the third thesis as a finishing thesis meets with the first thesis. The singularity of truth links these two theses.

If we examine the above principles we can find some points compatible with Marxism. One of the explicit meanings of the first thesis is that man and his

affirmative thought is capable of some singular truths. Human beings can understand the truths of their time and act accordingly. The Immortal or the historical subject is capable of truths and able to act accordingly. Therefore human beings are not simple passive figures of history. Human beings can understand the truth and struggle for it. This point shows that, similar to Marx, human beings actively make history. That's why Marx and Engels wrote "history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims" (Marx and Engels, 1845).

In this sense, the first thesis provides an opportunity for subjective intervention. As discussed in part 2.2.2, there are two aspects of historical change for Marx. Firstly there is a subjective aspect. Subjective intervention changes the existing order. But there is a second aspect: structural limit. Subjective intervention works only under suitable conditions. Here, in his first thesis, Badiou refers to the first aspect of Marx. That's why he indicates the ability of human beings to form singular truths. Being capable of singular truths means that human beings have the ability to attending to the body of the historical subject which changes the existing order.

The second thesis is connected to the first thesis. These two theses still indicate the subjective aspect of historical change. Therefore 'boundary breaking' is defined as the capacity for Good. Like Marx does, Badiou also recognizes the subjective necessity of historical changes and truths. If we see ability of boundary-breaking as a moment of Good, then it is clear that all Evil is about the obstacles to Good or about the attacks against Good. If we define Good in Marxist terms, we can see that there is no problem with this thesis. In second chapter of this study we explained that Marx's main target is the emancipation of human beings. Good can be derived from this assertion. The Marxist concept of emancipation cannot be defined in our capitalist society because it is the inexpressible content of our context; so when the Immortal Subject acts, attending to that Immortal Subject's activity becomes Good. If we use Marxist terms and Badiou's terms together, demolishing the economic order that causes alienation means breaking boundaries. Such an act is Good because it changes the existing system. In Badiou's terms, such an act is in the direction of performative axis. Therefore the proletariat's act of constituting a new world is ethical because this act necessitates new ways of thinking. Politics after such an act cannot be reduced to realpolitik. In this sense we should also say that Marxism can be the new way of

thinking. Instead of the capitalist approach to world affairs, Marxism offers new methods. That's why this thesis of Badiou's is compatible with Marxism.

And continuing from this point, we see that third thesis is also parallel to Marxist approach. In another society, at another time the "impossible part" of the context changes, therefore the Good changes. So Good cannot be defined by general laws. It is possible only in certain contexts. Above we mentioned that real does not stop attacking. (Because every order include an inexpressible part.) We defined the structural contradictions of capitalism as the inexpressible part of capitalist order in 3rd Chapter. But it is explicit that in another context, contradictory realm will be different. So parallel to Marxism, Badiou, rejects universal ethical laws. Accordingly, he thinks in different contexts, different kinds of truth procedures occur.

In the preceding paragraph I showed the first result that we acquire from third thesis. There is one more result that we should consider. Badiou actually indicates the structural condition of an ethical act which we defined in part 2.2.2. We can explain this point with an example. An ethical act cannot be the result of voluntary action. Yes, there is a subjective aspect, but ethical action must be located on a structural necessity. For instance, as capitalism was emerging for the first time, defending the political action of the feudal class cannot be defined as ethical. The contradiction between feudal landlords and capitalism, was not the *Real* of the capitalist order. To explicate this point we can consider a feudal landlord who is acting according to some universal ethical rules, but at the same time following the policies of the feudal class. According to Badiou's approach, the landlord cannot be defined as an ethical subject. The landlord's main obstacle is not the ethical rules in which he believes, but his political action. As this landlord is not following the *Real* policies of the proletariat, he cannot attend to the body of the historical subject. Therefore 'universal ethical rules' do not have any meaning from the perspective of Badiou - and the same is true of Marx. On the other hand, the contradiction between the proletariat and capitalism is the *Real* of the capitalist context. Therefore, the only ethical action in the capitalist order can be the action of the proletariat. In other words, there is no universal general law for ethical action. Ethical action has a structural condition. Only the proletariat can really change the capitalist world. Only the proletariat's political action can be on the performative axis. This is the structural condition for

the ethical action in capitalist society. In this sense there is no general ethics, only ethics of different fields and times. That's why I asserted that in third thesis Badiou points out the structural condition of ethics. Isn't Badiou's approach parallel to Marx's?

From these explanations it can be asserted that Badiou's three theses are compatible with Marxism. First of all his theses are located on a structural necessity. For him, ethical action is about a truth procedure. We stated that truth is related to event, and event is related to the inexpressible part of the structure.

Secondly Badiou's theses accept the subjective aspect of Marxism. Being capable of singular truths and the boundary breaking capacity of the Immortal subject clearly defines the subjective aspect of Marxism.

Thirdly and importantly, by relating his thesis to the concept of truth, Badiou also accepts that good is the action which changes the existing order. Once again we should emphasize that Badiou's theory is quite compatible with Marx's 11th thesis.

If fidelity to an event is the definition of Good then what is Evil in Badiou's philosophy? As we stated, evil is derived from the Good according to Badiou; these derivations can be seen below:

To believe that an event convokes not the void of the earlier situation, but its plenitude, is Evil in the sense of *simulacrum*, or *terror*. To fail to live up to a fidelity is Evil in the sense of *betrayal*, betrayal in oneself of the Immortal that you are; To identify a truth with total power is Evil in the sense of *disaster*. (Badiou, 2002, p.71)

Badiou gives the example of Nazis to illustrate the first kind of Evil. For the Germans, fidelity was at stake but it was not connected to the *Real* of the structure. The political power of the Nazis was not a revolution but a fake. On the contrary fidelity to an event is connected to the immanently universal featured void of structure. So we see that this kind of Evil is the result of being far from the universal of the situation.

Let's examine this proposal. The void of the symbolic as a contradiction, causes the collapse of the entire system by the subject's fidelity to the truth and then a new way of thinking is constructed. The subject as a member of the old symbolic system must abolish the system and it also must abolish itself. That is to say the subject of the symbolic must have a universal character. If we consider various kinds of subalterns,

such as the destructive subjects of capitalist order we make a big mistake. Struggles of subalterns – like women's rights or national liberation movements - do not represent a universal struggle against the prevailing symbolic order. The success of their struggles can be defined within the symbolic order of capitalism. This is because although they are in the disadvantageous position in this system, they are not located at the place of the One. Their disadvantage is not a founder contradiction of the symbolic order.

So there is only one subject for our time: the proletariat (Soma, 2008, p.169-175). The proletariat's struggle is not a struggle for social justice, or for getting advantages, but it is for emancipation. It is impossible to define the proletariat's victory from within capitalism, because such a success abolishes both capitalism and proletariat itself as a class. Therefore we can say that Badiou, while seeking a universal character for the subject, is completely Marxist. If we remember the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* this will be clear:

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property. (Marx and Engels, 1847)

The second thesis about Evil is a direct result of the definition of Good. The fidelity to an event excludes betrayal by definition; therefore such an Evil can be seen at the critical moment in the behavior of reactionism. A reactionist refers one who regrets to attend the body of the Subject. Previously discussed Mary Kay's situation is a good example. When she was in court she first accepted that she made an unacceptable moral mistake. She betrayed her love at the beginning but then when she ignored the accusations, she showed fidelity to her own truth. In a different context, we can give the example of the revolutionary discovery of Copernicus. his discovery forced humanity to think of things in a new way. Regretting Copernicus' revolution is nothing other than reactionism. Regarding betrayal we may remember the retroactive character of the One. After the symbolic is organized according to a new master signifier, not only existing order but also the past changes. Betrayals can be marked as reactionist only after the revolution is accomplished and the symbolic

order is renewed. In the previous part we discussed how meanings are changed in history. This point arises from the universality of the *Real* and the Master Signifier.

The third thesis of Evil is actually about the difference of between *courage* and *anxiety*. We can give one clear table from Badiou's Theory of Subject in order to see the relation between anxiety and courage.

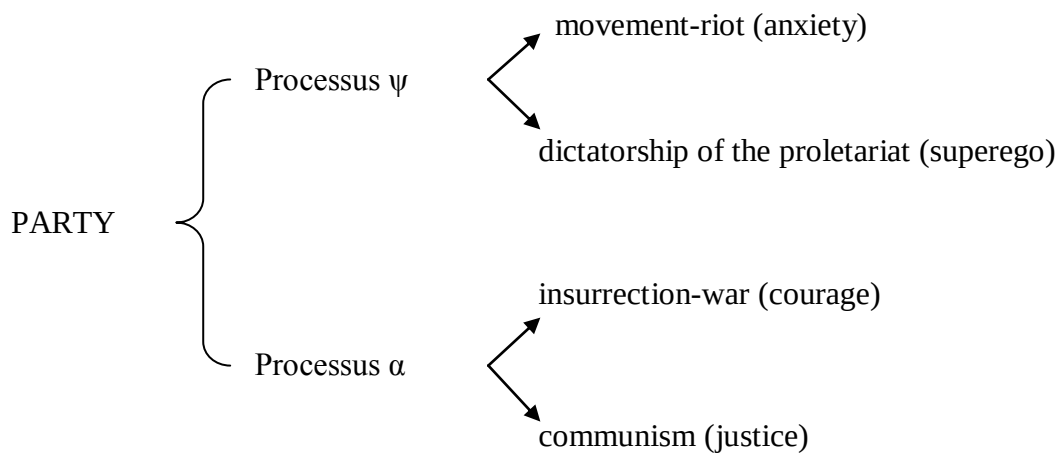


Figure 4.2: Two Processus' (Badiou, 2009, p.283)

As it is seen in Figure 4.2, two kinds of process can be defined. If a revolutionary movement acts according to process- α of Figure 4.2, it can be called ethical. Only the subject who is aware of the necessity of a new order, can successfully pass through the impasse of the structure. This point may have different results. For instance meaningless violence can be seen as the locus of anxiety. It arises from the *Real* of the structure but it does not reach any political demand for a new order. If any political movement, even it arises from the *Real* of existing order, blindly destroys everything, it represents evil.

As we discussed in 3.2.2, the point is not to kill the symbolic order but to change it. Let's take Lacan's famous statement, "the revolutionary yearning will always end up in the master's discourse" (Lacan, 1970). Following this statement, we can say that anxiety is the situation in which the revolutionary movement cannot understand the founder principle of the 'Name of the Father'. Such a social movement while 'fighting against Master', actually gets included in the symbolic order. As we

discussed, this is how ideology works. The point is to change the ideology, not to fight against the founder principle of ideology.

Anxiety also does not understand the ‘residual which could not be included in the symbolic order’¹¹ That’s why Badiou takes anxiety and the dictatorship of the proletariat together. Every order has a contradictory part, has a *Real*; this fact is forgotten in the Soviet Union. The Russian Revolution remained as an attack of the *Real*, remained as an event, but could not transform to a truth.

As based on the excess-of-the-real, courage is identical to anxiety, but as a disruptive force within the splace, it functions as its inversion. Courage positively carries out the disorder of the symbolic, the break-down of communication, whereas anxiety calls for its death. (Badiou, 2009, p.160)

In the case of *disaster* we see that the foundation of a new order is missing, because the symbolic order is killed by anxiety. It can be opened; as mentioned, the *Real* is a foundational part of the system which causes the symbolic order to emerge. The *Real* as an inexpressible and missing part, forms all order. However if the attack of the real occupies the entire system then there can be no symbolic order anymore. This is because a total nothingness and an absolute plenitude are the same and equally meaningless.¹² Therefore disaster is the occupation of plenitude by the void. If we think of this issue in terms of Marxism we should discuss the moments after revolution. Communism cannot be a kind of chaos or terror; rather it can be marked as harmony. The establishment of the harmony can be provided by means of a Subject which is aware of the necessity of the void. That is to say, the solution of the contradiction of the old symbolic order will be a new symbolic order. We defined this point as passing through the impasse of the structure. However, after such an ethical act resulting from a new symbolic order is established, there will be a new contradiction / void. This point could not be criticized negatively by Marxism. Especially if we consider the Soviet experiences once again, we may assert that the Stalinist terror was a catastrophic *disaster*. Moreover, the materialist roots of Marxism always have room for the concept of contradiction against a disaster. That is to say we cannot know on which contradictions the *Real* will be located. But we can accept it as a founder and immanent property of a new order. Maybe to grasp

¹¹ See part3.1

¹² See the discussions in 3.1

this point Marxists should once again regard Freud's important warnings at this point:

By abolishing private property one deprives the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, a strong one undoubtedly, but assuredly not the strongest. It in no way alters the individual differences in power and influence which are turned by aggressiveness to its own use, nor does it change the nature of the instinct in anyway. This instinct did not arise as the result of property; it reigned almost supreme in primitive times when possessions were still extremely scanty. (Freud, 1929)

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis we investigated whether Marxism may have an ethical dimension. We discussed whether it is possible to construct an ethics of Marxism without a humanist or essentialist philosophical understanding. Hence we first discussed Marx's own position. We investigated whether there is any ethical dimension in his studies. It is explained that Marx cannot have any ethical understanding in normal sense, because he does not grasp man as a unity who is totally free to make choices and act accordingly.

First of all, human beings do not make history on their own. They make it in a given context, in a given economic and social structure. Thus the human subject is located on a gap between historical-economical determination and free will in Marxist theory. Therefore it is meaningless to make ethical claims about human beings as if they are totally free while making their choices.

Second, under the distorted conditions of capitalism, human society is alienated. That is to say, man's social relations in capitalism cannot be considered as their real relations. We may assert that if society is alienated as a consequence of the economic order, the ethical and moral values of this society are also alienated. A classical Marxist approach may assert that real ethical questions may only be asked in an unalienated society. We can ask ethical claims in a communist society. A subject that is defined as species-being in Marx's own studies, can be found only in such a communist society. Only in communism can two preliminary criteria for an ethical society – freedom and solidarity - be provided.

On the other hand, we saw that although Marx grasps the human as a subject which is, in the final analysis, limited by the historical status of ongoing economic and social structures, he somehow still considers the human being as a kind of rational subject. He grasps man as a unity. He does not focus on questions such as 'How does human consciousness occur?' or 'How is an individual formed as an individual?' Moreover he does not focus on how superstructure affects human beings' acts and thoughts. Therefore we mentioned that his understanding of the human being is not

sufficient. In this sense it is suggested that a psychoanalytic approach may be supplementary to Marxism.

Starting with the 3rd Chapter I tried to explicate how an infant is included in the symbolic order. I discussed how one entering the society creates himself/herself. Beginning from this point I tried to explore how the symbolic order and the human being function reciprocally. That's why we employed Lacanian psychoanalysis. Lacan's approach about relation between subject and language was fruitful, because by his theory we placed subject within the symbolic structure. Or let us say we placed subject within context. In this sense the Lacanian approach was parallel to Marxism. For instance let's compare Lacan's 'Mirror Stage' concept with the remarks below taken from Marx's *Capital*/Vol 1. Here we can see how similar Lacan's and Marx's understanding of a human being are, and Marx's strong insight about the formation of a human being:

In a sort way, it is with man as with commodities. Since he comes into the world neither with a looking glass in his hand, nor as a Fichtian philosopher, to whom "I am I" is sufficient, man first sees and recognizes himself in other men. Peter only establishes his own identity as a man by first comparing himself with Paul as being of like kind. And thereby Paul, just as he stands in his Pauline personality, becomes to Peter the type of the genus homo. (Marx, 1867)

In this thesis we also mentioned that although the subject is in the realm of the symbolic structure or in the context, it has the ability to change the structure. I discussed the relation of structure and subject by addressing the functioning of ideology. Using Lacan's approach we discovered a subject which is not totally determined by the structure. We mentioned the dialectical relation between structural conditions and subjective intervention. These two aspects were more explicit in Marxist theory. But as I stated, we can find the same dialectical relation in Lacan's approach. We can say that in both theories there is a subjective aspect embedded in the structure and a structural aspect embedded in the subjective realm. Žižek clearly summarizes this point:

Lacan's 'Master-Signifier' is the 'subjective' signifying feature which sustains the very 'objective' symbolic structure: if we abstract this subjective excess from the symbolic order, the very objectivity of this order disintegrates. On the other hand, The Lacanian *objet petit a* is the exact opposite of the Master-Signifier: not the subjective supplement which sustains the objective order, but the objective supplement which sustains subjectivity in its contrast to the subjectless objective order: *objet petit a* is the 'bone in the throat', that disturbing stain

which forever blurs our picture of reality –it is the *object* on account of which ‘objective reality’ is forever inaccessible to the subject.(Žižek, 2000a, p.236)

In this sense it is mentioned that there is space for emancipation in both theories. Moreover it is shown that Lacan’s approach can be very useful for discussing Marxist terms like surplus value etc.

If there is place for emancipation, in other words if human beings are not totally determined by the structure then we need to discuss how emancipation may occur. In the 2nd Chapter, emancipation is defined as getting rid of alienation. Marx finds the reasons of alienation in the configuration of economic order. When society gets rid of alienation and exploitation humanity is emancipated. Therefore, emancipation necessitates a historical subject in order to change the economic configuration. We defined subject’s most authentic action as changing the structure. It is shown that this authentic action by which the historical subject becomes visible coincides with the 11th thesis of Karl Marx. We found the roots of the concept of ‘changing the world’ in Marx’s and Lacan’s theory (traversing the fantasy). However this issue is more fully understood by referring to Alain Badiou’s concepts of Event and Truth. Then we reached the Subject of Badiou, which is not an individual but a historical immortal actor. This subject is parallel to the Marxist understanding of the subject. Although Badiou does not place so much emphasis on the proletariat as the main agent of historical change, we know that he considers Marxism and Marxist terminology as the discourse of a Truth. We claimed that the proletariat’s struggle against capitalism cannot be defined or included within the capitalist context. As the proletariat’s struggle arises from the *Real*/void of the capitalist order, it creates an event. So Marxism ‘gives name’ to this event. Contrary to the existing encyclopedia of capitalism, Marxism creates the event’s own discourse. Therefore for Badiou, remaining faithful to Marxist discourse is an ethical action. Ethical action is defined as being a part of this historical subject which suspends and annihilates the existing order.

At this moment it seems that we arrive at Georg Lukàcs’ ethical understanding¹³ once again; if the workers’ movement deals with ‘the inability to tear itself completely free from the ideological matrix of capitalism’ (Lukács, 1929), namely if

¹³ See part 2.1

workers' movement can create its own discourse, historical change is possible. Although this struggle arises from the founder contradiction of capitalism, this structural contradiction is not the only source of emancipation: 'There must arise in that development a moment where freedom itself becomes the one of the driving forces'(Lukács, 1920). In my opinion, the moment to which Lukács refers is Badiou's Event. If so then his statement, 'Class consciousness is the 'ethics' of the proletariat, the unity of its theory and its practice, the point at which the economic necessity of its struggle for liberation changes dialectically into freedom's seems parallel to Badiou's ethical understanding (Lukács, 1923).

Being a part of the historical subject means getting involved in a movement which completely changes the world. Of course, such a change means attending a revolution. I explained that a revolution as a truth changes our way of thinking. It changes the form of life. It is clear that such an authentic action changes the moral values and ethical understanding of the society, because it completely changes the context. Therefore it is reasonable to define ethics according to the act of 'changing the structure'. In other words, instead of considering one context as universal and defining ethics within that 'universal context', it is much more meaningful to define ethics according to an authentic act which changes the context. In this way we can fulfill the Marxist criteria, because in such an approach the temporariness (context dependency) of ethics is accepted.

We can say that we cannot include Marxism in any domain of ethics, but by appealing to Lacan and then Badiou we can define an ethics for Marxism. According to the discussion in this thesis we can conclude that Badiou's ethics can be the ethics of militant politics which not only interprets the world but changes the world.

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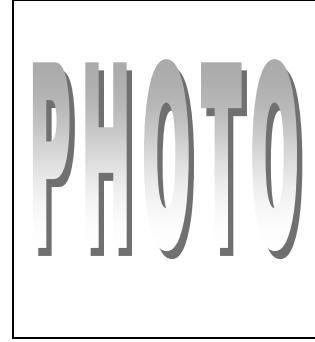
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