

# Thinking in the End Times, From Logic to Anthropology: Philosophy in the Social Sciences

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*...it's necessary to go further and ask what philosophy's relation to life is. This question is fundamental. If you can't say what purpose philosophy serves from the point of view of the true life, then it's just one more academic discipline.*

*(Badiou 2013, 114)*

## Abstract

The first part of the main title is an allusion to the title of Slavoj Žižek's book, *Living in the End Times* (2010). This book takes off from Francis Fukuyama's assertion that "...liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and 'the final form of human government,' and as such constituted the 'end of history'." (Fukuyama 1989, xi) Here, Žižek examines the current state of affairs and arrives at the question that if liberal democratic capitalism is the last phase of human struggle and human history, how exactly are we living in this particular socio-economic-political determination? Žižek in this regard argues that at the objective level, we are confronting the internal contradictions of global capitalism. This system for him is already "approaching an apocalyptic zero point."

Parallel to Žižek's diagnosis of the contemporary situation, Alain Badiou echoes that today we experience no less than an objective crisis in relation to capitalism. However, there is yet a more immediate crisis at the subjective level. For Badiou, humanity in general, but the younger generations in particular, are confronted by "an obscure vision of the future." Badiou's elaboration of the matter goes around the questions: "Can we continue as now?" which is not a very attractive proposition if one looks closely into the status of contemporary life; but then if continuity is not the solution, "How is it possible to invent a new form of life?"

The first part of this paper provides a reading of contemporary thinking in general in the field of philosophy, ethics, and social critique in order to see how these areas confront the phenomena the two thinkers have brought to light. In this paper, I would like to underscore how Žižek and Badiou's philosophies combined could provide a very powerful analysis of the deadlocks of contemporary human thinking that make the alleviation of the human condition in our global capitalist world even more impossible.

The second and third part of the paper is what gives body to the latter half of the main title, 'From Logic to Anthropology,' which is in fact a subtitle of one of Badiou's written articles. Here, I would like to steer the analysis towards the direction of championing a recast conception of the human person that could highlight real human potential for emancipation, creation, and novelty---one that goes beyond the ethical ideology of victimhood and totalization reflective, respectively, in the universal declaration of human rights and the celebrated moral dictum of respecting cultural and language differences in the fields of anthropology and philosophy. Such conception goes against the hyper negativity of critical theory and postmodern thought, and the archaic illogicism of contemporary forms of revolt. This is to argue finally that this is the only way we could address the contemporary crisis of subjectivity, and from that, introduce an immanent negation to the objective violence that bars the possibility of the better future to come.

At the end of this paper, I will provide a brief reflection of my hopes as regards the future directions of the social sciences as oriented by the ideal I have just sketched. To do all these is in lieu of doing service to a philosophical motivation: to reassert the relevance and power of philosophical thinking in today's world.

**Keywords:** *Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, contemporary thinking, philosophy, capitalism, subjectivity*

This paper finds inspiration from the situation I found philosophy was/is in when I started teaching at the university. Through simple conversations with my colleagues from other disciplines, I had the impression that philosophy did not share the same status as their disciplines in terms of familiarity, popularity, and perceived significance. This was further affirmed on several occasions that the philosophy program was discussed in our college and department meetings. In these instances, sentiments ranged from the urgency for philosophy to be 'visible' so it may attract more enrollees, to the necessity of incorporating the 'philosophical' method of writing in the Soc Sci 199 (Research Proposal) syllabus if finally we are to encourage theses from the students' minor programs.

These impressions were at the level of the faculty. During the second semester of the last academic year, I taught an elective course for philosophy minors, Philo 170 (Philosophy of Man), (which was by the way dissolved the semester before because there were not enough enrollees). This time I had the chance to examine the situation of philosophy from the point of view of the students. In our first meeting, I asked the students to write a short essay on how they perceive the status of philosophy as a discipline. Not surprisingly, majority of them expressed that philosophy is struggling because it can no longer compete with the rest of the sciences that talk about concrete reality rather than the abstract. To enumerate some of their observations, they projected philosophy to have the reputation of being 'unnecessary,' 'impractical,' 'useless,' 'non-scientific,' 'weird,' 'outdated,' 'insignificant,' and criticized for its 'underachievement.'

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the landscape against which philosophy is trying to keep its dignity as a discipline. In this paper, just like what I did in that elective course, I take courage in addressing this crisis. My main presupposition is this: precisely because philosophy is useless from the point of view of the world, that philosophy has some use. Precisely because it is not 'like' the other sciences, that philosophy is necessary. This is what I will try to demonstrate in this short discourse.

### The World as 'Is', is in Crisis

One of the famous scholars of the late twentieth century, Francis Fukuyama, wrote in an article entitled "The End of History?" that "liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and 'the final form of human government,' and as such constituted the 'end of history.'" (ibid.).

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek in his book *Living in the End Times*, diagnoses contemporary society and confronts the question, what kind of 'end time' are we living in? In so far as Fukuyama is concerned, this would consist of liberal democracy having reached the peak of its ideal, and that the best course of action would be the complete implementation of the principles of liberty and equality.<sup>1</sup> Mark Fisher, in addressing the question, "Is there no alternative?" echoes the sardonic remark of Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek: as if "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism." (Fisher 2009,2). Sardonic I say, because Žižek in *Living in the End Times* asserts the opposite: liberal democracy with its twin economic model, capitalism, is "approaching an apocalyptic zero-point" (Žižek 2010, x). For him, the inconsistencies of liberal democratic capitalism are exploding in our globalized world, and this is not because of "incomplete implementation" or as the standard capitalist views them, that they are simply "temporary, correctable glitches" in the functioning of the system. For Žižek, such inconsistencies must be viewed instead as moments of truth, as 'symptoms' in the psychoanalytic sense, as "exceptions" that "allow us to grasp the functioning of the system" in its internal inconsistency (Žižek 2007, 4).

Žižek diagnoses that our world today is being haunted by what he calls the "four riders of the apocalypse," comprised by "ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food, and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions" (Žižek 2010, x). Stating these, one only needs to see the News to be convinced of their reality. Simply put, our world today is undergoing a crisis.

The significance of Žižek's analysis lies in providing us a different

angle through which we could understand the world situation. He powerfully argues that the problems we encounter today: crimes, poverty, discrimination, global warming, etc., should not be looked at as psychological/subjective problems, but as results of the violence the system we are in deploys. From Žižek's perspective, it is not enough to punish wrongdoers, to make people aware of the catastrophic consequences of people's consumption and way of life on the environment, or to continually give charity to the poor. What we need is an unrelenting courage to question why crimes, ecological crisis, poverty and social divisions are being sustained first and foremost in an otherwise free, democratic, and globalized world, and to shatter the insensitivity to the systemic violence that had to go on in order for our comfortable lives to be possible. (Žižek 2008, 9)

But then there is yet another aspect of the problem which makes the solution to the objective crisis seem to be even more impossible: a subjective crisis. It means that the difficulty of questioning the global order lies in the difficulty of questioning our very own way of life itself. The philosopher Alain Badiou has identified this as a fundamental problem which the younger generations in particular are confronted with. This predicament consists, in his terms, of an "obscure vision of the future" (Badiou 2012). There are two aspects of this problem. On one side there is the question, Can we continue as now? On another side, if continuity is not the solution, if one recognizes the impossibility of sustaining this kind of life against the backdrop of the ongoing problems of social inequality, social divisions and poverty; if one ever desires to change the way things are, the next question is: how will such change be possible? "How is it possible to invent a new form of life?" (ibid.). What is another way of doing things? In the last (*X-Men: Days of Future Past*, 2014) film for instance, it appears as if the only solution left is to go back into the past in order to change the apocalyptic present. This entire line of questioning leads us to the core issue: the thinkability of the actualization of change.

### Contemporary Philosophy, Ethics, and Social Critique

The thinking of change itself now takes the discourse to the direction of determining the general forms of thought we have today

and measuring them against the demand imposed by the two levels of the crisis we are confronting. Here, I am dividing the discussion into three: in the field of philosophy, in the field of ethics, and in the field of social critique.

1) *Philosophy*. As I have preempted in the introduction, philosophy today is struck by the threat of its dissolution by virtue of its irrelevance. This situation became most pronounced starting in the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century, during which philosophers themselves declared the end and impossibility of philosophy. This could be recognized in the three dominant orientations of philosophy today: the analytic, hermeneutic, and the postmodern orientations. For these three the time for a philosophy that still believes in the possibility of a total conception of things has ended (Badiou 2003, 34). After the two World Wars, the fact of multiplicity and diversity became the center of philosophizing, with 'language' as their representative concept.<sup>2</sup> Today, this is referred to as the linguistic turn in philosophy.

Interestingly, however, the so-called death of philosophy by the dawn of the twenty first century transformed into what Badiou called the "artificial existence" of philosophy in the form of "moralizing preaching" (Badiou 2011, 68). Badiou remarks that "if, twenty years ago, philosophy, forced into ruinous sutures with its conditions of truth, found itself asphyxiated by inexistence, philosophy today, chained to conservative morality, finds itself prostituted by a vacuous over-existence."<sup>13</sup> From anti-philosophical declarations, there was a shift to over-attributions of moral pronouncements to philosophy, which meant that "only the most elementary form of moralizing preaching qualifies any longer as 'philosophy'."<sup>3</sup> Definitely, the theme of the incommensurability of differences remained. However, it was no longer only at the level of language and epistemology, but also at the level of culture and ethics. Philosophy therefore not only underwent a linguistic turn, but more appropriately, an ethico-linguistic turn.

2) *Ethics*. This transformation of philosophy went side by side with the transformation of ethics. Moral pronouncements such as the respect of differences, multiculturalism, and the politics of tolerance,

found philosophical articulation in the philosophies centered on linguistic incommensurability. This new conception of ethics takes a firm stand against racism, hegemony, or a substantialist nationalism that denies or excludes others. Badiou remarks, "Its great ideal is the peaceful coexistence of cultural, religious, and national 'communities', the refusal of 'exclusion'" (Badiou 200, 26). Much of this is reflective in social anthropology.

This ethical standpoint, finds further concretization in the core values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely, freedom, equality, and brotherhood.<sup>4</sup> Under the Human Rights Declaration, we have an ethics founded on our most inalienable rights: the right to live, to avoid abusive treatment, and to enjoy our 'fundamental' liberties as one decides and chooses to (ibid., 4). The core of such orientation on ethics, Badiou explains, rests on the assumption that we share a general consensus on what is harmful or unjust, which can be the basis for a universal determination of what is Good. Its power, Badiou accounts, is its self-evidence (ibid., 9)--the self-evidence of suffering being highly visible and that we have an immediate aversion to it. One of the most pronounced manifestations of this is in what is called ethical consumerism, wherein you get to enjoy your consumption while still being ethical (examples of which go with the tag line: buy this product and you help save a life, etc.).

3) *Social Critique*. The ethics of difference and compassion (embedded in the ethics of universal human rights) are also the building blocks of the dominant theoretical forms of social critique today. One of these is espoused by the critical theorist, Theodor Adorno, namely: Negative Dialectics. Under the logic of negative dialectics, negation and critique are themselves forms of affirmation and creation. The goal of thinking for Adorno is precisely to prevent the repetition of the banality of Auschwitz. (Adorno 2001, 116).<sup>5</sup> We also have the views of Antonio Negri, whom Žižek refers to as a liberal communist. Negri does away with hyper-negativity and proposes instead a Spinozistic faith on the inherent evolutionary creativity of capitalism (Badiou 2013, 2) For Negri, liberal democratic capitalism is now working towards the direction of actualizing the ideals of communism. This is even reflected in one episode of a recent Japanese anime series

entitled Psychopass. The police system, composed of brains in vats, challenges one of its employees and says: “Keep criticizing us so we can transform!”

In the second volume of his magnum opus *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou explains:

*There are only bodies and languages.*

This statement is the axiom of contemporary conviction. I propose to name this conviction *democratic materialism*. Why?

*Democratic materialism.* The individual as fashioned by the contemporary world recognizes the objective existence of bodies alone... In order to validate the equation ‘existence = individual = body’, contemporary *doxa* must valiantly reduce humanity to an overstretched vision of animality. ‘Human rights’ are the same as the rights of the living. The humanist protection of all living bodies: this is the norm of contemporary materialism.

Moreover, it is essentially a *democratic materialism*. That is because the contemporary consensus, in recognizing the plurality of languages, presupposes their juridical equality. Hence, the assimilation of humanity to animality culminates in the identification of the human animal with the diversity of its sub-species and the democratic rights that inhere in this diversity...Communities and cultures, colours and pigments, religions and clergies, uses and customs, disparate sexualities, public intimacies and the publicity of the intimate: everything and everyone deserves to be recognized and protected by the law. (Badiou 2013, 1-2)

Democratic materialism, as Badiou says, “is in the process of becoming the enveloping ideology for this new century” (ibid., 4). As is the case for an ethic of human rights, only the body, and its capacity to be a victim, is capable of identifying the nature of man, together with his most basic and inalienable rights. This is our materialism. On the other side, there is an infinity of language games, there are as many languages as there are cultures, communities, perspectives; difference is our reality and it must be protected, which can only be done in a democratic order. This is thinking in the end times.

### **The Need for a New Logic that will give birth to a New Anthropology: Confronting the Question of the World as ‘Ought’**

In the eyes of Badiou and Žižek, it is easy to see what the democratic materialist ideology amounts to: an anthropology that

equates man simply in his capacity to suffer and be a victim, and his incapacity to pursue a Good that transcends, and in fact ignores, the brute reality of difference and appeals to our generic humanity. When confronted with the question of change, its only proposal is to survive and be tolerant.

*Man: a biological species, a ‘biped without feathers’*

The ethics of human rights, Badiou explains, begins with the identification of suffering that actually splits the human subject into two: a passive subject who suffers, and an active subject who judges that it must be stopped by all available means. Put in the case of charity works or social welfare movements, for instance, the character of man is divided into the suffering-victim-man defined by his misfortunes, and the rich-healthy-benefactor who is identified by his sensitivity and exercise of good conscience.

What this alludes to is the fact that in a situation that calls for an ‘ethical response’, there is always the necessary coexistence of the suffering victim and the capable benefactor, without which there can never be an ‘ethical act.’ Since we must act in accordance with “the spirit of brotherhood,” ‘ethics’ is only for the ‘privileged man of conscience’ to exercise, towards an other whose subjectivity is identified simply with his capacity to suffer.

For Badiou, this ominously downgrades the definition of man to a “living organism pure and simple” (Badiou 2000, 11); reduces ‘humanity’ to the “status of victim, of suffering beast, of emaciated, dying body” (ibid.); and equates him with his “animal substructure” (ibid.). He adds, “To be sure, humanity is an animal species. It is mortal and predatory. But neither of these attributes can distinguish humanity within the world of the living” (ibid.). It is not our victimhood which makes us what we are. Instead, it is our capacity to be more than this—our capacity to concentrate our force and direct our existence in pursuit of a conviction and decide our fate. “Beyond this,” Badiou says, “there is only a biological species, a ‘biped without feathers’” (ibid., 12).<sup>6</sup>

*Tolerance: as an ideological category*

Their next point of contention against democratic materialism involves the ethics of difference. Badiou notes, that this has bred in

our time another ideology, which is of a communitarian-particularist kind. Žižek sharply refers to it as the ideology of tolerance.

Žižek explains that the “Respect for others’ beliefs as the highest value can only mean two things: either we treat the other in a patronizing way and avoid hurting him in order not to ruin his illusions, or we adopt the relativist stance of multiple ‘regimes of truth,’ disqualifying as violent imposition any clear insistence on truth” (Žižek 2008, 139). Both of these stances however are problematic. In the first case, instead of an authentic respect for the other, what one expresses is a distant engagement in order not to see how thoroughly ‘other’ the other is, precisely because the otherness of the other is in itself offensive. Žižek, in his discussion of the problems of racism and discrimination that immigrants experience, follows Sigmund Freud’s analysis that this is primarily motivated by the violence of sustained difference. He explains: the other, the neighbour, is viewed as “a traumatic intruder” “whose different way of life disturbs us, throws the balance of our way of life off the rails;” “when it comes too close”, it may “give rise to an aggressive reaction at getting rid of this disturbing intruder” (ibid., 59). This idea of a false form of respect could also be observed in Badiou’s satirical polemic:

...the celebrated ‘other’ is acceptable only if he is a good other...Just as there can be ‘no freedom for the enemies of freedom’, so there can be no respect for those whose difference consists precisely in not respecting differences.

Respect for differences, of course! But on condition that...that which differs also respects, just as I do, the said differences. (Badiou 2006, 24)

The second instance meanwhile, the acceptance of the relativist stance of multiple regimes of truth that also plagues philosophy today—in Žižek and Badiou’s diagnosis, has now turned into the ‘multiculturalist ideology’ that simply resigns in the gesture that differences must just be ‘tolerated’ rather than ‘overcome.’ (Žižek 2008, 662-682) Under this ideology, particularism, otherness—today exhibited in the discourses on the diversity of cultures and religions, of expressions of sexuality, of technological specialization, of functions and skills—is used as a right, a protective barrier against any form of intervention, even political struggle. With the recognition of the

general character of today’s world as free and democratic, situations that call for a militant firmness to intervene against barbarism are glossed over. It breeds, in Žižek’s words, “blindness to oppression on behalf of ‘respect’ for the Other’s culture.” (Žižek 2008, 144) What this suggests is an ethical gesture that backfires against itself in reality, wherein the very limit of an ethic of difference becomes visible, most particularly when what one confronts is a ‘fundamentalist other.’ For Žižek true respect means: treating the other as a serious adult responsible for his or her belief (ibid., 139).

When questioned if these two are once again proposing a universalist totalitarian point of view in their critique of multiculturalism, Žižek’s philosophy provides a powerful response: “Actual universality, is not the deep feeling that above all differences, different civilizations share the same base values, etc.: actual universality appears (actualizes itself) as the experience of negativity, of the inadequacy-to-itself of a particular identity” (ibid., 157). It is precisely this negativity that mobilizes the value of difference and the demand for respect, but it is a form of respect, not as tolerance, but rather as intervention.

From the point of view of Badiou’s ethico-political philosophy meanwhile, ethics itself is the assertion that, yes, “there are only bodies and languages,” “except that there are [also] truths” (Badiou 2013, 4). This means that there are not just differences and communities, there are also very authentic human gestures in the fields of science, politics, art, and love, that cannot be reduced to strict animal parameters. These gestures transcend the elementary necessity of everyday survival, and they are the halting point of differences itself. Badiou writes:

Freedom has nothing to do with the capacities of an ordinary body under the law of some language. Freedom is: active participation to the consequences of a new body, which is always beyond my own body. A truth-body which belongs to one of the four great figures of exception: love, politics, art and science; ... freedom is not a category of elementary life of bodies. Freedom is a category of intellectual novelty, not within, but beyond ordinary life (Badiou 2007).

For Badiou, there should be no reason to “respect or vilipend” (Badiou 2004) differences in the first place. That our life as human

animals consists of particularities is the law of things (ibid.). “Infinite alterity is quite simply what there is.” (Badiou 2000, 26) The real challenge of thought is rather the question of the ‘same’, the question of the ‘universal’ that could cut across differences. One can love, solve a scientific problem, create a work of art, fight for justice, while eating what one is used to eat, wearing a turban, kimono, a saya, or anything, or while praying to a deity or God, or not at all. Whether it be in the realm of art, politics, science, or love, the question of race, gender, religion, class, age, for Badiou should not be a problem. It does not even count.

*Negation does not equate to Affirmation*

Finally, in the discussion of the current forms of social critique, Badiou runs the polemic that it is the moralism of Adorno’s thought that regards the victimized body as the foundation of morality which he finds analogous with, if not a translation in, the democratic respect for human rights. Meanwhile, it is Negri’s faith on capitalism transforming into a sort of communism which Badiou sees to be an acceptance of the capitalist order itself. Even Negri’s final proposal for the focus of political struggle, viz., ‘rights to global citizenship, minimal income, and access to and control over education, information and communication’, for Žižek, receives similar articulation in universal human rights (Žižek 2001). He argues, it is as if “one has only to drop the capitalist form, and the revolutionary goal is achieved (Žižek 2008, 16).

Such compatibility with the existing order prompts Badiou to regard the two as forms of critique which cannot be sustained if we are to envisage an idea of change. Badiou announces that “the fundamental problem in the philosophical field today is to find something like a new logic” (Badiou 2013, 1). His philosophical position is to found what could be called an ‘affirmative’ dialectics, which, in contrast to ‘negative’ dialectics, is not a matter of negating the existing order as such but of thinking the possibility of the new itself. He wants “to find a dialectical framework where something or the future comes before the negative present” (ibid.. 3).

If one is to pursue the consequences of simple negation and critique, the problem involved in it could be summarized in three points. First, what it produces is a reactive kind of subjectivity that

remains entangled to a previous order: to what it negates. Second, there is nothing in it that prevents the germination of a different oppressive order, or even worse, sustaining the order that one wishes to topple down, because it is obsessed with the current order. Third, it highlights the critical aspect of human agency but fails to account for human creativity as such.

In following Badiou’s point, the real challenge to make the ideal society possible is not simply to destroy an existing ‘imperfect’ regime, but more precisely to actually create the ideal society ground up, and only as a consequence, do you destroy the existing regime. Are we not witnessing today an immense amount of highly critical expressions and statements? Have they really been able to successfully determine the next course of action? Here, one gets an insight that negation per se of an existing system, regime, or model does not immediately or necessarily give way to the new. For instance, you do not simply negate or criticize the current way Filipinos think, and then you give birth to a new ideology. You introduce a new ideology. Once they see its binding force, that is the only moment that you consequently negate the old. The previous perspective gets stuck in the previous rules of the game. One competes in a game where one’s enemy has the monopoly. In the affirmative point of view, you institute the rules, you create the coordinates, let the people see its promise, and only then do you actualize change.

With these discussions, we have finally reached the point where the question “Why the title: from Logic to Anthropology?” has to be addressed. Drawing inspiration from Badiou and Žižek, I argue that in confrontation with the crises of the world, what we need is a new logic, a new way of thinking that could actually give us insight on how are we to envisage the possibility and creation of the ‘better tomorrow’ we so dearly hope for. At the same time, this should transform not only our way of thinking but also our own understanding of ourselves as human beings—the kind of understanding that would equip and fortify us with the kind of courage and faith that we need in bringing about changes in oppressive systems. If the current ideology only offers survival, tolerance, and simple negation, I do not think we can dream of a real change in the current state of things. By sticking to

the democratic materialist ideology, we are simply taught to thrive in a world shaken by catastrophes, and tolerate social divisions.

Indeed it is true that there is an aspect of philosophy which is concerned with the transmission of past philosophies. But we must not forget that there is also an aspect of it that cannot be reduced to this nor to its being an institution or a discipline. It is that aspect of philosophy that involves not the school, nor learning, nor transmission, nor professors, nor papers. But rather 'the corruption of the youth' in the Socratic sense of it, which fundamentally involves teaching people:

...the possibility of refusing any blind submission to established opinions. To [...] give to young people some means of changing their minds about all social norms; [...] to substitute discussion and rational criticism for imitation, and even, if the question is a question of principles, to substitute revolt for obedience. (Badiou 2007)

It is this spirit which I would like to see in the field of philosophy today: that aspect of philosophizing which refuses to be translated into a set of information; a way of philosophizing which knows its history, but also, why in the first place it has to exist, or why do we have to philosophize here and now.

In the beginning I have mentioned that I will demonstrate how philosophy, precisely because it is useless, has use, and that because it is not 'like' the other disciplines, it is necessary. What I mean by this is because the term 'use' is something that is useful from the point of view of the world. However, as I have presented, what philosophy does, is to diagnose the world and introduce into it ideas through which it can move towards the direction of the world as we 'desire' it to be. Philosophy is useless in 'this' world, precisely because it wants to 'change' this world. It rests on the assumption that a transformation in thinking can in fact generate change. Other sciences think about the world as is, but philosophy, thinks about the world as is and measures it against the ideal of the world as it ought to be. And it is through this that it becomes necessary.

Why did I take the issue of the use of philosophy? In a capitalist society, philosophy is threatened to dissolution, by virtue of its assumed irrelevance which goes with lack of funds, lack of means to reproduce itself. In this case, we risk that particular discipline that

takes thinking itself as a point of departure and teaches people to be critical, analytical, interpretive. We risk, consequently, the future of our students, the future of the young generations, with the danger of the reproduction or the sustaining of liberal democratic capitalism together with its crises. We risk continuity of the crises that haunt us today.

Finally, if philosophy is to look at the gap between its concepts and reality, it has to see it not as a problem but the solution to the problem. Precisely because of the gap, concepts can introduce a new reading of reality, a new world. At the same time, reality or the world can expand concepts and theories. So that when confronted with the contestability of concepts or intelligibility of philosophy, the attitude should not be to get rid of philosophy or concepts but to extend, reconstruct them. And it is this entire dialectical process which generates the transformation of worlds and consciousnesses in human history. If I am to go back to the quote of Fukuyama on the end of history, he later clarified that what he meant by history is History in the capital H, a grand narrative. What this provides us then is the insight that precisely because of the gap between reality and concepts, we don't have a History, but rather histories.

## NOTES

1. The general tenor of his thought was that despite the problems liberal democracy is facing, these are only the result of "the incomplete implementations of the twin principles of liberty and equality" "rather than flaws in the principles themselves." Fukuyama furthers that, while stable liberal democracy cannot yet be achieved in other states, "the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved on." Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, xii.
2. Hermeneutic philosophy in its emphasis on interpretation and in contradistinction with representation, asserts: "Language is the house of Being." Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in 2.



Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings from Being and Time and The Task of Thinking* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, 2008), 217.

Analytic philosophy, in its preoccupation with the rules and laws governing sensible propositions, declares: "The limits of my language is the limits of my world." *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), 68.

Post-modern philosophy, in its task of deconstructing assumptions of unity in order to highlight the incommensurability of differences, argues: "In a language, in the system of language, there are only differences." *Jacques Derrida, "Différance" in Margins of Philosophy* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 11.

3. Badiou further writes that during this time, "All situations are assessed in terms of the moral conduct of their actors, with the number of deaths being the sole yardstick for political endeavours and the fight against the 'bad guys' the unique 'Good' possible to be put forward. [...] It is only possible to exist as a 'philosopher' then, [...] in so far as one uncritically adopts—in the name of 'democratic' dogma the refrain of human rights and our societies' various customs in respect of women, types of punishment or the protection of nature." Badiou, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, p 68-69.
4. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is available online at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.
5. See also, Mark Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002).
6. Or as Žižek would remark: in renouncing "big ideological causes, what remains is only the efficient administration of life." Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, 40.
7. The trajectory of Badiou's thought is towards founding a framework where affirmation comes first, having negation only as its consequence. His goal is to find "a way of reversing the classical dialectical logic inside itself so that the affirmation, or

the positive proposition, comes before the negation instead of after it."

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