

Special issue of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*
Badiou & Education: 'the possibility of new possibilities'

Deadline for Submissions: **May 1st, 2008**

I invite you to submit work for a special issue (to be published in early 2009) of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* tentatively entitled, "Badiou & Education: 'the possibility of new possibilities'"¹ This issue will explore the implications of Alain Badiou's scholarship for education theory, analysis, and teaching and learning as taken up in critical pedagogy, curriculum theorizing, psychoanalytical theory, and in subject specific disciplinary concerns (i.e., Mathematics, Social Studies). Information on manuscript guidelines can be found at the journal's home page at <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=0013-1857&site=1>

Brief Background on Badiou:

With the translation of *Ethics: An essay on the understanding of evil* (2001), French philosopher Alain Badiou has stimulated increased attention across a range of subjects in the humanities and social sciences of the English speaking world. His critiques of hermeneutics, post-modern philosophies, and ethics based on the Other challenge contemporary and conventional Anglo-American categories of public understanding and scholarly analysis.

In contrast to these "conservatism[s] with a good conscience" (Badiou, 2001, p. 3), Badiou sets out on a radically different path, arguing that "truths" ought to be the primary category of philosophy and that ethics, in contrast to its concern with "abstract categories (Man or Human, Right or Law, the Other...), should be referred back to particular situations" (Badiou, 2001, p. 3: Emphasis in original). Badiou's "ethic of truths" is part of his broader project to re-think political subjectivity in an age characterized by relativism on the one hand and an alleged "end of history" on the other.

Badiou's work has inspired scholarship now finding publication in several leading international journals, including *History and Theory*, *Culture Machine*, *Studies in Media & Information Library Education*, *Radical Philosophy*, *International Studies In Philosophy*, *New Left Review*, and the *European Journal of Philosophy*. The time is ripe for the field of education to take up this scholarship.

Engaging Badiou's work has much to offer education scholarship. Although he does not address education in any systemic manner, Badiou understands education in general to be the practice of "organiz[ing] knowledge to the extent that a certain truth can break through" (Badiou, 2000a, p. 61). In relation to critical pedagogy and other critiques of the contemporary "situation" of schooling, Badiou's work offers a fresh ontological analysis of "becoming subject[s]" through their "fidelity" to a "truth process" instigated by an "event." In doing so, Badiou's "ethic of truths" challenges the necessity of the "situation" or, in another translation, a "status quo," to keep people "(k)notted up" (den Heyer, 2007, p. 18) in a "perseverance of being" so as to arrest potential trajectories of "becoming subjects:"

The everyday world of routines and opinionated opinions is structured according to the interests of those (this is the Gramscian/Althusserian aspect of Badiou) who dominate the “state of the situation” and who are constantly (if imperfectly) vigilant against situations becoming *events* in ways irrecuperable [sic] by the *status quo* (Jenkins, 2004, 46).

Among others, Badiou’s work raises several provocative questions:

What might an “arrangement of knowledge for a truth to break through” look like in classrooms?

In what ways might educators take up a “truth process” instigated by an “event” to work in ways inside/outside the standardization in education?

Does the primacy of “truth” in Badiou’s philosophy move this concept beyond or return it to its Enlightenment legacy as understood for example in post modern philosophies?

Can Badiou’s articulation of and call to attend to the “Same” challenge neo-liberal economic celebration and packaging of “difference”?

Read through Badiou, can hermeneutics be considered “radical”?

What does Badiou’s “event” offer emancipatory oriented pedagogies that an “encounter” as taken up in Levinasian and Derridian influenced educational discourses does not? What distinctions are necessary to make in education theorizations between what I refer to as the latter’s ‘hermeneutics of redemption’ and Badiou’s ‘affirmation of imagination and invention’? To what ends?

What new/fresh readings does the work of Badiou offer Lacanian influenced psychoanalytical theorizations in education?

Is Badiou’s call for people not to give up on their seizure by a truth process a call for an education based on egotistic individualism?

To submit your work by May 1st, 2008, or if you have any questions, please contact Kent den Heyer at

kdenheye@ualberta.ca

best,
KdH

References:

Badiou, A. (2000a). Art and philosophy. *Lacanian Ink*, 17(Fall), 48-67.

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ⁱ This phrasing is taken from an unpublished lecture by Badiou where he asks, “The question is not whether possibilities are possible but is there the possibility of new possibilities?” citation found in Cho & Lewis, 2005.