AN ETHICAL INQUIRY: TOWARD EDUCATION IN AN INFINITE CONDITION

by

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Abstract

This study is a philosophical inquiry into the ethical conditions of modernity as these bear upon, and are expressed in, the educational project. In modernity, the ethical is assumed as both a juridical proceduralism (of codes of ethics for teachers, or of a broader legal context) and a moral result (of presupposed good and evil, vested in categories like humanity, liberalism, or difference). When ethics are assumed as completed in the form of codes or ideals, that is, as present and already acted upon, there remains little of an ethics of justice in the ancient sense of the pursuit of the right way to live. Supplanted by imperatives of management and morality, the ethical conditions of living are no longer vital to education. The problem is ontological. The revitalization of the ethical in education requires inquiry into the logics of being. These logics are widely implicated and thus the resources for this inquiry are necessarily historiographical, critical, and speculative. These are deployed in this study in three thematic movements: First to the question of education’s ‘emplacement’ within the modern ethos, or ‘of what’ is educational thought a consequence in the modern ethical settlement; second, how may this be seen to be expressed as ethical thought in contemporary educational discourse; and third, and on the basis of the previous two, to the question of how it may be possible to re-think education ethically. The modern ethical topography is articulated as an oscillation among the ontological forms of conceptual realism (the constructivist procedure of the adequacy of thought to being) and those of ethical idealism (the transcendental production of what cannot be thought). Expressed as ethics of phronesis (practical wisdom) and alterity in educational thought, these are contested on the basis of generic ontology, or that of immanent infinite multiplicity, toward a subjective ethics in
education—one that refuses the idealist corruption of the ‘object’ where ethics are concerned. To do so, I propose to educational thought a concept of truth elaborated at the intersection of mathematical formalization (à la Badiou) and comic realism (à la Zupančič).
Preface

As a philosophical inquiry, this study draws upon thought from a broad array of sources, including literary, philosophical, and social scientific. Its interdisciplinary intervention into education takes place at the level of educational foundations, and it is intended to contribute to discussions about the ways in which education is constituted in discourse, as institution and aspiration, as the theory that lives in practice and the practice of theory. Its overall design is that of a theoretical edifice—a ‘theoretical fiction’ to borrow from de Certeau’s Freud—of educational ethical foundation in modernity with and against which to think in re-imagining and re-constituting education in a complex era of transformation and uncertainty. Some of Chapter 2 is informed by a study previously published as Giles, G. (2013) The Concept of Practice, Enlightenment Rationality and Education: A Speculative Reading of Michel de Certeau’s The Writing of History. Educational Philosophy and Theory. DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2011.00816.x
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This glossary is intended to assist the reader with some of the philosophical terms of this text. It provides a maximally reduced sense of the use of many of the terms that become increasingly important as the work proceeds. Thus, when encountering the most substantial contribution of the thought of Alain Badiou to this work, the reader will find here very brief definitions of key terms by which to orient her or his reading as it becomes most philosophically dense. For additional quick reference, in brackets are indicated section numbers and/or footnotes where the some of the more discrete concepts may be found elaborated further.

Being—In excess of language, undefined existence, which both ‘haunts’ and ‘precipitates’ continuous existence, or the ‘real.’

Contingency—The constitutive incompleteness of discourse, failure of symbolic totality that Badiou comes to figure (pace Cantor) as actual infinity, an affirmative subjective condition of truth.

Ethics—The search for the right way to live, consisting of inquiry into the constitution, and conditions of transformation of, subjects and worlds. Thus we have the entailment of questions of reality and the re-thinking of multiplicity (diversity, transformation, change, heterogeneity, difference etc.).
Education—A facilitative engagement in the being and becoming of subjects-to-truth—one cast as a responsibility to lead in non-sophistic (non-statist) pedagogies and curricula—fidelity to, and languages of, which are concerns of ethical inquiry in education. In a Badiouian universe, such is to “reestablish the link of truth and education . . . as fundamental condition of the very possibility of the latter” (Bartlett, 2011, pp. 5-6).

Event—Disruptive abnormality, undecidable on the basis of established knowledge but whose consequence is the subject. Within the resources of a situation, the event generates new situations by way of subjective intervention/invention. (86, 226, 246, 268)

Formalization—Inquiry into formal conditions, which admits both language and mathematics (among infinite other possible media of truth) without subjecting one discourse to another; formal conditions of thought are those which give it structure, and instantiate new conditions and subjects instigation—as not an opaque foil to ‘content,’ but rather as ‘index of the real of the act’ or where the new is ‘authorized’). (1.4.1; 10, 11, 17)

Generic multiple—The constitutive ir-representable of any situation, basis of its transformation but undecidable/indiscernible within the resources of the situation itself. Requires a subject to declare it and—by way of the praxes of a truth procedure—transform the situation thereby. (200, 218, 230, 236, 248, 250)
Historical (situation)—Regime of identification that includes the uncounted (the void, or ‘exclusive inclusion,’ contra ‘natural’ situation). Predicate of the ontological commitment of evental philosophy; condition of possibility for truth.

Immanent/Immanency—This refers to designations which resource no extra-situational elements; an immanent ontology is a consequence of the ‘not being’ of the ‘One,’ or the gathering of elements (of a given situation) within an implicitly extra-situational qualifier. (6.2; 145, 235, 275)

Infinity—A designation in flux in late modernity, of a movement from presumed unending excess beyond limit (virtual infinity) to one within it (actual infinity). (6.2.2; 239, 250)

Language—Reference of generic multiplicity (not the seat of being, but its refraction). Venue of the reifying temptation of ontological finitude. (179, 248, 255, 266)

Null set—Multiple of nothing or of the void. Initial existential claim of set theory, and basis of the unfolding of an infinity of further sets.

Meta-ontology—Translation of set theory’s axioms into philosophical terms. For example, what this study conceives as ontological is largely meta-ontological in that it is based on, extrapolated from, the translation into philosophical terms of mathematical ones.
Natural (situation)—Regime of identification that admits no excess or remainder (contra ‘historical’ situation). This is the predicate of the interconnectedness, or ‘immeasurable’ commensurable relation, authoritative in broadly ‘statist’ philosophy.

Ontology—Formal language of set theory—in that, for Badiou (2006a) “mathematics thinks being” (p. 99)—that does not discern the nature of any situation but refers to the structure of its multiplicity (thus for Badiou philosophy as meta-ontology is a discourse on the discourses of being). (1.4, 1.5; 35, 145, 155, 226, 230, 236, 243, 266)

Praxis—A series of enquiries into a situation (an intervention) made in fidelity to an event. Truthful praxis in education is instigating and facilitating such praxes as the mode of subjective emergence.

Philosophy—Reflects and attempts to schematize those transformations happening in contemporary historical situations toward the development of a ‘space of compossibility’ condition of possibility for impossibility (the new and the subject in co-extension).

Real/‘real’—Ways to differentiate the signification of reality, in the first case as that which structure fails (which is not, and cannot be, designated or symbolized) and in the second, the image of reality as substantial, coherent (i.e., the symbol of the real versus that of its incompletion/obstacle). (1.4.3; 6, 11, 30, 35, 52, 54, 143, 146, 155, 157, 207, 264, 266, 291, 293)
Set Theory—The ‘formal theory of non-unified multiplicities:’ Provides ways to think
ontological constitution without inherent recourse to transcendental indices (of reductions
such as constructive knowledge and its presumptive limitation, its finite ‘mysteries’).
(17, 149, 153, 228)

Situation—‘Presented multiplicity:’ A way to think with mathematical ontology of the
existent as a set of (discernible and indiscernible) elements. This allows for radical
thought and subjective intervention i.e., for thought as utter transformation in the addition
of a new element. (4.2.3; 151, 152, 159)

State—Arrangement of knowledges which structure a situation’s representation,
subsequent to the one-count of its presentation, the State is a term to indicate regimes of
identification which predicate varieties of the ‘real.’ (2.3.1)

Structure—A unifying effect in the presentation of multiplicity, i.e., what renders of the
inconsistent in presented being consistent, most rudimentarily for Badiou, as what he
calls the “count-as-One” of consistency in being (existence, objects, concepts, dreams
and other ‘entities’). Structure assigns ‘things’ to identities.

Subject—Finite trajectory of a truth, or of a decision to be faithful to prolonged
investigation of the consequences of an event (as subject-to-truth). (1.4.1, 3.1, 5.3, 6.1,
6.3, 6.4, 6.5; 5)
Subjectivization—Process by which a subject comes to be. (5.2.1)

Transcendental—Literally that which ‘casts away’ its referent, for Badiou (2006a) this is the “thought of a multiple being” on the basis of “an operation that indicates how its elements derive from another being” (p. 197), commonly in the conscription of extra-situational operators (God, knowledge, ‘ethical’ rectitude etc.) by which to found the simulacrum of truth. (107, 150, 187, 193, 200, 230, 251, 260, 275, 281)

Truth (procedure)—A ‘forcing’ (following mathematician P. Cohen) of the existence of a generic multiple within a situation, which unfolds a new multiple thereby. (38, 44, 95, 106, 149, 162, 180, 200, 201, 204, 227, 228, 236 (on Cohen), 238, 259, 266)

Void – Inconsistent multiplicity. Demonstrated in modern set theory as inherent in any existent ontological constitution. Can be thought as the inherent zero point of any structure (concept, object, subject). This, for Badiou (2005b), is what inaugurates an event in a situation, the evental-site (errant point of address of the void) thus being where identification fails and new configurations emerge. (153, 200, 218, 226, 235, 243, 244, 245, 253, 267, 289)
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Chapter 1 Introduction

I

1.1 Statement of the Problem: A Paradoxical Void

The world was deeply plunged in ‘ethical’ delirium. (Badiou, 2001, p. liii)

The heuristic with which I begin is that there is an ethical void in education. This is to say that ethics have abandoned the educational aspiration (as the becoming of subjects and worlds in the question of what it is to live) and, in the demotion of ethics to the irrelevance of a matter settled, education recapitulates the ethical vacuity that makes this abandonment possible. This basic claim of an ethical void I seek to examine and put into motion in this work. To do this I ask a number of questions: What is it to be ethical as an educator? How is this question prefigured in advance, and to what effects? In what ways and to what effects may this be an affirmative and generative question for educators to ask? I have undertaken this exploration to assist those of us who educate others to position ourselves in the realm of a more vital and rigorous ethical sensibility, and to provide ways to continue the struggle to do so. This struggle is important in order to resist the reduction of education to a technical enterprise, that is, one whose (moral, epistemological, imaginative, intellectual, and other) horizons are, most simply, insufficient to the dimensions of education’s charge.
To illustrate, consider how the vocation to *locate ourselves ethically* may lie at the heart of the educator's concern. How is this to be thought? One approach would invoke the great existential problematic of modernity—wherein, broadly, God's former province became that of 'Man'—that *what is known of living is radically and irrevocably incomplete*. The problem of ethical location here obtains as a question: Is it not both 'educational' and 'ethical' to find ways to affirm that knowledge, and especially ethical knowledge, *as such* always provisional, that it remains within innumerable alternatives *constitutively*, which is to say by virtue of their very exclusion?¹ For ethics this problematic expresses a condition neither en route to a full understanding of what it means to be ethical, nor guaranteed by *any* claims to it.² It is to a condition of the constitutive incompletion of knowledge that modernity delivers us paradoxically, as both its greatest promise and profoundest difficulty. Within this condition, the desire *to locate ourselves ethically* amounts to the assumption of a paradoxical responsibility, to that which may only be imperfectly described as *new*, or for that which subsists as both the productive *and* suppressive consequence of a fundamental contingency. For if contingency is established at the very foundation of knowledge (and the various modes of rationality which install and authorize it), it is also contingency from which knowledge is renovated, by which it becomes otherwise. The inherency of the new is thus the

¹ Žižek (2000) explicates this 'condition' in terms of a Kantian distinction: “Every imagination is already violent in itself, in the guise of the tension between apprehension [*Auffassung*] and comprehension [*Zusammenfassung*]: the second can never fully catch up with the first. Consequently, temporality itself, ‘as such’, involves a gap between the dispersed multitude and the synthetic act of comprehension of the unity of this multitude” (p. 7, emphases in original).
² In the first instance as the constructivist ontological proceduralism I later explore—which Nietzsche calls the ‘rainbow bridge’ of concepts (over which the gods cross into their new citadel) (Arendt, 1978, p. 158)—and in the second as founded symbolically, that is, in the *presumably already morally extant* and thereby secured.
ubiquitous difficulty of the dream of the moderns, in which, I claim, we who would assume ethicality must accede to playing a role. The complex responsibility of such an ethical location must involve acknowledging, speaking for, representing, and thinking further on the basis of, ‘ethical’ elements (subjects, conditions, ideas, events, desires) whose lack of referent is less deficient than constitutive, less to be remediated than somehow assumed as an ethical condition.³ This is an ethics of a world becoming otherwise. The hypothesis in this understanding is that thinking education in the inherent ambit of new conditions enjoins a new reading of its obligation and, more difficult still, of thinking an educator’s existing implication in the drama of ethical production and suppression. Ways to consider how this paradoxical condition—of which the constitutive incompletion of knowledge is but one element—may be articulated and responded to in education are central challenges of this work. For I claim that we would not have education otherwise, but merely educational policy—support of the unfolding of a single ‘new’ world—in the reassertion of what already is.

3 Badiou's distinction between condition and example is here instructive. The movement of discourse toward what conditions it is to treat its precursors, structuring agents, constituted objects, supra-metaphysical or ontological ‘worlds,’ and certainly even wholly imaginary or ideological fictions about itself as in some in-eliminable measure constitutive—as ‘what educates’ it—and thus also that by which it is transformed: Both fixed and fluid, imaginary and ‘real,’ conditions connote how and from what ethics are incited, disturbed and coalescent. A discourse which exemplifies, on the other hand, seizes, or is already seized by, this or that figuration or commitment, it ‘already knows’ enough to legislate among presupposed commensurabilities, and thus is less a response to than a legitimation of the circularity of a given method (which, as such, is a variety of faith). de Certeau (1988) calls this the “tautological tomb” of hagiographic “exemplarity” so compelling and disciplinary as salvific ‘rationalist’ discourse (p. 269). Along with definition and proposition, what Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) similarly describes as “the closure of exemplarity” (p. 144) installs in thought what Badiou (2009a) calls the “disastrous theme of finitude” (p. 535). As such, it may be philosophy of education's unique obligation to refuse the credentialing blackmail of exemplarity and instead move discourse into new formal conditions, ones faithful to the place of emergence of new subjectivities (and indeed also conditions) which I argue is also education’s most profound ethical charge.
1.2 Related in Educational Thought

In recent educational theory, many engaged in resourcing a new basis for ethics, and inventing therefrom novel approaches to teaching and curriculum, have been doing so by way of speculative critique, or the hazarding of new forms of thought. Especially significant in this effort has been the elaboration of new ways of realizing as *educational problematics* such concepts as singularity, truth, representation, identification, desire, and subjectivity. In affinity with this study, many of these thinkers (e.g., Jagodzinski, 2002, Jagodzinski, 2004, Henderson, 2008, den Heyer, 2009a, den Heyer, 2009b, Taubman, 2010) resource post-Kantian Continental philosophy, particularly that at the intersection of philosophy and psychoanalysis in the work of Jacques Lacan and one of his most consequential readers, Badiou.

Jagodzinski (2002) advocates for the pursuit of an “ethics along a different axis” (p. 85) from those prevalent in modern schooling—ones concerned with subjective regulation and production of ‘good’ citizens, of educated (informed) individuals. Against a socializing “ethics of recognition” (p. 96) he posits an ethics of a new subjective relation of the ‘*sinthome,*’ which is, for Lacan, the inescapable “singularity of symptoms” (Jagodzinski, 2004, p. 25) that knots together the subject with the truth of a condition of radical contingency. As radically “prior to” both discourse and ontology, for Jagodzinski (2002), ethics induces a more truthfully “ethical pedagogy” (p. 96) in

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4 This I elaborate as the third element of the method of this study, after the historiographical and critical.
5 This study uses the term *subjective* to designate both that which concerns subjects and which concerns the conditions of possibility for subjectivity as such. Thus ‘subjective regulation’ here refers both the regulation of subject and the regulation of their condition(s) of possibility. The same double usage may be seen with respect to ‘ethics’ (as encompassing ‘the ethical’) and, more elsewhere, ‘politics’ (and ‘the political’).
6 For Jagodzinski (2004), a “pre-ontological” ethics of “the Real”—that is, one “beyond” both language and the imagination—resources repressed desire to contest the coextension of western education and representation (p. 24-25).
generative opposition to norms of “deterministic accountability” (p. 81), such as those based in Kohlbergian moral developmentalism. As an ethico-moral avocation anterior to both “phenomenological and critical dimensions of teaching” (Jagodzinski, 2004, p. 23)—to both its grounding in (phenomenal) immediacy and its (rationalist) critical disruption as such—Jagodzinski’s Lacanian educational ethics develop the question of desire as the ethical address of constitutive incompleteness. By way of the ‘lack’ theorized as the (unconscious) base of desire—how it ‘presents’ as absence—is afforded relief from the “illusionary level of the egoic imaginary” (p. 24). Thus only a subjective ethics (of Lacanian desire) could generatively dislocate, as a condition of subjective possibility, what Jagodzinski regards as ethical narcissism. This is seen to be of both the faithful and rational modern ethical enclosures, of both the ‘religious’ and ‘rational’ ethical investments from which devolves the destitution of ethical thought in education, which is to say its conscription to diverse, but regulative, idealisms. This concept of ethical destitution finds a strong resonance in this study, which derives its ideological geneeses initially instead in the richness of de Certeauian historiography.

Taubman (2010) also invites ethical thought in education to the problematics of Lacanian desire (to which he adds some Badiouian considerations). He would deploy its “radical analysis” as “ethical act” in order to develop an ethics of teaching, a ‘pedagogical ethics,’ which finds ways to dwell within symbolic precariousness and contingency. Like Jagodzinski, Taubman (2010) does so in resistance to the “normalizing approach to ethics” (p. 197) supportive of a condition of subjective over-determination he names “the conditioned life” (p. 198). Against the assumption of the (institutional) forms of the given world—the given being first an institution—Taubman
provides a “counter-balance against the totalization of the new” (pp. 210-211), one which supports the persistence of the forms of ethical institutional authority. Thus, Taubman’s qualified uptake of Badiouian ethics in education pits the question of ethics itself against its passive assumption. Against the disturbing consequences of such ethical passivity in education—of ethics as merely some combination of a response to “an a priori evil,” “the other,” and “the Law”—Taubman raises the call to ethical thought as a form of ethics: “we cannot avoid confronting the complexity of the unconscious and desire” (p. 207) but rather must “adhere” to the “truth of that complexity” (p. 207). The resonances with this work are manifold (toward a reconception of truth in educational ethics, of ethics as the search for ethical conditions), but the nature of the engagement with ontology differs substantially. In this study, the ontological is the indispensable referent or mode of ethical thought, its psychoanalytic figures (the unconscious, desire) ultimately lack requisite rigour or speculative ethical force.

den Heyer (2009b), in pursuing “the void at the heart of enforced schooling” (p. 32), seeks to rethink contemporary subjectivity as an element of a new ethics in education. With the inspiration of Badiouian polemic, he critically re-articulates the purposes of education pursuant to an ethics so reconceived. In this he finds he needs to confront the “logic of deficit” (p. 31), of ‘human-as-victim’ (a powerful Badiouian critical theme), which undergirds the ethics of contemporary educational aspiration, especially in Canada. Such logics den Heyer (2009b) finds to be productive of subjectivity (the ethical condition of possibility for students) as “abstracted object of [educators’] missionary designs” (p. 38) in a condition essentially of moral panic, which “works to foreclose any potential challenge to, or questioning of, the necessity of the
[ethical] cage” (p. 33). To this he contrasts an ethics that forefronts research into curricula re-premised on “(real) students’ capacities to engage in truth processes” (p. 39), which is to say, to “affirmatively invent realities” (p. 35) by way of the voided in curricular thought, of its specific arrangement of knowledges for—and not as—the appearance of truth. den Heyer is less Lacanian and more Badiouian than Jagodzinski and Taubman, but the preoccupation is the same in re-articulating ethics in education on the basis of a generativity—of constitutive incompletion, or inherent excess—immanent to, and misrecognized within, extant ethical regimes. His commitment to Badiouian inspiration is inventive and exemplary, although he shares with so many of us in this field an aversion to the mathematics that make Badiou’s ethics more than polemical, which make them, that is, finally of ontological concern. den Heyer’s work is also notable here in its affinity with this study’s commitment to the ideological status of contemporary ethics, of their paradoxical status as both what passes for ethics (to which I colloquially refer as of codes and concepts) and as that which suppresses its instigation of what Žižek (2003a) calls “the possibility of new possibilities” (p. 73).

Henderson (2008) similarly contrives to add a facilitative Badiouian ethical diagonality (of the “event”—a way of thinking the new, or its rearticulating discursive address)⁷ to Pinar’s (2007) “disciplinary structures” (p. xiv) of verticality—the “intellectual history of the discipline” (p. xiii)—and horizontality—its “present set of intellectual circumstances” (p. xiv). As in this study, a concern for the compulsion of circumstance to the invention of “a new way of being and acting” in specific (educational) situations is determinate, is indeed generally what comes to be theorized as

⁷ Diagonality is a Platonic figure for incommensurability.
a condition of subjective emergence, contra the structural normalization of various ethical dispensations in education (which I examine in some detail as ethics of phronesis and alterity). While Henderson’s efforts to read Badiouian ethics into a democratic form represents a—perhaps Deweyan—departure from the foremost concerns of this work, he shares with it strong commitments to 1) the developing ethical import of the ethical search itself (ethical ‘perseverance’ is the Badiouian phrase he advances for this purpose), and; 2) an emerging domain of ethical thought, especially with regard for its import to educational thought.

1.3 The Trajectory of this Study

At the beginning my task is a historiographical one. In considering an ethical domain from which to depart, I draw from de Certeau's psychoanalytics of what is essentially Freudian historiography to consider the complexity of how education has come to be ethically circumscribed within an advanced liberal modernity. I articulate education’s modern ethical conditions by evoking the impulses, presuppositions, entailments, and betrayals in discourse of which the concept of education is in this ‘late’ modernity an artefact. In elaborating education’s modern ethical domain, and the questions that flow from and within it, I begin to inquire conceptually into what Badiou (2008a) calls the “great philosophical category of modernity” (p. 40): That of the subject, or new subjectivities and the forms of their emergences. Thus, from the first I make a

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8 In Freudian historiography the discursive residues of symbolic reconfigurations are the vectors by which sensibilities, their structures of intelligibility and indeed logics ‘of worlds’ come, or have come, into being. The ‘world’ is received as a complex knot of discursive problems that significantly prefigure and determine the modes of their approach, as Cassin (1990) retrieves the critical problematic from Aristotle: “If one is to destroy the logos, one must surely have a logos” (p. 111, emphasis in original). Ethical inquiry in this reading is foremost the paradoxical complexity of the destruction/subtraction of logics of worlds.
beginning in drawing out this study’s main preoccupation: How is the subject of ethics’ implication in education to be thought, or what is the ethical subject in education? How are to be thought its worlds, its ‘realities’? What constitutes and impedes such thought? What are the stakes associated with the antagonisms that afford or suppress the question of the subject in education? To what could educators consistently respond in articulating the commitments of their calling as such? This broad concern is, of course, one no more for educators than anyone else, but with a key proviso. Since educators are implicated in, or instrumental to, the uncertain becomings of everyone else, since institutionally we are ‘producers’ of subjects and society, we exist within a posing of the question with a more profound and consequential responsibility. Perhaps even the stakes and implications of ethical geneses and conditions require further that we be called to give ourselves to it as a matter of thought, as our ethical donation to its ongoing problematics, which is also to say: To not be too easily satisfied where ethical thought is concerned. With the production and circumscription of the figure of the subject as of foremost educational concern, this remains a basis of this study throughout.

Thus, in chapters 2 and 3, I outline the ‘ethical scene’ of modernity in order to posit education’s ‘emplacement’ (de Certeauian term that connotes a proscribed position within a general order) therein as an ontological matter. This as a matter of the production of worlds, of the installation and progression of the honorific ‘real’ in the grounding of ethics. This part of the study asks of what educational thought is ethically a part in modernity, and especially of what new ethical worlds it partakes—which is also to ask specifically how education is modern, how is it inscribed with the what I term the modern ethical and ontological settlement I resource de Certeau to help elucidate.
Clearly beginning with a historiographical impetus, beyond historicism however this study further requires both critical and speculative engagements by which to propose conclusions about the destiny of ethics in education. In affinity with what Bartlett (2011) calls the very model of “an education by truths” (p. 29), and with the activist sense Taubman (2010) avows of engaging ethics as its own ‘radical analysis,’ my approach comprises the “double movement” of a Platonic method, which consists in “both staking out a position by which to conceive the character and constitution of the Athenian state and to subtract from it the rudiments of a new form of thought” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 29, emphasis in original). The difference here is that I develop ethics from a de Certeauian edifice of the modern state instead. From an initial historiographical inquiry into the ethical thought of education in modernity, this is annealed in a more critical inquiry into the nature and effects of modern ethics in contemporary educational ethical thought. It is my contention that subsequent to historiographical consideration I will be in a strong position in chapter 4 to locate the modern ethical emplacement of education as its ‘haunted itinerary’ within educational ethical thought itself. This is to say, I will be able to consider modernity’s ethical conceits and subjective implications effective as ethics in education. These I discuss as a symptomatic tension—of the modern ethico-ontological settlement—between phronetic ‘realism’ and the idealism of ethics of alterity, or of the ‘other,’ as proposed in the work of Noel (1999) and Henderson and Kesson (2004) in the first instance and, paradigmatic of the ‘ethical turn’ in educational theory, foremost in that of Todd (2003, 2008) in the second. By way of such critical engagement, and on the bases of a study of ethics in educational modernity of what I consider the conceptually richest possible remit, I am able to deepen the ontological concern of ethics as an
educational matter, and thus direct this concern most profoundly toward new ethical articulations.

This remit makes possible a unique speculative opportunity tantamount to rethinking ethics and its subject(s) in education. To pursue this, in chapters 5 and 6 I raise the matters of new subjective formalisms (or ‘ways’ the subject is and may be thought) consequent to an ethics of generic ontology—one I develop with Badiou by threading it into earlier movements of this study beginning as early as chapter 2—as an immanent ethical condition, an ‘infinite’ and voiding condition of the ‘impossible’ possibility of the indiscernibility of truth. In transmuting an apparent ethical dead-end—of that which presents precisely as ‘nothing’—into ethics’ most profound condition of possibility, this inquiry finally offers the means by which to think ethical modernity in education otherwise, to re-think education ethically. These means are discussed in terms of the disparate discourses of mathematical formalism and comic realism. This is how a study beginning with the ethical thought of education moves through consequent ethical thought in education to finally ethical thought as education in ethics.

In the final chapter I conclude with a return to this introduction's declaration of an ethical void in education to consider how its attestation is ethically productive, how it may be thought productive of ethics, or of ethos—or ethical ‘worlds’—itself, and especially how such ethics may be articulated by educators. As an exemplary instance of its own heuristic avowal, how is a historiographical-critical-speculative method ethical, and in what, as what ethical forms, may it be thought so for educators? What languages, and modes of language itself, does it require? How finally is this, this methods’ articulations and their subtractions, an instance of an ethics in an infinite condition, I
ask, and how may (ethical) inquiry and (educational) ethics necessarily align, or necessarily remain disjoint?

For it may well be that only as the search for ethics itself that education may actively be ethical, rather merely than that which adheres to an ethics.

II

1.4 Theoretical Resources: Ontology in Formality, Logics & the Real

This introduction is divided into two parts to allow the reader to gain an overview of the study and its location within its field, in the first part, before delving into its conceptual thicket in the second. This section provides a valuable introduction to some of this study’s central constructions and philosophical investments, which I have divided here into those concerning form (or formalization), logics (as an ethical matter), and the ‘real’ (as ethical precept). I propose that these three thematics are those by which ethics may be rethought within the historiographical, critical, and speculative trajectories of this study, outlined in the previous section. To conclude I draw these themes together as the concerns of ontology (whose purview is the logics of the forms of the real).

As a work of philosophical inquiry in education, an introductory section of this sort is called for to orient the reader within some of the perhaps unfamiliar terrain of what follows, to prepare the reader to enter its domain in the audacity that it calls for as instance of its claims. This is also to say that philosophical inquiry subsists here in the extension of—here ethical—norms (abstractions of laws and customs from practice and
tradition) into the medium of their own reconstitution. To do this one need name this medium, and thus a philosophical thematics need be introduced at the outset.

1.4.1 The Subject and Formal Inquiry

...the present form of this world is passing away.

(1 Corinthians 7:31, New Revised Standard Version)

To live is to defend a form.

(Hölderlin, as cited in Žižek, 2003a, p. 95)

Toward the searching dissatisfaction I develop here as the ethical impetus, this work concerns itself with educational thought in conditions of and for a new subject, or subjectivities. By subject, I denote a subjective figure of form, or colloquially, the ‘who’ which is implicated in the educational project, produced by it, conceivable within and thus subject to it. As a conceptual matter, subjectivity requisitions the question of formality, for clearly—by virtue of the abstraction of the category subject itself—as Besana (2010) puts it, we are not “dealing with original entities, but with structural results” (p. 45)—these here of concern as of the ontological predications of a prevalent modern rationality. Such, in our ‘late’ liberal modernity specify how the subject

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9 I have qualified this work as one of the movement of discourse toward a certain (infinite) condition as an avocation of ethical inquiry. To do this I draw upon Alain Badiou's distinction between condition and example (see fn 3). It may be philosophy of education's unique obligation to aspire to move discourse into new formal conditions; and here I do so into newly modern ones that I will come to consider as of the a-theological infinite.
(individual, person, child, teacher, student, administrator, and even society as the case may have it) is given in discourse to be figured, or thought. This is thinking the forms of thought as an ethical matter. In simple terms, formal ethical inquiry keeps “tabs on structural reality” (Fraser, 2010, p. 182), by inviting thought outside its disciplinary function as ‘representation’ of reality and into the question of its function as such. Further however, as the question of a thinking that would adequately correspond to its referent (to an objective ‘person-thing,’ emblem of a category, instance of a concept) recedes, the formal concern makes possible, I claim, new ethical opportunities, speculative ones of “being’s appearing to itself” (Bryant, Srnicek & Harman, 2011, p. 17). Ethical thought as a formal matter may be construed as the warped existential mirror whose warp is the ethically germane, instead of the collections of elements distorted therein. Neither grounding nor reflection of empirical ‘realities,’ the formal concern manifests as what Brassier (2010) calls “the paradigmatic instance of a productive experimental praxis” (p. 66), here as ethical inquiry in education.

The formal concern advances in this study as ontologization—as the ethical resource of the address of being, or what ‘warps’ the existent (knowledge, objects, languages etc.) by way of impasses that implicate new approaches to the question of truth. Inscribed in the forms of thought, ontology is possible as ethical inquiry as a

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10 As Hallward (2003) advises, “the present moment is almost entirely dominated by…the generalized suspicion of formalization” (p. 248), of the analysis of form as of the order of truth (a suspicion no doubt fuelled by the dismissal of the apparent idealism of Platonic ideal forms). Philosophy offers such analysis as a condition of possibility, Hallward again: “The history of philosophy is precisely the history of its de-objectivation, its subtraction from the myriad empirical domains initially claimed by Aristotle’s encyclopedic embrace” (p. 243).

11 Badiou (2005b) prosaically describes his pilgrimage toward formalism as a trajectory from being “trapped by the universally recognized Anglo-Saxon distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘empirical’ sciences” which was inconsistent with what he came to encounter as “the clear Lacanian doctrine according to which the real is the impasse of formalization. I had mistaken the route.” (p. 5)
consequence of the contingencies of rationality itself, rather than in its particular content, as the ‘objective’ empirical confirmations of its auto-generated idealist ‘outside.’ This formalist ontological commitment as an ethical domain is productive irrespective of the prevalent form-content opposition, and rather instead as a species of contingent realism, of the order of ethico-ontological encounter, of a participation in being which accepts the rigor of a search—the ethical search—in not ‘knowing’ itself first, or not privileging comprehension over apprehension, as Kant would have it. 12 Formal inquiry requires formal invention; it is the creation of new regions of thought by which to become re-oriented within the received—and, as such, its dialectic (among forms of thought and their contingency) is, according to Bartlett (2010), universal. Perhaps insufferably, the formal is for all.

Such a formal concern in educational thought derives from Plato, whose notion of participation in the encounters of becoming has been mediated by the Aristotelian precedence accorded to the emergence of innate potentialities, or already associated qualities. With Plato we are given to think education as a matter of formal transformation, and with Aristotle its terror is subsequently moderated to a more limited, and manageable, remit—of ‘improvement’ (Bartlett, 2011, p. 25). 13 In the distemper of the Platonic commitment, if we, our worlds and their logics (or modes of relatedness), are expressed via impasses in the forms of thought more than as its ideal or empirical content,

12 As ‘operations of the faculty of the imagination,’ in the Analytic of the Sublime of his third critique, Kant (2007) depicts comprehension as representative, according to aesthetic judgment whose most realized instance he calls the sublime. Although this work does resource the Kantian concept of the sublime (with Zupančič on the comic mode of representation in chapter 6) its earlier concern for ontological presentation derives more from a rethinking of Kantian apprehension, which, for Kant, is a sensuous incapacity of intuition before the ‘colossal monstrosity’ of the object (p. 82-83).

13 “one is never transformed in Aristotle—it is his greatest fear—one is only improved . . . while for the Platonist, justice or generic equality is the axiomatic starting point” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 25).
it falls solely to thought itself to bring this to light, to assert itself, if only as that whose absence or lack is demonstrative, as an ethical domain in the venue of form.

Appropriate to its vocation as a work of philosophy of education, this study’s transactions occur therefore where the triumphs and humiliations of education are staged in advance, and where we are converts to them whether we know it or not: The formal place of the concept. Consider, for example, the notion of freedom: Can such a concept really be said to deliver all of its significance directly? Is it rather in its form that its significance obtains, in what it presupposes, excludes, and makes possible, even before it arrives to thought? Does it in fact denote something ‘concrete’ in the world, or something first abstract that conditions it? And if the latter, what does its uptake only as the former deny or displace? As, in effect, a matter in representationalist accord with its own referent, the concept of freedom occludes what Brassier (2010) calls “the materiality of its production” (p. 65). It not only trades in the idealist domain of received forms of the concept, it asserts as appropriate (as moral) this circumscription by virtue of the exclusion of the question of form.

Formal inquiry instead treats a concept as a model in a formal discursive system (arguably our most profound ethical inheritance) which, as Brassier (2010) observes, is to “situate its specificity by transposing it beyond the narrow ambit of the illusions engendered by its ideological recapture and into the wider . . . space constituted by the various models of the system” (p. 70). This ‘wider space’ is where the freedom of

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14 Livingstone (2012) calls such occlusion the elision of the question “about the nature and structure of reason, thought and language” (p. 34), which Bertrand (2010) supplements with the question of the history of forms: “Instead of referring representations back to the real world that underlies them, it’s a matter of understanding why the history of real mutations has taken a [given] form” (as cited in Toscano, 2010, p. 187).
*freedom* is assumed, where its formal status is constitutive, even if it is, as such, forever incomplete.

In another ubiquitous instance, should the concept of *nature* be thought in exclusion of its status as a production of the second term of the famous nature-culture divide?\(^{15}\) The irony is instructive. Surely the notion is proliferate with signification, and effective significance, but, as surely as well, it is contingent and incomplete, and as such is *both ethically expressive and suppressive*, to perhaps largely unconscious degrees.\(^{16}\) The point here is threefold: That form prescribes conditions against which ‘there is no argument;’ ‘logics of worlds’ are entirely formal matters; and formal inquiry is thus comprehensive. As Brassier (2010) puts the matter of ethics and formalization: The problem is not of confrontation between a “concrete” and a “model” but one of “the history of formalization” (p. 70).\(^{17}\)

As a condition of ethical possibility, formal enquiry is also action against submission, as Douglas (1998) has warned: “Find out what any people will quietly submit to and you have the exact measure of the injustice and wrong which will be imposed on them” (p. 310). In this study I insist on asking where the question of the

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\(^{15}\) From *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture*, Raymond Williams (1983) describes nature as “perhaps the most complex word in the English language” containing as embedded “an extraordinary amount of human history” (as cited by NeNeil, 2005, p. 235).

\(^{16}\) In a happy coincidence of the two exemplary concepts cited here, how—if not as a matter of form—could be imaginable John Gray’s declaration that “The idea that humans are by nature free is one of the most harmful fictions that’s ever been promoted anywhere” (O’Malley, 2013)?

\(^{17}\) According to Badiou, Cantor utterly renovates and explodes the history of formalization from within mathematical set theory. With ethical theory no different in my argument, with formalism we move toward a “materialist account” of theory which "challenges both the empiricist assumption that scientific theories merely model empirical reality and the idealist claim that reality is nothing but an inert support for scientific theory" (Brassier, 2010, p. 65).
form of our thought takes us in ethics of education.\textsuperscript{18} What thinking does it make possible and impossible, and thence, how we should think such a division, and what further may be found there, in what additional genres of thought may we engage as the ethical search of an ethics? Such examples are obviously grand notions, but they are ones I contend education ethically trades in daily as formalities: As abstractions the likes of which dictate the cast of the reality our efforts to educate necessarily convey. They typify the signs that we—so often unwitting, Oedipal\textsuperscript{19}—deliver in the semioses of our practices, as the worlds our forms of thought assume and enforce.\textsuperscript{20} They are of the worlds to which we become subject, and how to ethically navigate this imperilling subjective condition is to where this work’s focus is consistently drawn. In this formal regard, this study’s intimacy, its presence, is so obvious (in the Orwellian sense of \textit{that which is most easily overlooked})\textsuperscript{21} as to be incomprehensible, an exit we pass daily en

\textsuperscript{18} This may be taken up colloquially with Mark Twain, inasmuch as it is in the deceptive shadows of form that language ‘lies,’ that it states something, as de Certeau (1988) puts it, “by uttering something else” (p. 134). In this, to condition educational thought in the domain of ethics, of ethical formality, is first to dispel anti-ethical formal ignorance, and indeed the passion for it, and to stand for a particular sort of justice with the likes of Douglas and Twain (1885), who asks apropos of which: “what chance has the ignorant, uncultivated liar against the educated expert?”

\textsuperscript{19} Kovacevic (2007) calls ‘Oedipal’ one who “lives within the confines of a world whose particular conditions (consistencies and inconsistencies) he or she does not wonder about” (p. x).

\textsuperscript{20} Semiosis here refers to a process (word, symbol, activity) of the delivery of signs to an organism, including the conveying of meaning. Mohanty (1997) makes a reference relevant to present considerations of ontological ‘productivity’ by way of Charles Sanders Peirce’s notion of the interpretant: “Peirce in fact showed that we can account for the productivity of language (its unceasing “semiosis”) only when we have understood how reference is culturally and historically determined” (p. 19). The Badiouian ethical supplement here is that this point of understanding is only the beginning of the real adventure, or that of the Real.

\textsuperscript{21} To which one should add Ramsey Clark’s (1998) observation (apropos of the destructiveness of the American Imperium) that “…apparently we need more education in the obvious than we do examination of the obscure and unknown”—thereby also bringing clearly into view the question of the obvious itself.
route to our place of business.\textsuperscript{22} It is my hope that this study finds a productive beginning in discussion of these concerns in educational ethical thought, as it reports on what it finds there in ‘taking the exit’ for the ancient question of ethics, and then considering the consequences it draws from its findings with respect to what it may now mean to enact ethics in education, and how this indeed may be inseparable from education itself—but, perhaps, only if unbound from it.

1.4.2 New Conditions and the Ethics of Logics

\textit{thought must interrupt repetition.} (Badiou, 2007a, p. 57)

Along with formalism must be taken up the question of logic, or that of the \textit{modes of relatedness} of the conceptual forms that populate an ethos, or the worlds proscribed by presupposed forms. Take, for example, the question of \textit{freedom} inscribed solely within a movement among statist and personal dimensions (as \textit{what the state secures} and as \textit{to what the individual aspires}) or that of \textit{nature} confined to oscillation among the ecological and personal (as what is paradoxically at once \textit{not human} and \textit{most human}). Logics prescribe the formal dynamism that ethical inquiry ought bring into view, for they proscribe intelligibilities, or the formal conditions of our accesses to what we accord

\textsuperscript{22} To add a note of psychoanalytic complexity, for de Certeau (1988), this overlooked ‘obvious’ would rather be the not-wanted-to-be-known: “Historiographical discourse probably exchanges the place of the king for that of the child in the tale, pointing to a truth that everyone feigns to overlook” (p. 48), one, like the method to which this study aspires, productive of “indiscrete questions that must be opened within the immense movement of praxis” (p. 49).
real. Furthermore, in logics, as such, are found the means by which ethical regimes incohere, disseminate, and become anew: “Putting logic under an ontological rather than linguistic prescription...a condition of a plurality of logics prevails” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 173). In this conception of logic, further intimate with subjective/ontological formalism as a renovative domain of ethical thought, this study is broadly necessitated by the conviction that new conditions for subjectivity—thinking a (or any) new subject—requisition(s) new thinking (new logics and new forms), and then that new thinking is a far more complex adventure that it may at first seem. ‘New thinking’ indicates breaking with given or received logical-formal structures, while ‘new conditions’ here denotes changes in circumstances for which there is as yet no referent—movements of discourse from the integrity of correspondence with its objects, dislocations of meaning and knowledge within their own emergent inconsistency, and also the surprisingly complex processes by which these come to exist, or fail, or are prevented to. By bringing a singular compulsion to the question of the new, logic as ethical resource in this work can insist primarily in the establishment of the ontological regimes of constructivist and transcendental logics, as the poles of oscillation comprising the modern ethical settlement’s authority.

23 Livingston (2012), in making the case for the necessity of a “politics of logic,” argues for critical and speculative relevance of the matter of the “logical form” of “practices, institutions and laws” (p. 8) as a common immediacy—his example is the Foucauldian notion of biopower—too readily neglected in critical theory (or the Enlightenment’s project of self-critique): “many existing analyses take into account the effects on social life of technology, progressive rationalization, and “instrumental reasoning.” But it is a substantial failing of many of these existing analyses that they do not consider, in any detail, the internal implications of the specific abstract and formal-logical structures that, on their own accounts, increasingly dominate social and political life” (p. 7). “It may be that critical thought” he continues, “must now continue explicitly in a formal mode, if it is to continue at all” (p. 7). Logic is thus, for Livingston, a “form of life,” itself requiring a politics and, as I argue here, it is also constitutive of ethics.

24 Of course none of this is to say that the ‘new’ should be adopted in any guise—commercial, religious, ‘spiritual’ or other—whatever, but rather that, and despite and even through its travails therein, its inquiry is a keystone of ethics in education.
A pillar of my methodological commitment is thus that attention to ethics of logic is tantamount to the development, as an educational commitment, of inventive formal thought as rich and indispensible venue in which to re-think subjectivity as an ethical charge. By way of consideration of onto-ethical logics in the realism of the refusal of reifying correlation (of logics and their objects)\textsuperscript{25} and the speculative fidelity to the instigation of the new, I elaborate an especially modern ethical domain of inquiry. This first to the question of modernity itself (its historiographical condition of ethical possibility) and then further, in educational thought, with regard to the \textit{conceptual realism of constructivism} (as paradigmatically expressed in educational discourses of phronesis, or practical wisdom) and the \textit{ethical idealism of transcendentalism} (as similarly conveyed in the discourses which found ethics in education of alterity, or the otherness of difference). As ethics of onto-logics (the—constructivist and transcendental—formal logics of being), phronesis and alterity thus provide in educational thought instances of a broader implication. In my thesis, it is, however, an implication made broader still by the theorization of such onto-logics as symptoms of a uniquely modern ontological oscillation, or co-articulation. This I will argue (with de

\textsuperscript{25} The idealist domain of logic as an ethical concern—arguably the only conceptual one which refuses the excesses of idealism—I deploy for the purposes of my inquiry to both understand existing ethical conditions and to engage in processes of the production of new ones. As two central elements that I would not exclude from any ethics of an educator, these matters here are founded by \textit{a refusal} that grounds ethical possibility in education: Of anterior reconciliations of \textit{the correlation of thought and being}. This work instead submits them, as logics, to \textit{the question} of their modes of relatedness, to that of the historiographical dynamism of their forms. This is ethically important especially inasmuch as such correlation is constitutive of reality (see Meillassoux, 2008), as what Badiou calls its ‘logics of worlds.’
Certeau) is a product of a modern ethical sublimation\textsuperscript{26}—whose product is a paradoxical ‘cult of finitude’—which is, in the most intimate sense, modernity.

It is within this complex landscape of thought, as a matter of form and logic, where the ethical stakes of the ‘real’ may obtain, and in whose destiny resides the fate of the subject. For it is within the pervasiveness of form and logic, and by their capacity to articulate and disarticulate being where subjective conditions of possibility reside. And it is here, at this complex philosophical crossroads, where education and educational ethics encounter the true challenge of ‘thinking that which is new in situations,’\textsuperscript{27} where it too (along with philosophy more generally, and here in its provocation) may yet be a “guardian of this thought” (Bartlett & Clemons, 2010a, p. 188). In questions of form and logic is deposed that of the ‘real,’ which is, in the end, the ultimate guarantor of the being of the subject. Although it remains to be seen as this study advances precisely how such is the case, how the subject (as an ethical matter of form and logic) may wax and wane, may consist and be eclipsed, the language of such a question may be introduced here.

\textsuperscript{26} In this study, I use the word sublimation in a literal sense, of the pushing below the threshold (sub-limin) and thus unmediated transition (of the movement from one state to another without the intermediary, which I posit as characteristic of the birth of ideology, its constitutive side-stepping of discourse), which is expressly not to bar its consideration in a Freudian sense (as in, for example, the release of the creative libidinal energies of modernity by the sublimation of an explicit god).

\textsuperscript{27} There is, the acute reader may have already ascertained, a neo-Platonic sidestepping of the Kantian apprehension/comprehension distinction at work here . . . to whose purpose I ultimately marshal the resources of mathematical formalism (viz Cantor via Badiou) and comic realism (viz Lacan via Zupančič).
1.4.3 Articulations of the Real

thought approaches the real through its Idea.

(Bartlett & Clemens, 2010a, p. 188)

That conceptual complexes of ethical thought in education become naturalized (like the modern coextension of ethics and education developed in the following chapters, and the onto-ethical oscillation underpinning that of phronesis and alterity thereafter) speaks to a need to study their progenitors and emergences. These invariably reveal cracks—typically paradoxical opportunities for new ways forward. To engage critical and speculative articulation of ontological logics and forms as ethical inquiry is to introduce disquiet within the discursive networks of presupposition and implication of the governing symbolic economies of being—which lend form, or ontological weight, to the legitimacy of modern ethical thought. As such, this is also to name, and to call something new into being, within the logical and formal orders of ethics. Consequently, one may show that such engagement—as articulation—is also one of disarticulation (inasmuch as the condition for disarticulation is surely articulation itself; its antithesis simply silence). Thus, from articulation of ethical conditions with an eye to what Toscano (2010) calls the “sin of their origins” (p. 233), I am able to effect and attend to their immanent disarticulation. Further still, we come to articulations of disarticulation by which to develop an ethics of another (immanent) scene in educational thought. All of this however depends upon bringing into view (articulation) of ontologics and forms, or the structures and operations of fictions of the ‘real.’
The mode of inquiry I propose and develop is thus a displacement of what would otherwise be ideological critique—a deliberative reflection of external forces in thought which presumably effectuate conditions like education, ethics and subjectivity, which ‘cause’ their limitations and transgressions, and which, in turn, exemplify their theoretical articulations.\(^\text{28}\) Rather, as the systematic displacement of such figures as ontological forms and their ethical logics, this is the movement of ethical discourse toward the void of its foundations (which I declare as an ethical heuristic at the outset and develop in later chapters); it is also the disruption of their modern critical finitude in accordance with another, arguably more faithfully modern, ethical remit altogether. The ethical supposition made possible here is the refusal of the settlements of the ‘real,’ especially as an ideal matter. I hold with Badiou and others who regard ‘reality’ as received or somehow completed as inadmissible passivity, an ‘un-ethical’ reconciliation with an assumed single ‘world’ and the process of its intelligibility and legitimacy (which amount to an order of power); according to Kovacevic (2007), this reconciliation amounts to ‘birth of ideology’ in a ‘logic of disavowal,’ specifically in the identity, the idealistic identification, of “a function in the symbolic register with the reality of physical presence” (p. 195).\(^\text{29}\) In this study I designate this ideological product as the ‘real:’ The ontological signification or implication that, as Toscano (2010) puts it, “is fashioned by

\(^{28}\) Such critique arguably partakes of a “religious form of freedom” attendant to modern reason: By embodying “the alienated freedom of man” (the contrary of ignorance) in “something external to him” (Toscano, 2010, p. 197), the profit of critique.

\(^{29}\) The ‘symbolic register’ for initial purposes may be figured as that in and through which the ‘real’ is constituted, the medium of its mediation as intelligible, extant, present, existent. Although language is its most powerful and perhaps obvious instance, the symbolic—at least in the inheritance of Lacanian psychoanalytic philosophy—may be thought as any semiosis by which ‘what is’ become ‘what is intelligible’ as such, rather than, as in the imaginary register, ‘what is recognizably imaginable.’ The distinction is subtle, but profound.
representations, mediations, institutions, languages” (p. 27) as a sort of onto-ethical self-guarantee.

The real, conceived in its contingent absoluteness, is never so real that it cannot be suspected of being fictitious. Nothing can testify to the fact that the real is real, other than the fictional system in which it will come to play the role of the real. And since the real is fundamentally indifferent to the moral categories of good and evil, there is no built-in mechanism to prevent this fictional system from drawing upon terror as its ultimate means of distinguishing false from truthful testimony. (Hallward, 2003, p. 288)

Another way to think such a play of ontological ‘fictional systems’ is that even (or, perhaps especially) in the most basic of instances, ones where the ‘real’ of being is concerned as ambiguous ethical authority, as Livingston (2012) simply puts it, “we occupy the homogenous medium of norms” (p. 9). To engage this onto-ethical condition as a point of departure—rather than one of foreclosure—I deploy the Lacanian figure of the ‘Real’ to distinguish the ‘real’ from its ethical condition as authoritative fiction.\(^{30}\) The Real may be thought as that which forever prevents reality from assuming completion, from conforming with its image(s), and, additionally also, as that which may

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\(^{30}\) The Real indicates “the obstacle on account of which every Center is always displaced,” that “distorting screen, which always “falsifies” our access to external reality” and on account of which “every symbolization misses its object” (Žižek, 2003a, p. 67). Since Hegel, the rendering of ‘reality’ as a thematic of the Real, as nontransparent and inconsistent with itself is “simply to take the notion of reality more literally” (p. 66). As such, the Real can naught but subsist as the ‘short circuits’ in orders of the ‘real’ and decisively—for such can only be a matter of ethical decision—not a presupposed ‘deeper’ reality whose projections on the screen of representation are authoritative, and ‘idealistic’ realism of disavowed or explicit transcendentals (or surreptitious ‘built-in mechanisms’ or ethical guarantees). The search for an ethics of the ‘Real’—title of a far-reaching work by Alenka Zupančič (2000) which comes into play in the latter phases of this work—is the consequence of the ‘real’/Real distinction.
be marshalled to basic ethical ends in resistance to the sovereignty of the imputation of the ‘built-in mechanisms’ of the cited passage, or those of the ‘realization’ of the ‘real’—which I take up as ethics of constructivist phronesis and those of transcendental alterity. Such mechanisms this study examines as modernity, as symptoms of its ideological closure, and then in modern educational ethics. Ethics’ immanent other scene as such becomes elaborated where that Real obstacle subsists (a symptomatic lack or excess), and this I develop in this study, initially on a historiographical basis, as the ontological non-coincidence of existing ethics with themselves. This ethical domain is then one of the paradoxes of the ethical governance of transformation and becoming, in the vacancy of their guarantees, and of the infinite and as-yet nameless invitations of being, of its worlds as-yet unknown, to which ethical thought in education is, in my argument, most fundamentally obliged. In liberal parlance, the domain of ethical inquiry is here that of selfhood and its conditions, in which the concerns of being are undoubtedly those of becoming (and unbecoming), and whose domain of conceptual inquiry, as an ethical

31 For Badiou (2005b), it was Pascal who “invented reading for symptoms” (p. 217) as a sort of wager of subjective fidelity, in that he declaimed both the immanent infinite propulsive of modern reason, and its capacity to utterly rend its own forms. Here, with modernity taken as an event (a reconfiguration of the symbolic coordinates of being), its own status as such is both its condition of incalculable possibility and of its own immeasurable ideological obscurity.

32 Toscano (2010) cites Blumenberg’s considerable understatement to this point: “…there exists a high degree of indifference between a concept and its history” (p. 233)
matter, is that of the emergence of the subject.\textsuperscript{33} Such is a promise of ethical inquiry as philosophy of education.

As the struggle to think and articulate truth (of the ‘real’) as an ethical concern—of the exposures of the forms of being and its subjects—ontology here must insist on discourse as its field of reference: It “approaches the real through its idea” (Bartlett & Clemens, 2010a, p. 188). With formal conditions as such, their logics, and the question of the ‘real’ (and indeed the Real of the question) as domains of ethical inquiry in education, this study proceeds as if in unprecedented fashion, not in the service of the unprecedented, not merely to idealize an educational input/output called ‘subject,’ but rather to profess its instance wherein its most profoundly ethical conditions of possibility obtain: As idea, one which remains, stubbornly, and despite how much we may come to know, in an infinite condition.

\textsuperscript{33} The German tradition of Bildung offers an instructive counterpoint to my thesis, one of a sophisticated nexus of the individual and the societal which, however, tends to forefront the (conscious) self’s relation with a society’s highest ideals via the eschewal of universal narratives. As outlined by Thomas Mann—and developed against Hitlerism—Bildung (as the labour of culture) forefronts “inwardness,” “introspectiveness” and “conscience” against the “objective, political world” (as cited in Bruford, 1975, p. vii). As developed here, against the rather tenuous bulwark of inwardness and conscience, universal narratives are instead that by which the subject emerges, as their lacunal failure rather than their rather neurotic redemption, via ethics, their ‘objective’ frame is what is transformed, rather than supplemented as a matter of fostering ‘culture.’
1.5 Ontology and Ethics of Radical Enlightenment

The mind is its own beautiful prisoner. (Cummings, 1966, p. 88)

It is through what is common to all that what is true for me is guaranteed.

(Roffe, 2010, p. 125)

To provide for the being of the subject as an educational ethics is to think subjective determination within ethical institution otherwise, to dislocate the norms that prefigure the question of subjective determination. This I argue requires grappling with voided ontological ‘substances’ within the place of the alien ‘real’ ones we take for our own. This is ethics hidden within the trivial, or displaced when presupposed within formal mechanisms like dilemma or ambiguity (see Colnerud, 1997). This challenge—which I designate as that of the search for the ethical as an educator—finds its field of study among the forms of thought, the ethical productivity of logics and the contingent

34 Here thinking may be taken in the Badiouian sense as the invention of form (Mullarkey, 2010, p. 173), and subjective determination in the informal sense Hackney (2006) uses, as “making up people,” or the anterior forms to which subjectivity is deposed as conformity, that of the static nominalism Nietzsche (1974) claims causes him “the greatest trouble” in that “…what things are called is incomparably more important than what they are” (p. 58, emphasis in original).

35 Žižek (1989) calls the everyday “alien substance” (p. 230) of webs of ontological presuppositions. Ontology designates a field of inquiry into the logics of being, here as ethical instances and authorities. Žižek is with this indication designating the instantiation of the quotidian, the everyday, empirical-real (the ‘alien’ of the normal, one might say) as a presuppositional ontological primacy of an absence of freedom. Characteristic of his Hegelio-Lacanian ilk, such freedom would subsist in the split within essence itself, whereby, at base, its constitutive estrangement becomes the sole means of a subjective freedom worth the name, the means by which to think, that is, and to participate in a symbolic universe generatively. The immediacy of its alternative comprises the alien in/of the everyday.

36 Colnerud (1997) finds that teachers find themselves in a sort of ethical miasma of the invisibility of the “ethical dimensions” (p. 634) of their work. A complex circumstance, this obtains not the least because of both teachers’ lack of a language with which to articulate the ethical in their work and lives and unwitting companion theoretical commitment to not seek the ethical as such within every element of their work.
authority of the ‘real.’ These it develops as the ontological concern for what produces the ethical investments that determine the forms of subjects and our worlds. I pursue these by way of historiographical, critical and speculative modes of engagement with the ethical conditions of modernity—those prescriptive of education and ethics’ conjunction, expressed within ethical educational thought and also those that could be their conditions of possibility, which could be new forms of ethics in education. This is why this work is singularly one of philosophy of education, why, as a formal enquiry into logics and their ‘real,’ it trades more in conditions than examples, more in symptoms than instances, more in ideas and ir-relations than objects and methods.  

The ontological language by which I pursue these investigations to their most productive possibility is not common language. Its strength and its difficulty is that, unlike everyday speech, its remit is discourse and the forms and logics of its objects. This is perhaps not as foreign a terrain as it may seem, consider Grigg’s (2005) observation that “it is not difficult to think of many true sentences for which there is nothing by virtue of which they are true,” and the example he offers: “there will never be another Napoleon” (p. 60). Explicitly as well as inexplicitly, we trade in ontological truth daily, we are both haunted by, and expressed as, its forms, the coordinates of the ‘real’ whose whorl we inhabit. As an expressly ethical matter however, more of us is required, articulation must be hazarded, politics of abstraction engaged, ethical domains named, extended, subverted.

Relevant here to invoke the domain I would occupy methodologically is Barthes’ (1987) explication of the “scrap heap” of what he calls the “will-to-method:” “Some people speak of method greedily, demandingly; what they want in work is method; to them it never seems rigorous enough, formal enough. Method becomes a law…the invariable fact is that a work which constantly proclaims its will-to-method is ultimately sterile: everything has been put into the method, nothing remains for the writing; the researcher insists that his text will be methodological, but this text never comes: no surer way to kill a piece of research and send it to join the great scrap heap of abandoned projects than Method” (p. 318).
Ethical inquiry by way of ontology engages any discourse that might further its purchase on being (commonly figured as of the ‘real’), to promote generative chemistries among ethical conditions and subjects. The ‘subtraction of sense’ this can involve echoes in comprehensiveness Britzman’s (2009a, July 14) instigation that we *figuratively* (formally) will have to “destroy education to create education.” This study pursues this inspiration by way of a resistance to “the charms of interpretation” (During, 2010, p. 86) wherein—as an “attribute of truth” (Bartlett & Clemens, 2010b, p. 162)—it finally comes to be elaborated at the unlikely intersection of mathematical formalization (à la Badiou) and comic realism (à la Zupančič). From mathematics it conscripts the rigor of ontological equality as ethical resource, one where “only mathematics can support pluralism, absolutely” (Mullarkey, 2010, p. 175), and in comedy it finds the kindred disjoint commonality of the truth of language (or the Lacanian Symbolic), whose condition is also shared, if only in lacunae.

In developing such a committed ontologics for ethical thought in education I am relying on what Israel (2002) calls “radical Enlightenment” (p. vi) thought. He identifies an insufficiently avowed Spinozist animus behind much of the most revolutionary pretensions of the Age of Reason, those to have brought us its characteristic confrontations with authority, its scientific temerity and political progressivism. While

38 Here however Britzman’s declaration—to engage comprehensively with the symbolic (formal) universe of modern education as a critically generative commitment—is taken less as the matter of a critical destruction than as a speculative subtraction. Badiou (2007a) argues that the destructive remains within the specifying predication of knowledge—it deploys logos against itself, we might say—rather than allows its own immanent condition of finitude its corruptions, enables a subjective avowal on the basis of something (infinitely) else altogether. The *subtractive*, alternatively, as the intellectual correlate of an “ethics of truth,” is posed as the “protocol of thought that differs from the protocol of destruction” (p. 56) for it refuses, from the first, the integrity of the object whose ‘destruction’ would be declaimed. This is tantamount to a formalism of fidelity to material conditions, and against their bypass to the symbologies of conceptual realism (typically and ideologically in the enforcement of a ‘real’ or *specific* world, a ‘known’ world).
not drawing from the well he specifically identifies, I would say that this work is of radical Enlightenment thought in that it takes not the given Enlightenment as its inert and implicate starting point, but rather as a condition of possibility for its own vital continuance otherwise. To such opportunity we arrive if ethics may be ontological, if, in the formal enquiry of the ethics of modernity, as educational and toward the infinite, ethics may be thought at what Balibar (2004) calls the “incomplete philosophical conjuncture” of the “history of truth” (p. 22).

In education—and as educational ethics—no less is required, if we are to allow the new worlds we may dream, which must be dreamt, any chance of coming to be.
Chapter 2 The Conditions for Ethics in Modernity

That more knowledge could cause problems, that light might prove another tyranny were not thoughts the philosophers of the Enlightenment were prepared to entertain.

(Tsoukas, 1997, p. 839)

2.1 Introduction: Engaging Conditions

This chapter and the next refine the thesis that education and ethics are first concepts, discursive effectivities ‘bound’ in modernity in particular ideological configurations.39 Following Lacan, discourse is both “a linguistic structure that provides the possibility for . . . subjects to relate to each other” and speech “without words”: “Words are simply the means through which a given discourse structure produces its meaning effects” (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 125). In de Certeau, according to Godzich (1986), discourse, or discourses, in contradistinction to mere language (as “object of knowledge”), constitutes “forms of actual social interaction and practice” (p. xx). As such, it is in discourse where I will examine how the co-extension and co-implication of ethics and education in modernity is both actualized (as necessary intelligibilities) and suppressed (as delimited contingencies). In so doing I am contending with what gives form to the very thought of education (Britzman, 2009b).

39 For de Certeau (1988), ideology prefigures the loss of (historiographical) specificity: “Denial of the specificity of the place (of production) is the very principle of ideology, all theory is excluded” (p. 69). For the early Badiou (who is the more explicit on the question) ideology “decomposes into a threefold function of repetition, totalization and placement” expressed by “(a) instituting the repetition of immediate givens in a ‘system of representations […] thereby produc[ing] an effect of recognition [reconnaissance] rather than cognition [connaissanse]; (b) charging this repetitional system with a unifying sense of worldhood and totality while ordaining it as “Truth;” (c) reinscribing both individuals (as subjects commanded to ‘take their place’) and scientific concepts in this representational whole” (as cited in Fraser, 2007, p. xviii).
In question here is the "thinking of education" (Bartlett, 2011, p. 2, emphasis added) that, from Plato, begins not in a discreet institutional or epistemic configuration, but rather in a "general order of thought" (p. 1). I confront the obscurity which veils such questions with a psychoanalytic study—such is de Certeauian historiography—of what thinks education and its subject? To where should we turn in thinking a ‘general order of thought’ so as to encounter the thinking of education, and ethics therein, anew—and why?

Pursuant to the Badiouian point that enchantment (here ethical) is always recaptured at the point at which it has been obscured (Badiou, 2009a, p. 76), I begin with a ‘general order of thought,’ with an event, with the advent of Euro-Atlantic modernity (or ‘western civilization’s’ latter day ethos). This is also an investigation into the genesis of a sublimation of the ‘real’ within the orders of modernity’s enforcement. This, I argue—especially with de Certeau (1986, 1988) and Toulmin (1990)—initially subsists in the reversal effected by the dogmatic cut of now and then (de Certeau, 1988, pp. 10-12), whereby the first great modern figure became what is known as tradition (as that which

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40 This may be thought at the medium in which contemporary discourses are founded and authorized, the “something else” that there “must already be” (Livingston, 2012, p. 47) in order for current ones to take form. This is in clear confrontation with what Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) calls the “dream nourished by all of the Moderns of a possible auto-conception (in all senses) of the Subject” (p. 142), which he contests with the psychoanalytic claim that “we do not live, but that we are lived” (p. 166, emphasis added).

41 As a “derivative phenomenon” bound up in a social order (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 160) one here may take due care in approaching “the perennial question” of “who educates educators” (p. 168).

42 As this chapter and the next will elaborate, in the “gigantic machine” of a rational-humanist deliverance, a concept of history as “endless labour of differentiation” for de Certeau (1988) prosecutes the modern project of desire as to “secure identity” within a “unity of consciousness” comprehensible thereby (p. 36-39),
stands before or behind), and the most paradoxically traditional, massively both productive and thereby also blinkered, as the modern.\footnote{Žižek (2003a) supplements this depiction of modernity as ‘perversion’ in a way which neatly foreshadows some of the theoretical difficulties ahead and captures the theme of desperation which I take up next: “with modernity proper, we can no longer rely on the pre-established Dogma . . . [and] this is one way of reading Lacan’s thesis that the big Other no longer exists. Perversion is a double strategy to counteract this nonexistence: an (ultimately deeply conservative, nostalgic) attempt to install the law artificially, in the desperate hope that we will then take this self-posted limitation “seriously,” and, in a complementary way, a no less desperate attempt to codify the very transgression of the law” (p. 53, emphasis in original).}

It is in the conjecture,\footnote{This resonant with Butler’s (2002) analysis of Foucauldian critique, whose “inaugural scene” she argues, as “originary freedom,” is given “in the form of conjecture” (p. 224).} which is to say the speculative historiographical production, of the effectivities of a misapprehended and occluded birth of modernity—as the new ‘tradition’ that departs from, both founds with and casts at a remove, the ‘traditional’—that a new purchase may be gained in the study of education and ethics.

2.2 A ‘Socialized’ Ethos I. Developments: Cooler Heads Prevail

According to Toulmin (1990), the ‘modern’ commitment to rationality took enduring root during the tumultuous period of 1610-1650. Early in the seventeenth century, he advises, “the religious conflict triggered by the Reformation took place at the same time when the traditional cosmology—the Sun and Planets moving around a stable, stationary Earth—at last come (sic) under sustained attack” (p. 82). Of interest here is the scope of both the sense of crisis, and that of its presumed deliverance: “if everything in general is under threat at one and the same time, everything in general must be restored and underpinned in a brand new way” (p. 83, emphases in original). This new underpinning was the deliverance of the ‘rational method’ of the ‘cooler heads’ of the era: “the more acute the differences between Protestant and Catholic zealots, the more
dogmatically they denounced one another, the more urgently did cooler heads embrace the project for a ‘rational’ method” (p. 82-83).45 A univocal reason ultimately ascends in the raiment of the religious formalities from which it devolved. However its operation is bivalent, it divides as it validates, not at all unlike the troubled faiths it ostensibly superseded.

Toulmin enumerates some of the more familiar elements of this deliverance. Derived from a certain reading of Descartes (to whom much of this shift is ascribed), an “idiom of certainty” (p. 70) is imposed, modeled on the “self-guaranteeing character of Euclidian geometry” (p. 74). The sixteenth century humanist project is appropriated and subsequently attributed to seventeenth century rationalism, whose rapier method was deployed “as a Joker with which to trump all the inconclusive arguments of theology” (p. 79).46 The dawn of modernity was an advent inspiring of faithful excess no less than any rapturous beginning, but it was different in that it cast itself as somehow exempt from the messiness of absolutes, absolutely.

de Certeau submits to an analytic historiography the manifestations and effectivities of the loss that this paradoxical auto-exemption produced.47 It is my thesis

45 This is not to be taken in a ‘modern’ sense, as the hypostasis signified as ‘history’ but as important precisely because of its persistent effectivity. Barack Obama (as cited in Lilla, 2010, ¶1), in one germane instance, laments the resistance of politics to “facts and science and argument” winning the day, against human nature’s apparent persistent failure in a fearful “hard-wiring” to irrationality. Similarly, and to use another apparently progressive example from the American orbit, Brown (2008) shows the “dangerous” and “profoundly anti-democratic” recourse to “rationality” in how Al Gore, in The Assault on Reason, argues that “democracy is in danger not from neoliberalism, [a] particular form of rationality…but from a multiply-sourced attack on reason, truth, and facticity.” Univocal reason continues to effect its splitting (of the righteous from the fallen) under the banner of progress and the Good. de Certeau (1988) would call these a “presupposed partition whose effect is validity” (p. 39).

46 Apropos of the modern humanist citation, Douzinas (2013) observes a continuity: “The concept ‘humanity’ has been consistently used to separate, distribute, and classify people into rulers, ruled, and excluded. ‘Humanity’ acts as a normative source for politics and law against a background of variable inhumanity.”

47 de Certeau (1988) identifies this loss as of both “the absolute object” (p. 9), or God, and “the integrative virtue that the religious frame of reference had represented until that time” (p. 154).
that it is to the repressed consequences of this loss to which we must look for the proscription in the foundations of modernity by which have come to be oriented conceptions of both ethics and education. In other words, with de Certeau, we can find a way to think modern ‘social’ ethics as contingent—and indeed ‘repressed’—consequences of specific developments in ethical thought, rather than as naturalized ‘givens’ of an assumed and formally inert modern world. As an ethical aspiration in education, here we may find the provocation of an ethics worthy of the implication of the term in, and as, the re-foundation of an ethos, its ground of new forms of being.

First among these foundational movements— which we can figure here as flights from the implication of a loss, which is to say, as a repression—is what de Certeau (1988) calls the “sociocultural localization of religious ideologies” (p. 134), a symbolic re-location of what had been God’s (the mystery of being, divine moral authority etc.) orientation toward the figure of the ‘social’ and thus to human reference as the grounding significance (here in both the sense of importance and of signification). I have written elsewhere of the burgeoning of the ideology of ‘practice’ as a consequence of this movement, but what primarily is of concern here is less the field by which this new metaphysics was referenced and verified than the means by which this was (and is) accomplished, and the relevant configurations it spawned—its (uniquely modern) ethical conditions, that is. The operational elements of this ‘rational’ re-signification that come to bear most directly on ethics and education are: Metaphysics, legality, morality and epistemology. I plan to develop this analytical organization of a historiographical discourse to help to characterize the effectivity of the loss productive within the modern

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advent: Metaphysics as sublimating philosophical operations, legality as qualifying of their form, morality as their (socializing) function and epistemology as the form of their confirmation, of the ‘body risen’ of a modernist eschatology. Found in these elements is the ‘material’ of the formal binding conjunction of ethics and education of modernity, its facilitative pre-specification within a deceptive freedom of finite horizons.

2.3 A ‘Socialized’ Ethos II. The Elements of ‘Everything in General’

In what Toulmin (1990) calls “the collapse of cosmology and epistemology simultaneously” arose the urgencies of a “rationalist” will to make anew a foundation to replace the one perceived lost, of “a fresh cosmology from scratch” (p. 83). For de Certeau (1988), this becomes a “methodological invention of new systems of signs” (p. 74, emphasis in original) beholden to “the dream of a totalizing taxonomy and by the will to create instruments proportioned to [a] passion for comprehensiveness” (p. 74); thus a great labour of ethical creation (primarily in writing) establishes its own founding. An ironic deliverance—because what was being delivered from were the failing referents of deliverance itself—this is modernity’s founding as a remove from apparent ethical chaos. To show how ethics and education in modernity are ‘projected from’ this ‘methodological’ instance of obscured moral panic, I consider here in what the method, the dream, the will and the passion of a new order found its expressions, and how such
ethical elements—of a wholly new ‘everything in general’—came to be. For to show the point of departure of an ethic is to create the conditions for new ethical departures.49

2.3.1 Elements I: Metaphysics

In the advent of modernity, a closed, ‘social,’ cosmologics (a new ‘real,’ or ‘everything in general’) of rationalist method is coextensive with a metaphysics at a remove from what they are convoked to overcome—that is, the early metaphysics of ‘western’ modernity perform a splitting function, of its method from its objects, its function from its materials. In ethnological works, de Certeau (1988) sees this schismatic repeated hundreds of times: Uncanniness is exteriority, excluded, and ‘civil society, in which a truth of man is always legible’ (p. 219), is interiority, is ‘what belongs.’ This ethical division, which holds that “nature is what is other, while man stays the same,” convenes the enclosure of a new “social space [where] an ethics is developed” (p. 220) upon the predicates of ‘Nature’ and ‘Man’ as proscribed by their division. Thus located, this became an ethics of the “progressive unveiling” (p. 220) of a model, one that becomes its own circumlocutory object: ‘society’ is developed because a social nature is presupposed, reason is progress because progress may now be ‘reasonable,’ and so on. Metaphysics is the first element of the specifically modern ethos by which we may come

49 My project, here with de Certeau, diverges from Horkheimer and Adorno’s (2002) in two key aspects, first it eschews the sense of continuity they discern in the establishment of enlightenment reason: “Humans believe themselves free from fear when there is no longer anything left unknown. This has determined the path of demythologization, of enlightenment, which equates the living with the nonliving as myth has equated the nonliving with the living. Enlightenment is mythical fear radicalized” (p. 11). Modernity in my thesis is not a redeployment of ‘mythical fear’ but an ethical re-founding in new formal coordinates—and what is new about it, more than what is continuous within it is what is important. Second, with respect to the “universal taboo” of positivism (which they claim for enlightenment’s “ultimate product”), they advise that “nothing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the “outside” is the real source of fear” (p. 11). Modernity in de Certeau’s thesis precisely retains and orchestrates the idea of an “outside” to enlightenment rationality to suit the shifting purposes of veracity.
to see education and ethics circumscribed by the particular new discursive coordinates of a modern ‘real.’ The complexity given in their contingency—partiality or incompleteness, debt to pre-existing forms, reliance on the contiguity of (ideological) fictions about itself—is important to repeat with persistence, for therein lies the inherent plasticity of modernity’s ethical immanency, its foundational condition of change, its most basic ideological operation as an ethic.

Thus the concept of a model—of a new social cosmologic—is the investment that underlies interpretation in modernity’s founding innovation. It grants relevance to difference by way of its predicative presupposition (p. 77), of a difference ‘already known’ or admitted ‘in form’ in advance. This view of social ideology as modern metaphysics founds a conservative ethical configuration whereby significance is both an exception to model and an effect of method (p. 84). The presupposition is no longer of divine (‘infinitely’ mysterious) authority but of an ideological (‘infinitely’ efficacious) one. The loss of cosmological confidence instigates its re-founding in the security of a deeper obscurity, which both generates new forms (of life, of knowledge, of thought, of language) and sublimates the contingency of their genesis. In the ‘social’ reinterpretation of Christianity, the redeployment of Christian formalities re-emplaces God into the security of plain sight, with ‘real’ competences allocated appropriate only to their object (the ‘state’ of affairs as ‘society’), in a landscape of visibilities which retains resonance in later democratic ideology: “subversion will ultimately be repressed by ‘state policy,’” which will assign to an entire society the exact place where, in the name of the king,
everyone can speak” (p. 264). The true subject of this projective metaphysics—of a ‘rational’ function, a ‘civil’ process, of the enforcement of a metaphysical model—is, according to de Certeau, none other than the emerging discursive figure of the state: Initially as in the (new) ‘state of things.’ In the metaphysics of the rationalist cosmology of modernity we confront a ‘social’ delimitation of “situation within a totality” (totality being simply what is without remainder) whose name is the social body, or the state (of emerging modern affairs). Freighted with an infinite charge sublimated in the overcoming of the vicissitudes of belief, such an implicate order “replaces with “state” what “being” represented within the former metaphysics” (p. 165). de Certeau (1988) calls this a substitution by an “ersatz:” “the state (and in theory, ‘state policy’) becomes a substitute (an ersatz) for God-the-Father, who was. . . ‘split up’ by the wars of religion” (p. 293, emphasis in original). Originally then a sort of ontological “life insurance policy” (p. 299) against the contingencies of its founding (against the weakness of its totalization), a new god—for the formality is no different—of rational method comes to be naturalized variously, as multiplex guarantor of the necessity of its order: As ‘the people,’ agglomerate of a new (putatively more rational) ‘Man,’ and also the self-transparent sovereign individual of subsequent liberalism (the ‘free’ man of modernity’s profligacy), and even the child as analogue and instance of a process of development (toward a ‘natural’ state as in Rousseau, or a ‘mature’ one as in Kant).

50 Modern freedom, in this reading, is the grant of this modern order, a no less divine bestowal than the ‘superstitious obscurity’ it founds (as ‘tradition’) in order to supersede; its caveat is that it not be assumed as such, that is, as not a new species of contingent belief but instead a methodological totality which dispenses with belief, even as it re-founds it. That a grant of this dimension—a new ideology of freedom— itself would repress is only paradoxical to the extent that its subliminative character is itself suppressed.
In addition to whatever such may variably connote as empirical objects (primarily ‘citizens,’ ‘individuals’ and their precursors), they are also metaphysical figures of a new order: No longer *articles of faith*, they are *its operation*. In the stead of the fickleness and violence of belief, new ‘progressive’ imperatives\(^\text{51}\) came to be performed in the domain of *practice*, or practices. As the replacement of what de Certeau (1988) calls “assimilation of a universal Christian truth” with a “social gesture” (p. 130), practice is that into which religion is formally repositioned such that, beginning in the seventeenth century,

Practice is a fact which can be observed. A proof that makes of itself, practice is *the justifying visibility* of a belief that from then on also obeys the imperatives of social utility under the bias of philanthropy and the defense of order. (p. 129, emphasis added)

From my reading of de Certeau, practice is an entirely new domain of human significance, from which we may hardly now disassociate ourselves (in that it is now ‘obvious,’ even passé, such is the genius of its self-sustenance). The importance of this new metaphysical field is that it both embodies a *new* social axiom of action, and acts as a perpetual placeholder for that toward which ‘society’ is a ceaseless pedagogy of transit

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\(^{51}\) These, for de Certeau (1988), are more effectively significant in the inverse, as the founding of a new “global ‘heresy’” (p. 128), one that maintains its order exclusively, by virtue of the production of its mystical/irrational ‘other.’
(or it is a ‘concrete’ place of deliverance).\textsuperscript{52} Symbolic referent (identification with the order of which it is a part) of ‘application,’ of ‘utility’ and as the vague instrumentality of ‘what works,’ no longer doctrine, modern metaphysics is merely a sort of motion.\textsuperscript{53}

Within the redeployments of ‘Christian structures’ of evangelism, messianism and crusade (de Certeau, 1988, p. 178) we may see here articulated a symbolic (cosmological) and specifically modern “institution of the real” (1986, p. 200).\textsuperscript{54} In this, ethics assumes the ‘socializing’ function of the realization of their ontological model, guarantor of the new order of the ‘supposed real.’ “Ethical tasks” as de Certeau puts it, “are replaced by what is supposed to be the expression of reality” (p. 200). These however, are

\textsuperscript{52} For de Certeau the “concrete” is metonymic of the ‘real,’ a historical model—as, more bluntly, also for Badiou (2006a): “the concrete is more abstract than the abstract” (p. 79). For an instance of this, in contemporary political discourse we find the notion of the concrete sustaining a discourse of the pragmatic instrumentalism of ‘what works.’ Expressive of a vaguely ‘commonsensical’ and putatively ‘non-ideological’ consensus, this instance of a language of pragmatism, as Worsnip (2012) argues (apropos of Toscano (2010)), conjures the spectre of extremism in subtly stifling dissent: “The language of pragmatism is a far cry from “straight-talking;” rather it is a way of depriving citizens of the language in which to voice dissent” (emphasis added). More prosaically, Kovacevic (2007) points to the ‘vulnerability” of pragmatic discourse to “thought’s betrayal in dogma” (p. 185). From the immediacy of the pragmatic, practical, and concrete, it is a short leap to the circumscription of a language of possibility as that which induces, and ‘routinizes’ (pace Weber), the belief that there is no space from which to oppose the status quo, no way to “think through conditions of possibility for emergence of sociopolitical [to which I would add: subjective] formations” (p. 199).

\textsuperscript{53} de Certeau (1988) ascribes to the new ‘rational’ normality the ‘self-securing’ operations of application—the mercantile logic whereby “the assurance of existence to whomever ‘applies’ a law” (p. 301)—and utility—the rule of the utile is imposed everywhere” (p. 173). Twin species of a “mystifying idealism,” these modern imperatives Kovacevic (2007) identifies (in terms of Lacanian discourse theory) in the Master’s “demand for rapid implementation” (p. 207) and the Master’s and the University’s paradoxical putting an end to the possibility of radical change (p. 218)—paradoxical because they express an imaginary commitment to efficacious change. These, in effect, deploy and promulgate the symbolic efficacy of the instruments of power within the illusion of their surpassing, of progress, at the high price however of “not being able to show how its particular struggle related to fundamental questioning of the very order supposed to grant its demands” (p. 211).

\textsuperscript{54} The real in the sense used by de Certeau is that outlined in the previous chapter as the ‘real,’ in the sense of an imaginary and ontological discursive totality (the Lacanian Real, by contrast, is the immanent obstacle to the ‘real,’ symptom of symbolic incompleteness).
representations, whose dogmatic status as such is denied.\textsuperscript{55} Either as the self-coincidence of the lawful character of ethical codes (which elide the sovereign imposition of their founding, their dependence on exception, that is)\textsuperscript{56} or the naïve reification of ethical concepts, ethics and reality subsist in unprecedented and stifling intimacy in modernity.\textsuperscript{57} The key moment of the genesis of this singularly modern ethical anemia is described in this deposition as an ontological enforcement: Of a new affiliation with a ‘real,’ and not merely the less universal, or imperious, good. Its function is to imply—to “make us believe”—that “our worlds are adequate to the real” (1988, p. xxvii). This imperative is an important backdrop to, and a central element of, the ontological settlement that is modernity, and it is important to discover how, within this ethical nexus, modern education is emplaced as agent, bound to its ethical function of ‘realizing’ being.

As thus both deliverance (to an entirely new ‘real’) and the sublimated enforcement of its repressed terms, the fact that the modern advent consists first in an occluding metaphysics endows the powerful momentum of the modern deliverance of repressive freedom, of liberating ersatz. Brown (2005) offers an apropos analytic of “all speed, no direction,” which “if analogized to a mental state” would be characterized as “the truly terrible state” of a profound “depressive anxiety:”

\textsuperscript{55} de Certeau (1986) identifies the inherent obscurity of the knot installed by the modern ethical founding: “Representations are authorized to speak in the name of the “real” only if they are successful in obliterating any memory of the conditions under which they were produced” (p. 208)—though Alain Badiou would argue that it is in thought rather than the memory which is the ‘disinterring’ mode of historiographical analysis and recovery. de Certeau regards a “new dogmatism” (p. 200) the resistance to the dis-objectivizing thinking that would engage ethical conditions’ contingencies as such.

\textsuperscript{56} As Livingston (2012) puts this post-structural commitment: “The original institution and continuing force of law depends essentially on a founding gesture that is both illegal and exceptional with respect to the order that it founds” (p. 19).

\textsuperscript{57} de Certeau (1988) regards modernity as such to comprise a “new way of being deceived without knowing it” (p. 299) in that it makes available to the modern subject a new way to “abandon and dedicate himself in order not to be abandoned” (p. 300, emphasis in original).
you cannot move because of the bleakness but you cannot rest because of the anxiety; you can neither seize life nor escape it, neither live nor die. There may not be a better appellation for our condition, for the bleakness of a seemingly eternal present with catastrophe limning its horizon. Permanent daylight, Nietzsche (2009) reminds us, is one with unbroken darkness; the unbearability of both is time stopped, an endless present.

Unbroken time is the time of eternity, death’s time. (p. 11)\textsuperscript{58}

It is the occlusion of its repressive aspect that is most germane to my inquiry: That the modernity we assume as our own (our apparent divorce from pre-rational religious obscurantism) is \textit{from the first} a sublimation (of the contingency of a methodological totality).

Within the modern rational project therefore is a masked inaccessibility (whose product is the ‘real’). This misdirection (of modern reason’s foundation, or guarantee) is, in my thesis, also its most profound condition of possibility. For here are the means by which to orient, destabilize and germinate ethics of the modern ‘social’ project: Within the occlusion of a contingent foundation, one of an advent that subverts its own precariousness in the name of the freedom it insinuates and guarantees.\textsuperscript{59} The interruption of this contiguity may be said to release the repressive energies of its imperatives to new purposes, especially where ethics and the subject—two figures most perniciously bound in the paradoxical modern enclosure—are concerned.

\textsuperscript{58} This Badiou (2007a) calls “an inaccessible amalgam of agitation and sterility, the paradox of stagnant feverishness” (p. 106).

\textsuperscript{59} Deleuze (1995) offers a helpful addendum to the notion of disciplinary power by which to understand the multivalence of ‘social’ normativities. “Control” power prescribes no longer “a man confined but a man in debt” (p. 181) to dispersive “open circuits” whose ostensible “breakdown” ushers in new systems of domination.
But this is but one element of the modern ethical founding whose settlement proscribes ethics and education. Again in possession of the means by which “to be nourished by angels,” humanity in this modernity of a repressive ‘practical’ rationality may indeed don “the colour of daylight” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 301). Its diurnal law however is first and foremost the Enlightenment discipline of unstinting legality.

2.3.2 Elements II: Legality

Through the law comes the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

Here I discuss how the ‘real’ becomes the law of a new modern dogmatism in order to develop the ethical conditions of education in modernity to the end of their assumption as ethics, and not merely as their obscure dogma. The ontological hegemony of the new rational method of an emergent modern ethic co-extends with a discourse of ‘verisimilitude’—as we have seen, of a new ‘institution of the real.’ With this ‘realist’ ontological implication we find modern epistemology’s “principle of explanation” and “right to a meaning” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 220). Explanation is aprioritized, presupposed as a normality; the ‘principled’ legalism of a metaphysics of practical immediacy, it is the guarantee of meaningfulness in modernity. Like application and utility, in this modern sense, to explain (or to lack explanation) is to exist: To exist obliquely however as part of a repressive ontological process. In relation to curricular thought, this singularly modern existential legalism would construe learning about the ‘world’ as induction into an order of emplacement and control. This is simply because its implicate coordinates, a
‘principle’ and a ‘right,’ are held true as of the ‘real’ of which the modern ethic is woven, and on which it is founded. Such eminently legal form express the law by which the ostensible truth of a (very particular) world unfolds.60

Carrying the implications of legality forward more clearly, we need consider that the right to a meaning expresses first the subject’s incapacity before the law; meaning is to be delivered, received, rather than created or, better, inventively assumed and subverted. In this element, uncharacteristically perhaps, the rational method may be seen as what de Certeau (1988) describes as “sorcery” (p. 290). A “white space in the margins” and dependent on an “eliminated term,” legality is here a “structure of limits essential for the establishment of reason and social activity” (p. 290, emphases in original). In this authorization, right and principle are the formalities of representative circumscriptions, the circumscriptions of a modern mode of representation, and the representations of a uniquely modern (ontological) circumscription. To the government of ‘explanation’ and ‘meaning’—figures of the modern metaphysics and one of its symbolic enclosure—these depose being (and surely also its ethics and subjectivity) to what Badiou calls the characteristic ‘cult of finitude’ of modernity. They are the terms of its policy, lines by which the limits of the modern ‘real’ are enforced.

For de Certeau (1988), the reduction of such forms and their legalism acquires importance in the recognition that enforcing such delimitation proscribes transgression, reduces it to the recognizable forms which accord with the transgressed legalities. Limits as such permit solely their own surpassing (p. 85), they ‘legitimate’ only a very narrow ambit of ethical truancy (what doesn’t explain well enough, or is not sufficiently

60 Kovacevic (2007): “Freedom is repressed, not because its unimpeded expression would lead to the end of culture, but because it would lead to the end of a specific culture” (p. 67).
meaningful), and also therefore prescribe a conveniently narrow field of remediation (educate to explain, or to be meaningful).

The transmutation of metaphysics into an attestable field of ostensible immediacies—the social space, its practices and subjects—obeys first and foremost the legalities of the legibility of that space (the positivism of its explanation and the poetics of its meaning), so proscribed as a matter of form (or right and principle). It is important to note that, for de Certeau (1988) this obedience affords both a “politics of order,” one based on principles of organization and management, and also “the organization and edification of a community” (p. 282) as the newly ‘realized’ social space.\(^6\) These—order and community, as they align with the legitimacy of practice, its ‘principled rights,’ following from the axiomatic ontologization of the social space—will make a modern conception of education both possible (as a pillar of social organization) and, ineluctably, also ethical (as adherence to a modern good, or the \textit{consciencization} of sociality, politics and knowledge).\(^6\) Within a rigid and ecumenical “heirarchization of the real” (p. 266) education is inscribed, by a law so ubiquitous its status as such is obscure.\(^6\)

The dogmatic realism—its status as the truth of a lawful method—of ethical reason in modern metaphysics is predicated in the establishment and administration of the \textit{totality} of its purview (the ‘social’ world, the modern world of ‘Man’). However, this comprehensive immediacy is also that to which is owed such reason’s legitimacy, and

\(^6\) See here also Brown (2005) on ‘Freudian civic bonds’ by which love is effective in the symbolic identification that underlies community, and also its tenacious chauvinisms.

\(^6\) Freire’s (1970) earlier use of the term \textit{consciencization}, nonetheless refers to a subsequent mode of resistance, of a praxis of critical consciousness-raising, whereas for de Certeau the notion refers to the instigation, and installation, of conscience as a socio-political operator in modernity.

\(^6\) The socialized law of the progressive union of a \textit{split} or the \textit{break}—of an ‘inside’ (reason, a social nature) whose discovery reveals an ‘outside’ (religion, overt faith)—is even more effective in ruling than the religious moralism it superseded.
thus modern ethical reason, in this reading, is ‘doubled back,’ conscripted to the morality of the ‘necessity’ of the modern ethical circumscription, of the world it presupposes (for as such operates a law of method of a ‘real’). In the maintenance of this circuit, education, by virtue merely of its agentic function as what variously institutes its ethos, plays a ceaselessly re-founding role. As such, where the law of ethical reason is concerned in modernity, to sustain it is to not interrupt it.

As modernity, mediation (in faith) is replaced with what becomes the fact of what de Certeau (1988) calls “a new delimitation of the relation between reason and the real” (p. 76). This new delimitation within ethical reason he simply calls “the law,” and its necessitarian purview, characteristic both of the ‘everything in general’ of its metaphysical founding and the aprioritization (literally placing-before afforded by modern metaphysics) of efficacy, is what “effectively happens” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 41). As I discuss as a consequence of the modern ethical founding in the next chapter, it should be emphasized here that this legalism is a delimitation—of explanation and meaning within a given state (of affairs)—that presupposes, and thereby enforces, (symbolic) relation in the position of what was the former (divine) mediator (whereby relation was not necessarily presupposed as a theological matter). The legality of this delimitation is more easily sustained, more available to articulation (as of the ‘real’ itself) because it is one of method, and not of truth. Even as it installs a particular ontological truth (of the newly realized ‘real’), the law is not this truth in modernity, but merely the means of its ostensible security. In the co-extension of a metaphysics of method and the legalism of its comprehensive aprioritization, deliverance becomes discursively automated, a-subjectivized, in that it became something one assumed in conforming to a
(discursive or symbolic) law, rather than chose in acceptance of a (divine, imaginary) command. In this analysis, piety is exacerbated in the shift to rationalist instruments of social control. In modernity, one may be faithful without having to do anything about it, without having to do anything, that is, except abandon one’s claim of subjectivity to the state.  

Legality, as the guarantor of intelligibility (of the ‘real’) and the referents it enforces (explanation, meaning, order, community), as such becomes “the central affirmation of the Enlightenment” (as cited in de Certeau, 1988, p. 171). It is attested to in the intractability of the inheritance, the ubiquity of the logos, as in the ease with which, for example, alternatives to the social model’s continuing unfolding are foresworn in the collapse of some of their political forms (e.g. of the famous “end of history” read as traumatic apotheosis)—and how potentially new ones are submitted to the didacticism of an ‘inclusive’ pedagogics as soon as their rupture is legitimated, or can no longer be ignored. Here we can witness the pathological condescension of the ‘western’ media’s reading of the Arab Spring of 2011, as developmental ‘instance’ of liberal awakening rather perhaps as the search for new forms. The forms are already given, as exemplified by wealthy powers; their creation is nullified in advance, or consigned to the ghettos of culturalism.

Legality is therefore the character of the form of the modern settlement, the iron guarantee of its symbolic identification: Finally! A saviour to be trusted! Afforded to a

64 As Toscano (2010) puts this condition (which I discuss in the next chapter as the modern consequence of the (lost) subject), a “formalism of unconditional [infinite] subjectivity . . . directly contravenes the precondition of the modern state” (p. 157).

65 As the closure of the horizon of political transformation, this Kovacevic argues that the “end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992) is the announcement of late-modern ‘apocalyptic’ liberalism’s “new sovereign” (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 201).
psychoanalytic historiography, such indeed are the constitutive economies of a modern desire, on condition they remain unavailable to thought. Modern ontological legalism prescribes that, like water closing over a sinking object, ideas that fail to conform (surely their innumerable majority) drown beneath the smooth semantic surface of what is first a symbolic order (a matter of the forms by which identifications—concepts—are legitimated, ‘realized’). A modern ‘social’ imaginary thereby governs its contiguity in mastery and possession of a ‘social nature,’ a modern ‘progress,’ and their ‘natural’ equilibria and corporate form—and, always necessarily, a pietistic ‘secular’ morality.

2.3.3 Elements III: Morality

A realignment of metaphysics at the advent of modernity transported the concept of ethics into a moralism of (rational) deliverance, one to the ends of which is successively created and conscripted the entire social project (as exemplar of the presupposed perpetual modern dawn, perennial source of legitimate questions, unit of an administrative modern concern). It is in this ethical ‘theatre,’ or passion play, I would argue (alongside de Certeau), that education, to the extent to which it is developed within the circumscription of modern ethical reason, thereafter plays a centrally reproductive role. This element of the ulterior binding of ethics and education is especially elusive,

66 This corporate form is meant in the sense of corporeal, of a body, one that, in true Christian fashion, is incorporation, the assumption of form, of a new body (the social corpus), founded in the death of an old. Modern rationalism in this sense expresses transubstantiation, of a body risen: purified, from the sacrificial death of the old. Its underlying moral imperative is to not betray the sacrifice, and not to contest the (social) order in which its mystery or “spirit” resides. For Freud, this is the subject’s investment in collective structures, socioeconomic reasoning’s “repressed,” its taboo (de Certeau, 1986, p. 218).

67 Foucault (2001) is lucid on what he calls “the great confinement” of an administered modernity: “But in this great confinement of the classical age, the essential thing—and the new event—is that men were confined in cities of pure morality, where the law that should reign in all hearts was to be applied without compromise, without concession, in the rigorous forms of physical constraint. Morality permitted itself to be administered like trade or economy” (p. 54).
primarily because of its ostensible delegation to the domain of reason’s other: Moralism, in the guise of a receding Christian piety (or re-insistent as *the fundamentalist other*), having come to play the role of *the dispatched* which reason dispenses and overcomes. Nevertheless, it is precisely into *mores* where de Certeau sees deposed what had been the province of faith.

Rationalist moralism posits what de Certeau (1988) calls “a homology between mental and social structures” (p. 131) to displace the mysterious implications of a divine address with a more comprehensive operation. It is one that makes possible an apparent modern subjective participation of presupposed inner amenability to the social project. The ubiquity of the modern founding invests its pedagogies here with the especially blunt force of an alien implement (the revelation of a ‘social’ nature) deployed in the construal of the commonplace (the modern social delimitation of ontology) fitted to it. As with every presupposed delimitation, homology or circumscription of modern finitude, it is to what I call the moralism—the ‘making right’ in advance what may then be ever more efficaciously confirmed—of the modern rationalist ethos to which I turn here. For ultimately, as with all of the elements of the prevalent configuration of the modern advent, at stake is the very question of the subject.

As the question of revelation gives way to ‘practical’ answers of explanation, application and utility, these lawful necessities—of what de Certeau (1988) calls “stately duties”—in modernity assume the status of imperatives on the “battlefield” of practical morality (p. 162). This installation could further be conceived in terms of social *subjectification*, on the basis of the homologous ‘social nature,’ a formal subsumption of *the question* of the subject obtains by way of its *presupposition* in the emergent figure of
the autogenic, self-transparent humanist ‘Man,’ author both of his subjectivity and the conditions for it, en route to a condition of (vaguely epistemic) freedom—this later political (democratic or Marxist) and economic (mercantile, and latterly neo-liberal). Split from what was formerly figured as piety, this new moralism, encoded in terms of social practices—of what is recognizable, of what is ‘shared’—appears in every venue in which a common condition is substantialized (in the formalities of shared values, of human nature, of progress, even, as we have seen, of freedom). Ethical language emerges in the equation of value and utility, of being and metaphysical efficacy (of its ‘realization’). Such express the imperative to produce of what de Certeau (1988) calls an emerging “merchant morality” (p. 173), first in evidence in the writing of history from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. In his view, this is a sibling imperative of the processural metaphysical dogmatism discussed above, which sustains its functioning foremost by way of the methodological efficacy it affords, which is further to say, which allows for the smooth and secure transaction, or functioning, of related elements (here foremost ontological). Whatever its explicit objects (society, knowledge, order, ‘reality’), a nascent modern morality is inescapably first of the re-production of the rational operations by which the ‘real’ is objectified: To make ‘everyday’ the ‘real’ which is their product, dispatched however into the medium of preternatural immediacy, into the concretion of the ‘real’ world of production and exchange, choked in the image of the one that presumably already exists.

In the sophistications of Enlightenment evangelism—the engagement of a self-verifying ‘will-to-identification’ whereby efficacy and transaction may signify the ‘good’ of freedom as a matter of ‘reality’—what formerly had technical merit and/or aesthetic
beauty (as contingent knowledge of the ‘world’) acquires ethical standing in the founding of an expressly modern order. de Certeau (1988) calls moral compression of the good and the real the conscription of desire to “the pure will to signify, whose non-place is a discourse of places” (p. 282). The practicality of its simulacral subjectivism (as morality is the subjective prescription of the necessary) is inextricable from its idealism. Of a ‘world’ as a ‘real’ place, the morality of modern reason’s faith is the practice of obedience to its method. This, in other words, is to be nowhere, to be of the pure will, ideal. How? By being somewhere, ‘modern,’ of this world, which already knows where and what it is (for modernity’s rudimentary epochal break establishes its time and place). This ideal emplacement, the symbolic assumption of what had been God’s, is what modernity uniquely erects, and, is so doing, it is what it also makes moral, or presupposes as good. In the rise of this figure of purity de Certeau helps us name the moralism of an inertia, one paradoxically of proliferation (of knowledge and its progress of ‘development’), afforded on account of its figuration, its imaginarization, as transitive and expansive.

This is also of course a salvation even more precarious thereby (for now both the terms of the liberation, and its contingencies, must be shored up—the latter formerly the deferred province of divine mystery, and, of course, the structural excesses of ecclesiastical intercession). The sublimation of its divinity makes modern moralism more ubiquitous, more pious in opacity. As the nexus of its propulsive tension, the subject becomes a mere postulate of the new order, beholden to the moral ubiquity of an investiture in a new discourse, and not just a new discourse, but ‘the’ new discourse, the discourse of the new: The modern. Modern ethical discourse requisitions institutional
support to the maintenance of its project (for its form is telic eschatology while its logics are neurotic, split within themselves as paradoxically partial comprehensiveness). Where would be deposed the modern vector of its self-reduplication, enforcer of the ‘good’ of a new piety of signification and installation of the new ‘social will’ in the proliferation of the signs of a benevolent identification and its valorizations (explanation, utility, application, meaning, transaction, order, commensurability)? These are the didactics of a modern project of education. As the ‘emplacement’ of education within the modern ethos, I discuss in the next chapter the extent to which education is in modernity bound to the social project, how it partakes constitutively of its implicate order ideologically, ethically and, most crucial to present purposes of thinking the ethical further in education, ontologically.

The important point to emphasize here is that the alignment of a social metaphysics, the legality of its presupposition and the morality of its ‘subjective’ implications comprise a complex movement of repression (whose guise is a paradoxical liberation) arising from their shared genesis in the birth of a new, modern, order. I am concerned with these as symptoms of a loss: As displacements, and also thus with symptoms of their systemic character as an ordering of placements in a totality, or as totalizing implications.68 As such, displacements enjoin the implicate institutionalization of ethics of an ostensibly ‘realist’ metaphysical edifice (and the educational projections which advance and develop it). I am arguing here that the broadly ethical means by

68 The inference of totality is born in the elements themselves, as their ostensible integrity, by which is “supposed” a totality, to follow an argument of Badiou (2008a): “the all is that which necessarily proceeds from the One, once the One is” (p. 14). In Badiouian terms, de Certeau’s modern repressive advent is foremost a ramified and variegated retention of “the rights of the One” within a new cosmology, and new orders of symbolic identification.
which to imagine education in modernity, in odious and remedial instances, are beholden
to a proscribed finitude (the inevitable consequence of repression itself un-displaced) one
need confront in order to avow ethical commitment with the rigor of a more vital, and
less dogmatic, ethicality.\textsuperscript{69} The movement here to keep in view is that of a ‘progress’
whose vast Enlightenment investments remain inert within a motile ‘story of progress,’
circumscribed, proscribed and wrought up within what today is education as a social
project, an ‘obvious’ function and horizons of value—in the ‘realization’ and
socialization of the individual (which hardly differ to the ‘pure will’ of signification), and
thereby also those of the societal imaginaries to which the modern subject owes a clearly
neurotic ‘freedom,’ of becoming ‘different’ by way of ‘becoming’ in the same way.
Refined in apparent escape from the vulgar warehouse and factory rhetorics of scientific
management, the moralism of utility, transaction and social productivity (of the creating
of a place of signification, whose ‘product’ is the subject) remains, latterly replete with
the more contemporary legitimacies of neo-liberal commercial rhetorics of accounting
and clientele (in teaching), of ownership and purchasing (in learning), and of investment
(in education policy). In both liberal and neoliberal instances, the social progressivism of
the educational function in maintaining the ontological ubiquity of a system of social
emplacement is nourished on anxieties characteristic of the sublimating method of which
it is a constitutive instance: Of ‘falling behind,’ or ‘failing’, and indeed also even
‘succeeding’ (following in the place of)—as a recognizable product of an order of
political (liberal) or economic (neoliberal) freedom. Thus the accomplishment of a form

\textsuperscript{69} Badiou (2008b) is acute on the charge to surrender the ethical struggle as a sort of piety (which he
regards as ‘professionalization’ and which could be said the same of education): “I maintain a constitutive
hostility to the tendency towards democratic professionalization of philosophy and to the imperative that is
rampant today and humiliates youth: “Be little, and work as a team”” (p. 7).
of secular salvation is intimate with the educational project in modernity.\textsuperscript{70} de Certeau describes this rise of Enlightenment morality (especially in the eighteenth century when its investments became more precise and its genesis more remote) as a form of a historical translation, that is, in “the metamorphosis of Christianity into ethics” (p. 178).

He here brings the argument to the question of education:

The metamorphosis of Christianity into ethics and, more broadly, into culture can be located ultimately under the sign of progress. To be sure, the appearance of this problematic issue, essential to all of the latter period of the eighteenth century, emerges from difficulties and experiences that had just preceded it. Thus the impossibility of having social reality gain a structural coherence or of identifying language with a logic leads to envisaging reason as a story of progress; that is, to categorizing observed phenomena along the line of a development of reason. Dates become a means of recovering an order, since exceptions can be ranked among resistances and former prejudices. Moreover, the role that the “milieu” plays for individuals is envisioned from the perspective of a production. “Custom” is not only a fact, but also a tool: a society acquires through it the power of endlessly “perfecting” itself, of acting on itself, of changing its nature, of constructing itself. From custom we pass to education: toward the end of the century this “myth” confers upon civilization the form of a conquest binding reason to the ability to transform man through

\textsuperscript{70} See Gabbard, (2003), \textit{Education IS Enforcement}. 
the diffusion of the Enlightenment, and colouring all action that works
toward progress with a moral value. (p. 178, emphases in original)

In the passage de Certeau (1988) describes, of the moralization of the productivity of
custom within a new delimitation of the ‘real,’ education in modernity is formed as
participation in a ‘pure will,’ of the enforcement of perfection without goal. Custom,
now as ‘the development of reason,’ prescribes to ‘Man’ a divine destination through
mechanisms of auto-reconfiguration or ceaseless reformation, split such as these are at
base between unitary predicates (‘perfect’ or perfectible man) and a trajectory of
correction (that is, of error). The subjective legacy of Enlightenment ‘Man’ is here a
moral postulation (the production of a subject which legitimates the methods and
investments of its production), exemplary instance of the ‘real’ by which a new
metaphysical hierarchy is expressed. As the “evanescent double of the objective public
order,” the subject is a moral orthodoxy,\textsuperscript{71} the scholasticism of the social project, and
conservative pedagogics of the stupendously impoverished bivalency of the ‘subjective’
itineraries either of civic morality or occult existence (p. 168-169). Education in
modernity in my thesis arises in the enforcement of the former against the latter, but,
more important, is the legitimation of the bind of the division itself, its continuance as an
element of the production of the ‘real’ by which modernity delivers itself from the
(moral, ontological, ethical) void it both presupposes and denies. As that governing
objectivity itself, there is no element with more existential gravity in this new cosmos
than knowledge.

\textsuperscript{71} Not to be misconstrued and underestimated as a sort of monolithic inertia, orthodoxy is rather, \textit{pace} Žižek’s (2003a) Chesterton a “thrilling romance” of “ordained transgression” based in the fact that
“morality is the most dark and daring of conspiracies” (p. 35-36).
2.3.4 Elements IV: Knowledge

If the active subject of modernity’s rationalist deliverance is finally the (metaphysical) state\textsuperscript{72} or the incorporate social body, and its operations, the discursive and semantic ‘legalities’ of application, utility, explanation and meaning are comprehensive within the moral immediacy of the ‘real’ of practice and society, of the creation of a place of signification as such, what of its object? Thinking my concern for the modern founding ‘back’ from its constituted object can lend dimension and reach to a reading of modern ethical conditions while bringing forward arguably its most grounding element. The question of the object of the modern ethical predication, or emplacement, of education is important in that it may provide new ways to consider and provoke the authority this element exercises over the modern project, and thus over its unfolding thinking of and in education. Aside from its constitution as the ‘subject’ matter of education, of what is learned and studied therein, how should knowledge be thought as an element of the modern ethos, as a figure in the ontological drama of modern deliverance, and thence as a perhaps new condition for modern ethics? If the ethical prescription is that of a search, its fertility most obtains where it seems most foreclosed, and it is my contention that nowhere is this more the case in the broadly modern ethic than where knowledge, its image(s) and operations, is concerned.

I maintain that we need consider that the object of the productivity and operations of the modern deliverance is objectivity itself, and knowledge is its sign. Putatively of method itself (product of the ‘impartial’ rational method), objective status attends other

\textsuperscript{72} Its ‘passive’ subject I have been figuring (from de Certeau) as the ‘postulate’ of the moralism of the modern metaphysical order of an exacerbated, and repressive ‘secular’ rationalism.
great modern productions, such surely as society, nation, empire, ‘Man,’ progress, and, especially germane here, knowledge itself. What I bring to the fore here is that, in Euro-Atlantic modernity of the broadly European Enlightenment inheritance, gnosticism displaces uncertain and vulnerable faith, of necessity. de Certeau (1988) asserts that “when the religious unanimity of Christendom was broken down . . . knowledge was needed to take up the slack of belief” (p. 26). This new mode of knowledge—as part of, we need recall, a compensation for the deficiency or deficit of an ethical genesis—then becomes a “tool of unification and differentiation” (p. 26), affirmation of the event to which it owed its new status. Thereafter, epistemic catechisms, paeans to the new status of knowledge (of ‘modern’ science) and the co-extensive rites of initiation (as educational) sustain and verify new urgencies toward the establishment of socio-institutional limits, as analogues of ‘objective’ knowledge itself. A new mode of knowledge is intimate in the provision of a new (ontological) mode of ‘society.’ This is how the social ontology of modernity is founded, as correlate of knowledge (the object, and the objective, of modern rationalist faith), the firmer stuff that supplants and remediates the vicissitudes of belief.

Participation in knowledge becomes a new form of salvation, and the image of knowledge as rational object comes to enclose the social project within the problematics of recognition, of the right adjustment of a subject to the social object(ive), now in metaphysical equivalence with the new law of the ‘real.’ For de Certeau however, in this mode and function of a “nonreligious type of certitude” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 127), and on account of the moralism of its ‘realization,’ its ontological cooption, especially in the repression of its initial status as the balm of sickly belief, knowledge is not a delicate
project, but rather one “which tramples” (p. 234). As the modern mode of objectivity, object of a new delimitation of the ‘real’ (see Section 2.3.1), following de Certeau, knowledge tramples over more diverse and creative modes of thinking—its “infinite iterability” (Livingston, 2012, p. 17)\(^{73}\)—about education and otherwise; when caught within the sublimated mechanisms of modern gnosis, of the recasting of knowledge within a particularly modern self-legitimation, thought is exempted from contingency by its implication in the modern ‘real,’ or ideological totality.\(^{74}\) This objective imperative—whose object is knowledge—is here ontological at root, that is, is not a ‘value’ but a way of formally constituting a ‘world’ (as symbolic totality).

For de Certeau, it is important to note that the ‘ontologization’ of knowledge effected discursively by way of a double movement of neutralization: First in the establishment of the modern ‘disinterested’ and ‘neutral’ field of modern science, and, second, by way of the inversion of its “neutralizing effects:”

having become actual seats of logistic power, scientific institutions have fitted themselves into the system they serve to rationalize, a system that links them to each other, fixes the direction of their research, and assures their integration into the existing socioeconomic framework. These effects of assimilation naturally weigh most heavily on those disciplines

\(^{73}\) Recall here the dangers inherent in the transport of ontological formality (God) into rational method: The guarantor becomes implicit. What does the guarantor, here as knowledge, do? It prescribes the symbolic security of an ethical operation (assures the adequacy of our thoughts to the world). However, as Livingston (2012) observes, this is a high stakes game if indeed “there is no symbolic expression that by itself determines how it itself is to be applied to any new case” (p. 15). Under such circumstances, infinite iterability of thought in this instance becomes the only effective security worthy of the name.

\(^{74}\) This Livingston (2012), who is acute on the politics of logic where the modern critical project is concerned, calls the “mistaken re-appropriation of totality in late modernity” (p. 29). de Certeau would argue however that it was there from the first where the modern ethos is concerned.
which are the least technologically developed.\(^{75}\) (de Certeau, 1986, p. 215)

This double-neutralization (of the activation of a field of scientific knowledge) certainly establishes a ‘place’ for education, and also for the humanities in general; a dispossession without a ‘native’ knowledge, their ‘place’ is effectively nowhere,\(^{76}\) except where sociological anxieties demand new palliatives and provide transitory legitimacy for ‘social sciences.’\(^{77}\) There is a weakness here prescribed to fields with little or no native knowledge, where ethics may yet be seen to subsist in finding new regions of thought, new modes of conjecture, new pathways of inquiry. This, in my argument, is a profound condition of possibility for a field such as education, where a parasitic epistemism (amalgam of social sciences, philosophy, management, (behaviourist) sciences, psychology and ‘social’ religion) should inspire less the apologetics of interdisciplinary shallowness than a forthright axiomatics of a mongrel truth. This figured as one which instantiates the referential space of a uniquely educational ethical fidelity \textit{to subjectivity proper}. Consistent with Freud’s (2010) observation of ethics as civilization’s ‘sorest

\(^{75}\) Take, for example, here the emplacement of education itself in the university milieu, and therein the authority of the putatively scientific, the “social” scientific validity of psychology in its thought. The overbearing influence of a method both far outweights its purchase in the sciences themselves, and the actual substance of what it prescribes to education itself. The assurance of a method here is the neutralization of its own—in Lacanian terms—constitutive, and generative, incompletion (to a matter of identifiable ‘limitations’) and, foremost, the reassurance of an efficient assimilation—as a formal, rhetorical, matter—within the order of the progress of knowledge.

\(^{76}\) These, in de Certeauian parlance, are a “discourse[s] of non-places” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 68), of knowledge posited in the absence of a place, which \textit{is} the very social space convened in modernity for a sort of ontological administration.

\(^{77}\) Admissible especially should they assume the ostensible ‘objective’ probity of a logic of accounting and a familiar language of journalism (both in common appeal to a sublimated romanticism whereby reduction to the dimensions of the \textit{known} is ontologically productive, and is a form of ethical security).
spot’ (p. 144), in this we may approach the subject as painfully latent in the many incommensurabilities of an interstitial intellectual space of powerful social relevance.

Consistent with modern metaphysics, de Certeau (1986) witnesses the conflation of the ‘real’ and the ‘known’ in objectivist (linguistic) “contract” consequent to the “naïve realism of the object” (p. 52). For de Certeau (1988), this notion of a linguistic contract is “the very principle of knowledge” (p. 256): At once the assignation of a locus in language and the security of an order of sociolinguistic practice. As its “non-place” in the modern settlement, it is the installation of the object knowledge (and the objectivity it licenses) as the “postulate of all language” in the form of “a stable relation” (p. 256). This is the complexity of the new idealization of knowledge in the modern ethical settlement, in that it plays a deceptive role in an ethical re-founding whose ‘neutral’ figure it becomes. What is its deception? The question is ontological.

In the transubstantiating movement of an ethic into the security of the absent project that is knowledge—which itself is itself in a new formality of ‘linguistic contract’—the hitherto intimate figure of the Other (God) is consigned to an unavowed founding (rather than an avowed, but infinitely mysterious, one). Redolent of Freud’s depiction of the primal scene, de Certeau discusses this repression as the reformation of paternity:

The “father” does not die. His death is only another legend and an aftereffect of his law. Everything happens as if we were able at any time

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78 Clemens and Grigg (2006) develop Freud in a way which I think perhaps here helpful: “Today we can say that, in Western societies at least, the therapeutic perspective has replaced the moral and the religious perspective in the management of the “sorest spot” that Freud spoke of” (p. 257). My argument is that the spot remains, and the subject its trouble and opportunity.

79 The disassociation which knowledge permits is the paragon of “the infinity of desire” de Certeau (1988) argues modernity delegates to a place “off and away” (p. 184)—see chapter 3 for the subjective implications of this.
to kill this dead one, and as if we believed that we have become conscious of him, that we have exorcised him through another power or turned him into an object of knowledge (a cadaver); but this simply means that he has been displaced once again, and that now he is precisely where we would never suppose him to be, within this very knowledge and within the “profit” that this knowledge seems to secure. (p. 302, emphases in original)

If hidden within the profit of knowledge is an exorcised god, should education in the ‘knowledge society’ of an ‘information age’ be thought of as a sort of séance, one where ghosts conjured in knowledge are also thereby re-interred, and exorcised through ‘another power’—reason—as object, the accumulating matériel of objectivity?

The disposition of this ‘God’ emerges to thought as paradox (see Tsoukas, 1997) or symptom (see Chiesa, 2007), both of the provisional contingency of knowledge as object, its failing status as such. This apprehension is in clear contradistinction to the image of knowledge as insuperable from a specific content, whose ‘exemplarity’ (or substance) as a knowledge (formal objective instance) is elisory

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80 I have been using this term mainly to denote the internal contradiction of an ethical advent wherein a new freedom is pursued within the formalities of the repression of its (both propulsive and constitutive) failure. If the condition of Enlightenment is indeed to be thought as liberating, the ethical question of its manifestation as such is one this study draws into the character of scandal with the assistance of de Certeauian historiography.

81 Less to the question of the mode of knowledge in general in modernity, and more as a pedagogical consequence thereof, Badiou (2005a) understands education in general as a question of arranging “the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them” (p. 9)—see also den Heyer (2009).
of the question of the mode of knowledge itself. A paradoxical and/or symptomatic thematics of knowledge—as failing objective totality—suggest to their subject however a view of education in modernity in the paradoxical fantasy of a peripheral centrality: As that which ‘produces’ the modern, but which also installs its necrophilic order (a metaphor in which Freud and de Certeau lugubriously align). The point here is not that certain knowledges are privileged while others are suppressed—though this is certainly the case—but rather, and this is not the same point, that knowledge itself assumes a privileging function as an element of a new ontological settlement, and that education assumes a specific, and paradoxical, place therein. Knowledge does not just ‘appear out of nowhere’ to be delegated to the innocence of ‘development,’ it already is a part of a ramified ideological thrust, one that wholly prefigures forms of thought as ‘of the real,’ synonym of the ‘known.’

In the modern re-formalization, the locus of knowledge in language and practice (as its ideal object) retains a crucial remove from the operation of its production. Education is thereby projected as knowledge transmission without implication in the infinite difficulties of its production (the question of the finitude of its displaced contingency). This is not merely to say that a ‘transmission’ model persists, but rather

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82 For de Certeau (1988), “what is known functions as what is silenced” (p. 326) in the writing of modernity, such that “repressed is the very principle of displacement” (p. 336). We must, in effect, provoke the exposure of the displacement of displacement itself in writing wherein the mortuary operation constitutive and characteristic of this modernity functions. He cites Joyce’s response to this arcane ubiquity: “Never will it ever occur. And after! Write it, goddamn, write it! What else can you do?” (p. 325). Freudian writing, in de Certeau’s thesis, is the invention of this genre, its analytic historiography is the “prowler” who “works on the edges of reason,” the “fictioneer” who “fabricates worlds of words that cannot fit the ends of a practical scheme.” This in contrast to the historian’s disposition, which moderates itself from the empire-building aim of a “paradise of a global history” to the irrelevance of a circulation among “acquired rationalizations” (p. xi), to a form of incremental readjustment of an historiographical accounting. The more general point here is that the contingency of knowledge has (subjective) implications far in excess of the matter of the correction of its apparent need for remediation, and the confrontation of its elision as an educational concern, as any other, is no simple matter.
that knowledge itself is a disciplinary extension of the modern ethos, one which effects a
discursive pull—with the force of law, or morality, indeed of the ‘real’—on the
educational project toward a naïve faith in knowledge, and toward its objectivist
fantasy.\textsuperscript{83} In the anemia of self-sustenance, the objectivist circuit at work here devolves
into the ethical persistence of knowledge as the object with which a stable relation is
retained. In turn, this devolution makes possible a concept of education without defense
against its conceit, vulnerable to the deontological efficacies of a naive epistemic faith. A
provisional sufficiency of professionalized condescension fills the vacuum of a
generative problematics where thinking education ethically is concerned. Pedagogy
becomes policy, education instruction and its administration. In taking for granted the
stable epistemic relation we are overwhelmed by its production of referential languages,
so many correlates among thought and world(s). Educational institution is thereby bound
‘ethically’ to the role of a staff function to the army of progress: One that shores up
supply lines of legitimacy, maintains the discipline of established distinctions, and trains
recruits (‘subjects’). But the front lines—exactly where, how, why and in what
knowledge is contingent—crucially remain elsewhere, unavailable to ethical thought, as
indeed is their subject.

The linkage of ontology and subjectivity afforded by the new modern ‘objective’
status of knowledge instigates the professionalization of education in the vulgar sense:
As of those who know, who profess the gnostic implications of a new order of piety (as a

\textsuperscript{83} Institutional, or of an (modern, ontological) institution, it “snaps back” as one educator put it, to “what it
has always been” (personal communication, 2012).
condition for the subject). As such, epistemic contractualism is the north star of education’s specific location within what Badiou (1999) would later call the “element of its own suppression” (p. 61). By virtue of the ostensible means of its liberation (deliverance from ignorance) it suppresses the subject of its deliverance.

The concerns of this study are clearly the less apparent consequences—those not aligned with narratives of its deliverance, of progress—of the repressions of a rationalist salvation. For it is these which bind education to the ‘ethical’ within the social project, or, more consequent still, by which it is no longer possible to see the binding of ethics and education.

2.4 Conclusion: Education In the Silence of an Elemental Disquiet

The complex imbrications that de Certeau describes as the forms of historiographical modernity, of history as a discourse about itself, have precise implications and consequences for rethinking what we have to consider as ethics for education in a broad sense. The re-founding of cosmological order is what, particularly

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84 Profession otherwise may be connotative of the act of professing, of ethics as a decisive and common search, for example—as discussed, in one instance, by Derrida (2002a) with respect to the “New Humanities” of a “university without condition” (p. 232).

85 This, of course, leads in the last century to a ‘crisis’ of knowledge and consequent attempts in educational thought (reconceptualists, the ‘ethical turn’) to overcome its disappointments, and destabilize persistent institutional structures of command and control (exemplified no better than the behaviourist refinements of scientific management and the Tyler Rationale). Lacan is prescient on this institution and its later failing: “The objects of everyday reality are secured for us by the hold modern science has on the world. In paradoxical opposition to the enormous development of technology, however, not only is the ‘objectivity,’ the “disinterested perspective,” of science historically determined but, in our epoch, it also clearly reveals itself to be highly disappointing according to its own (philosophical) criteria: indeed, “we have less than ever the feeling of attaining…the end of knowledge, namely the identification by thought of the subject…to the object of his contemplation” (as cited in Chiesa, 2007, p. 130).
in contemporary French philosophy, is regarded as an *event*,\(^\text{86}\) a transformation by which the symbolic coordinates of existence are irrevocably changed, yet—in the absence of a fixed external referent—for which there is no sure measure, no definitive form of ‘proof.’

To think the event of modernity becomes thus to plumb the elements of its own suppression, the operations and stories about itself by which its evental character is subdued, incarcerated, brought to heel of ethical institution in the functioning of an order, and the suppression of its thought otherwise. These elements I have discussed in this chapter as a ‘social’ ontology, a ‘humanist’ metaphysical immediacy with practical referents and indices of value, of the inviolable legalism of its methodological instantiation, and the moralism of an objective ‘contractual’ probity of knowledge. The traversal of these as a matter of ethical inquiry, their provocation toward the new articulations that would bring them into relief as modern ethical institution, is wholly dependent upon a decision *to not accept the world of their projections*, to refuse auto-conception or self-coincidence in ethics, to find ways to not accept their premises as a matter of course. Ethics is the foreign within the given in this construction, the inherent ‘open space’ of its transformation, or that of the ethos. It provides for a suspension that creates a referential space for the constitutive dysfunction of the founding paradoxes of

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\(^{86}\) This is a complex figure variously aligned with emancipation, equality and post-theological advent for thinkers such as Derrida (1994), for whom the future is “…the very coming of the event” (p. 28) in the irruption of the absolutely singular, Deleuze (2004), “the event is sense itself” (p. 25), Foucault (2007), who opposes to the discourses of “legitimation” (of scientific rationality and historical discourse) those of “eventualization” as a sort of prising apart of the discursive coercion which sustains administrative ‘confinement’ (p. 59) and, most relevant for my purposes, Badiou (2005d) regards the event as a figure of mathematical formalism, as the “perfect weakness” of *the predicated* (the ‘One’) which effects a “profound transformation in the logic of the situation” (p. 129) with implications which “make it impossible for those who affirm them to carry on as before” (Hallward, 2003, p. 3).
the modern ethos; it is however a refusal no more exotic than thinking.\footnote{Here Badiou’s (2005c) simplicity is helpful: “Not to resist is not to think” (p. 8). This pursuant to Badiou’s (2005d) view of philosophy: “philosophy is always the breaking of a mirror. This mirror is the surface of language” (p. 126). Language is a “circulation” within which thought finds \textit{a calculus of life} (such as the form, logics of the ‘real’ in modernity) determined by security (the modern ethical repression of the contingency it is founded to depress) against which philosophy must oppose its mere polyvalence of meaning with a principle of interruption. Badiou’s (2007b) view of the event is as an address to thought by “the ontologically unfounded:” “To break with dogmatism, the event must be released from every tie to the One. It must be subtracted from Life in order to be released to the stars” (p. 42).} No ‘mere’ abstract challenge, such thinking is rather the ‘concretion’ that obtains at the point where abstraction fails. This is where ontology \textit{becomes} an ethical impasse, where the \textit{literality} of thought re-induces the restoration of the ethical obligation to its perennial recurrence of seeking to articulate the elements of the change an event induces, of assuming their consequences inventively as ethical impetus, which is also to say: Of becoming a \textit{subject}, in a decisive and, as I shall later examine, infinite sense. This is how ethical inquiry, so especially requisite in modernity, engages the stakes of the ‘real’ itself, its discursive self-image warped in the shimmer of contingency, the void of its foundations, in its infinite conditions as \textit{obstacle} to itself: As Real, that is. Such warps—which provide no ‘outside’ from which to approach them—I have begun articulating in this chapter as the immanent symptoms of the ethical elements of modernity, their paradoxical status in the foundation of a new ethical age.

As the suppressed and repressive elements of the founding of an ethos, in this chapter I have articulated the elements of the historiographical settlement of the modern advent where possible as its ontological impasses. As such, these comprise the ‘general order of thought’ from which follows a number of formal consequences of basic import to any subsequent ethical project in education. I therefore follow my discussion of ‘what educates’ modernity ontologically—the historiographical settlement of its metaphysics,
legalism, morality and objectivist epistemologism—with one which turns to the question of in what conceptual or discursive media this ethical institution is sustained, or the consequences of the comprehensive modern re-founding. It is, in my argument, the re-engagement of the forms of the modern ethical re-founding that will provide the condition of possibility for new ethical thought in education. For, in the ethical consequences of the modern advent we may be given to make more specific the ethical entanglement of education within the modern ethos, to see its predication in action as that by which ethical thought in education is bound in modernity. An articulation of the ethical consequences of the modern advent affords this inquiry a historiographical basis from which to develop ethics and education otherwise. In this, to develop a discourse of the conjunctive lineaments of ethics and education in modernity is to think them together newly apart, to think such consequences as conditions for further ethical thought, as a further condition for ethics, and indeed as ethics itself, in the continuance of the ethical search to which I argue we are obliged in education. For on no less rests the ethical compass of education in a world such as this.
3.1 Ethical Consequences of the Modern Advent

In this chapter I delineate the three most significant consequences of modernity’s repressive ontological binding of ethics and education in the following terms: The circumscription of the conditions of possibility for thinking the subject; the realization of modern ontology as a symbolic production; and the advent of ideological totality or the implicit holism of relatedness. I discuss these consequences for two primary purposes. First, in order to strengthen my claim of a modern discursive ‘binding’ of education and ethics within the ontological founding of a ‘rationalist’ ethos—to more fully articulate the ethical stakes of modernity—and second, to prepare for the consideration of this binding as ethical thought in education. Only thereafter will the articulation of a new ethical discourse—one within new capacities of reason to which modern ethics remain obliged—be possible as an educational concern.

Examined here foremost as ontological prescriptions, subjective deracination (the paradoxical denigration of the thinking of the subject among the proliferation of its forms), symbolic enclosure and relatedness are elaborated as modern ethical symptoms\textit{par excellence}; logics of modernity whose echoes (to paraphrase Lacoue-Labarthe, 1989)\textsuperscript{88} enstate in circularity the modern ‘real’ as also its powerful consequences. With

\textsuperscript{88} Lacoue-Labarthe’s work on modern subjective deracination—especially The Echo of the Subject in Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics (1989)—is both incisive and lyrical; see also Martis’ (2005) Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe: Representation and the Loss of the Subject.
the support of my exploration of a uniquely modern ethical institution, I draw the discussion (of this and the previous chapter) of the elements and consequences of the modern ethical advent to a close in this chapter with regard for their constitutive role in what I call the *conjunctive entanglement of ethics and education*. In this figuration I develop what I call their ‘haunted itinerary’ as a *binding* within modern ontological finitude. The articulation of modern ideological geneses and ontological investments as such is intended to donate new critical and speculative resources to the following chapter’s discussion of the ethical thought *in* modern educational discourse, and indeed to those of subsequent chapters’ as its re-constitution. Remaining for the time being with the modern ethos, and with the emplacement of education therein, this is the trail I continue to clear.

3.1.1 Consequences I: The (lost) Subject

*I am walled round with their vociferations, none will ever know what I am.*

(Beckett, 2009, p. 319)

A surreptitious and durable subjective destitution—of a subject bound to an object, a figure of knowledge, a sign—is the first important consequence of the ambivalent ‘empowerment’ of modernity. A consequence of the elements of the modern founding discussed in the previous chapter, as what de Certeau (1988) calls “previous

89 This of an ethical founding indexed to the ‘real’ (see chapter 2)—which is precisely to say one *not* apprehended as such, not presented as ethical founding, but rather as the arrival of a condition (deliverance) from the contingency upon which ethics (at least those of codes and concepts) may be seen to founder.
forms of the same illness” (pp. 301-302), the emplaced displacement of subjectivity in the modern (and broadly intellectually European) ethos promulgates a founding ‘pathological’ ideologic: As an idea (the subject as that to identification) that is predicated on its disavowal as such. 90 In modernity this relies on a legalism of disavowal whereby "people know the arbitrariness of their social codes, norms, and values, but proceed to act as if they did not know" (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 194). We ‘know’ the subject cannot be contained, encoded, adjudged, but are enjoined to act as if it were, or, worse, celebrate this paucity as if it were the form of subjective freedom itself, of a subject entirely taken up within its orders of determinations, of a subject to the object which is its displacement and deferral. A field of presupposition of a broadly social ethic (whose subject is the subject-to extant orders), the imperatives of such an ‘ideal subject’ augur much for the possibility for any ethics of the subject in modern education. This especially inasmuch as they make their question inadmissible from the start, they make the question of the subject already answered in a permitted form: As an object, a representation or narrative. With this decisive consequence of the modern ethical founding this section is concerned: How the subject, and subjectivity more broadly, becomes a casualty of the apparent dawn of its possibility.

For de Certeau (1988), the especially modern ethical result—the movement of discourse on human subjectivity by way of writing in modernity—is that “man is always legible” (p. 219). An (eminently moral) “postulate of knowledge/language” (p. 266), the

90 As what de Certeau (1988) calls “law set up by a founding exclusion” (p. 323) one finds here ‘pathological’—or ‘theist’ inasmuch as God denotes that which “observes the world without being affected” (Luhmann, 1998, p. 51)—connotative of integrity predicated on exclusion; this Chiesa (2007) considers the traditional position of ‘Western morality’ as Aristotelian “elitist morality of the master” (p. 178) whereby ethics is the pathological masochism which “services goods” (p. 180).
modern subject is paradoxically empowered in the progressive discarding of former theological debates, in the heady possibility of the modern exodus from “non-identification to identification” (p. 259), un-freedom to freedom. The apparent paradox of an itinerary of freedom bound into identification is instructive, even definitive. While a new subjective destination of liberation and entitlement is inaugurated, its ‘good news’ is the suppression of the danger of any advent—of anything new—now a ‘broader’ matter of the state to which the subject belongs. The modern subject is thus a participant in the modern project by being its passenger, a player on its stage.

The withdrawal of the subject under condition of identification (the symbolic purview formerly delegated to God) is, at one and the same time, what I call a deracination, or the withdrawal from reason of the subject otherwise. Modern subjective subjection—of the exodus toward identification, as the subject of recognition—is an effect of the binding alliance of a new mode of knowledge (as object) and a new metaphysics (of the will to identification). As participant in a new ethical founding, the subject is thus obliged: to recognize (read learn), to identify, to attach (become), with the propulsive exception of the order to which it is subject—and this is a constitutive exception, an extension of the repressive ethical condition of possibility for modernity itself. As described in the previous chapter, this order is assumed ideologically, as already-known, as antithesis to religious superstition, engine of techno-scientific progress, avatar of political freedom and so on.

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91 This term I have been using to denote the signification of beginning, of the new and the emergent. A province of the thinking of the subject in education, it need be rigorously qualified as an ethical matter to not fall into the obscurities to which it is destined in the ontologically conservative modern settlement (see chapter 4).
To understand the grip of the modern ethical settlement on subjectivity, one by which the subject is sacrificed on the altar of its ostensible guarantee, let us consider the modern subjective guarantee in the inverse. Were the transport of the guarantee of the subject from religious into modern (secular) formalities not accomplished, the predication of the subject itself would deteriorate toward the apparent vacancy of the subjective—for such is the undecidability of contingency, the simple incompleteness of form. The subject is thus secured, rendered knowable as such, as subject-to, by means that vacate it of that which eludes identification (of contingency, of indeterminacy). The condition of possibility of such a subject is its disassociation from its constitutive conditions, which requires, as of all ideology, that the haunting of this vacancy itself be vacated, in admissible to thought, or deracinated. In the vacancy of the fallibility of identification, the subjective becomes (is lost to, in fact) the wholly neurotic grant of a comprehensive order, one riven from within: Identical with itself on condition of the denial of its constitutive incompleteness.

The modern ethical repression discussed in the previous chapter presents here as the exemption (of itself from its own ethical condition) that denudes modern subjectivity. This I call deracination because it is the subjective consequence of a literal withdrawal from reason of the thinkability (if the term may be permitted) of the

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92 Butler (1997) describes this analogously as “primary dependency” whereby, as a matter of “passionate attachment,” subordination becomes “central to the becoming of the subject.” Uninterrupted, this is a dependency which renders the subject (child) “vulnerable to exploitation,” to the manipulation of its passionate attachments to ‘unthinkable’ ends—for the conditions of such subjection require, as in modernity writ large, their denial: “No subject can emerge without this attachment, formed in dependency, but no subject, in the course of its formation, can every fully afford to ‘see’ it. The attachment in its primary forms must both come to be and be denied, its coming must consist in its partial denial, for the subject to emerge’” (p. 8, emphasis in original). Of course, in my submission, Butler has not the last word in the conditions of subjective emergence.
contingency of an ethical founding—one of a lacunal condition (of the crumbling of absolutes, paradoxically ‘restored’ absolutely in new forms). Presented as such, this ‘ethical’ operation permits the untroubled continuing ‘rational’ production of subjects (to be managed, administered, taught, and deposed as elements of existing orders).

To help think what becomes of the subject, or of the subjective, as its condition of possibility, it may be helpful to recall that the ethical moment of the ‘event’ of modernity may be thought first as a dispossession (of ethical constitution—of ‘traditional’ orders), and next as a deliverance, as, in effect, a compensatory temptation to assume a new order comprehensively, and thus ideologically, as advanced in the modern methodological ontologies of ‘reason.’ Thought as co-extension, the finitude—symptom of comprehensiveness—implicate within the foundational elements of the modern ethos\textsuperscript{93} prescribes, as ‘subjective’ itinerary, the sovereign automata of modern ethical ‘autonomy’: Of a heterogeneous whole, a presupposed completion. ‘Lost’ within the proliferation of its figures, the forms of the subjective remain fixed in the amber of the event of modernity. If this is what becomes of the subject, lost as such in the ethical formalities of modernity, let us examine how this subjective consequence of an ethical transmutation manifests.

The story of the fall may be seen to formally persist as the misperception of moral choice, of one, like modern freedom in the ideological sense, which is really a non-choice. With respect to the subjective proscription of the modern advent—the auto-exemption by which persists its paradoxical status as riven among liberation (the emancipation of identification) and repression (of the obstacle of its contingency)—we

\textsuperscript{93} From chapter 2, this is modernity’s decisive ‘break’ with the past, its law of a method, of a known (emplaced) subject (the state) and new moral status of knowledge.
may also see that it is the *prior prohibition that creates the sin*, and not the choice to then transgress it. In this reading, ‘free will,’ subjective itinerary of modern autonomy, was *not* inaugurated in the choice to accede to temptation (one valorized in the inverse in modernity: We now freely ‘eat the fruit’), but pre-exists it as *the law that made the ‘choice’ possible*, which thereafter is merely its consequence.\(^94\) In terms of modern subjectivity, to remain consistent with the modern subjective deracination is to accept its holist exemption, a condition *without remainder*, as its precondition, which is to say: To ‘become one’ within the new order of the (symbolic) exile of a dispatched founding contingency. To ‘choose’ within this ethical order is to accede to the ideology, which makes the illusion of such choice possible; to ‘become free’ on such (abstract) terms is to be subject to the administration of the moral management of ascendant authorities of the state, of society and interest, which is to say, to precisely *not* become free, by way of the conviction that one is.

I am describing here the assumption of the modern subjective condition as in the ostensibly pre-modern fashion, via the *prohibition* of modern diabolism—of thinking (‘of the two’) the scene of implicate dispossession—and thereby ‘becoming a subject’ precisely by way of *not* subjectivizing the constitutive split of modern rationalism, of working to never ‘become’ its ‘emperor’ unclothed, of still working to become *it* instead.

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\(^{94}\) As Žižek (2003a) reads Paul’s insight into the story of the first prohibition (as the perverse Christian strategy to seduce in order to save), I do so here with that of modern ethical advent, to illustrate how subjectivity is formally enchained by the law of modern ethical founding, as merely that which transgresses prescribed parameters (here in the insistence of subjective freedom within the repressed symbolic auto-exile of modernity). My argument is not that this should not be undertaken, that freedom in a modern sense should not be articulated and sought, but that, given of which it consists, it need be *undertaken differently* if to not recapitulate its ideological proscription (of a *Master*, a discursive supra-subject, of one sort or another at the helm) at one and the same time.
The formality changes—from subject fallen by acceding to the temptation of knowledge, to subject redeemed (not coincidentally in the inverse) thereby—but the operation remains the same, as acquiescence to the choice (to ‘become free’ in apparent disobedience) is to obey the law which founds it. Thus we encounter modern freedom as a subjective matter of both auto-constitution (an individual subject ‘unbound’ on the itinerary of freedom afforded by the modern exodus to identification) and auto-destitution (a subject, as such, whole, ‘made free’ thereby). This is the form of a perverse resistance to the ethical encounter uniquely afforded by modernity, its symptom as an accomplished modern freedom. As I will later show, this symptom of the modern wrestling of the mysteries of symbolization from God remains an essential precondition to furthering any ethical project, to not first make of it the new forms of acquiescence, that is. It is my argument that we must assume the modern sense of education bound within an ethos of such complex subjective divestiture. Otherwise, one might say, we have neither an idea of what we are up against, nor of how to resource it as the ethical opportunity of our time. Ethics in education, in order to be vital, needs to consider that the figuration of modern subjectivity, as de Certeau (1988) advises, is a way of saying something (‘freedom’) in order to say something else (‘unfreedom’) (p. 134).

The apparent modern subjective itinerary of freedom, of autonomy, and indeed of conquest, is won at a steep and deceptive price in this reading. The benefit of the

95 The metaphor of a labour is here entirely appropriate—as drawn to greater detail in chapter 5 with respect to modern subjective formalisms—for, as Badiou (2001) argues of the “Immortal” subjective condition of truth (or the ‘immanent break’ as constitutive), its denial can consist as nothing less, nothing more passive, incidental, omissive than an obscure and perennial effort: “Betrayal is not mere renunciation. Unfortunately, one cannot simply ‘renounce’ a truth. The denial of the Immortal in myself is something quite different from an abandonment, a cessation: I must always convince myself threat the Immortal in question never existed, and thus rally to opinion’s perception of this point—opinion, whose whole purpose, in the service of interests, is precisely this negation” (p. 79).
temptation’ of comprehensibility (of its apriorization as given) is the security of identity within a unity of consciousness. In an ethical shift toward the symbolic efficacy that is modernity, a uniquely modern subjective topos is inaugurated. Subjective security, unity and efficacy were accomplished by way of the submission of the subject to modern ontological conceits—the elements, metaphysical, legalistic, moral and epistemological, of a new ‘real’—by which it becomes an entailment: “subjectivity [becomes] a condition of possibility in respect to political or scientific legality” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 177). In this relation ‘to an eliminated other’ (the legalities of modern metaphysics and epistemology—whose dominion is implicit, ‘eliminated’) characterized by de Certeau, the subject is here at once a form of desire (to identify with the ‘gods’ of a new order) and its expurgation (deracination, banishment from thought). As such, as compulsion of an “infinity of desire” (p. 184) maintained by the tension of the elimination of that by which ontological guarantee is secured, this is the subjectivity of a new mode of certitude, one not to, but as its deferred promise of comprehensiveness, as its lost guarantee. In the new absolutes of a brute immediacy and the iron law of its method, a new “practical reason” relegates its subject “elsewhere,” to a place “off and away” (p. 184). It secures subjectivity as that by which the objective may remain secured.

The unity and communicability afforded by the modern impetus to the symbolization of the present—assumption of God’s former province—may be seen here as extending together from a common founding with an imperative of inherent subjective self-deferral. This is the deferral of the subject as not finally the integrity it would appear to be, its assumption as such, as, in essence, a linguistic product. The integral subject as product of discourse is an ideal circularity, the subjective product of passive
subordination as ontological modern consequence. An emaciated subject, this is nonetheless one purposeful, meaningful, legitimate and correct, one on which “the theatre of the identifying power is performed” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 41). Displaced by the new statist social subjectivity (wherein the subject ‘emerges’ paradoxically as a postulate of a process of objectification, rather than perhaps as its remainder, or inassimilable element . . . ), what remains is entirely objectified such that the subject has “no place of his own” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 333). As the price of subjective security, and along with the desire that would enliven it ethically, s/he is perennially elsewhere, relegated—and regulated as ‘the enemy kept closer’—to outside the modern project as the modern project of a new ‘Man.’

In the fist of the symbolic totality of the new (sublimated) order, the subject is dispatched, is “written into the language of illusion” (p. 266).96 Choked in the ‘realist’ abstraction of an ethic likewise fated, the subject becomes an object of pity, a pathetic and (for later romanticism) tragic figure.97 For lack of a robust subjective imperative (or axiomatics), the ethics of such a subject becomes a pious discourse of administrative elements. It becomes codes and concepts. By way of the effort to articulate its subjective securitization, we may see that the modern merchant morality of the metaphysical

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96 Assuming the “God’s-eye view capable of embracing everything” (Zupančič, 2000, p. 22), this “humanist” subject (to objectivity) becomes integral to what Badiou (2007) later calls the martyrlogical “torment” of the twentieth century, in “…striving to have done with the romanticism of the Ideal: to abide in the abruptness of the effectively-real but to do so with a subjective means (a dark enthusiasm, an exalted nihilism, the cult of war…) that remain irreparably romantic” (p. 153). Romanticism, in this reading, is both a reincarnation of making sacred, of sacrificing, and the elevation of that which mediates between “reality and the Ideal,” an aesthetic religion of sorts coextensive with the redeployment of religious formalities de Certeau characterizes in the geneses of modernity. It obtains, in other words, in the tragic pathos of the demand for a new (characteristically aesthetic) Master, as if beauty could save the good via the pathos of its loss/flight from the true.

97 Consider in contemporary popular discourse the metaphors of moral biology, of the infantile knowingness of the ‘gut’ or the ‘heart,’ the Oedipal figures of self-stupefaction of the orders of modern reason, its passive subordination to (intuitive) authorities, ones simply known.
relegation of the ‘real’ prescribes ethics as that which actually *excludes* the subjective. This Badiou (2007a) now calls “the law of our world” (echoing the ‘priestly’ marriage of the categories of subjectivity with legality), one fully installed as neoliberal piety: “what is objective must align its costs with the market, whilst what is subjective must not exist as anything other than an unattainable luxury” (p. 72).

It will be important later to refer back to the destitution of the subject when considering a new subjective formalism as an immanent condition of ethical possibility (and impossibility) of educational thought. For now, it has been necessary to consider the modern controls and implicate delimitations of what I have been calling modernity’s salvific imperatives and authorities (a metaphysics, legality, morality and new status of knowledge, expressed in a new ‘locus’ in language correlative to ostensibly secular new ‘formalities’ of practice) as what subordinates the possibility for subjective thought, and as the antecedents of an unconscious and passive subject. It has been further important to observe that these operate as the impoverishment of an ontological finitude, a condition such as obtains in the comprehensiveness of the modern ethical deliverance, as one *without remainder*. This is also one that, as discussed in the second half of the next chapter, even later romanticism was ethically ill equipped not to compound.

Subjective destitution as such is an important, and necessarily counter-intuitive, consequence of the complexity of the modern advent. It obtains in an ethical configuration binding the modern project with other powerful consequences of relevance here. What I term *symbolic enclosure*—the combination of ubiquity and finitude of the process of symbolization elevated to the supervision of the ‘real’ in modernity—

98 This is indeed also the latent inauguration of the formal unconscious, as that which escapes identification, dark surplus of the new ubiquity of symbolization.
facilitates modern subjective destitution as the second important consequence of the modern advent. Continuing to resource de Certeauian historiography, its thematics and the question of their relevance to the projects of modern education, I move here further toward a rigorous and searching articulation of an anti-ethical nihilism binding of ethics and education in modernity.\(^9\)

### 3.1.2 Consequences II: Symbolic Enclosure

**Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together . . . the shape of his destiny.** (Lacan, 2001, p. 75)

Put simply, the symbolic enclosure of modern ontology is the means by which reality—the new modes of its availability in the modern ethic—is sustained as intelligible and representable. As a consequence of ethical modernity, symbolic enclosure has two primary modes: First as convening of an analogizing space of meaning, and then as the subjective implication of the birth of superegoic governance. Contending with these, it is my thesis, will enable rethinking the trap of symbolic enclosure itself, without recourse to the perennial ethical temptation (of ‘restoration’) to return to the gods what modernity has wrested from them. It will also continue to help provide a theoretical context by which to displace the modern ethical poverty that prefigures both ethics and education.

\(^9\) In contrast to the ‘naught of the will,’ or the efficacy of its void, what I am describing here as nihilistic Zupančič (2003) brings into focus as the tension of apparent opposites—whose form as the linkage of a co-articulation is instructive otherwise here—which she calls the “mortifying either/or” of the capture of the will (or desire) in “the alternative between directly Willing nothing(ness) itself and not willing” (p. 66-67). Nihilism is the space between two alternatives which allows them to persist as such and that, in the terms of this section’s regard for modern subjective nihilism,’ is between assuming a proscribed subject (the ‘free’ and autonomous one) and working against subjectivity proper (in elevating to ubiquity objectivity).
As the operant of the divine in modernity—of being in modern metaphysics (see Section 2.3.1)—the symbolic enclosure of modern ontology consists first of the presupposition that reality can be rendered intelligible and is representable. Not merely presupposition however, as a consequence of the deliverance of the modern will-to-identification, symbolic enclosure is its mode of execution. This in that it fuels the operations of, and creates the venues for, ethical modernity as symbolic matters, as shared ventures of accessible accord, as of (in the earlier connotation) ‘things thrown together’ such that they may ‘stand for . . . something else’ (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, 2012). From this Lacan (2001) develops the notion of symbol as a ‘pact’ (p. 68), one by which, for de Certeau (1986), ethics in modernity may be vested with the guarantee of “a sense of unity and . . . communicability” of a “theatre of references and common values” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 205). As the inexhaustible prescription of a therapeutic palliative, we witness here the rise of a modern theology of meaning (as object), sustained—as ‘enclosure’—in relation to “meaning that allows it to be” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 34).

To understand this curious entailment, de Certeau invites us to imagine that the analogical progress of knowledge implicitly refers back to a zero point of origin. This, like the narrative structure in which it is emplaced (the fabled story of progress), both anchors fluidity (as the movement of temporalization) and confirms an imaginary totality (in being comprehensively of a single point, origin, source or substance). These provide the requisite horizon of the finite cult of ‘meaning,’ the absent coordinates of symbolic

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100 Recall here that modernity, for de Certeau, marks the redeployment, or re-formalization, of Christian ethical structures in the advent of their deposition otherwise. While its misconstrual is the illusion of their break, of their surpassing and overcoming by reason, its event is nonetheless their transformation into symbolic matters, rather than those of the ineffable Real to which they had been consigned hitherto.
enclosure. What this relation (to lost origin and ineffable destination) permits is a reas
gerance of coherence—of meaning, of what means. Akin to revelation in religious epistemology, this is an order of significance as the necessity of signification in making meaningful, of thereby making known, communicable, available and related to, the known—which is also to say to retain existence as not utterly alien, to make of it a ‘human’ project.

What I have discussed previously as a formally sublimated religiosity, a sort of symbolic faith—assumed belief in a ubiquitous symbolization—may here be thought of as a secular theism, whose object (meaning) is traceable to the modern birth of a social order itself (as a discursive or ideological matter of historiography, and not as the naïve opacity the story itself, as historical concretion). Entirely because of the metaphysical displacement of the Real (à la Lacan) into the realm of human symbolization and command, what is meaningful becomes true by virtue of participation in the logos, in the rational order of im-mediacy (the putatively unmediated). As a subjective matter, this consequence of an apparently objective metaphysical settlement allows for the nihilistic formality—a choice among vacancies—of simulacral subjectivity: While the form of the new ‘real’ may be objective, its ostensible content may be seen as entirely subjective, or ‘relative’ within the finitism of its projective remit, as of an ‘infinitely expansive’

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101 This distinction obtains relevance in that an event, such as that limned in de Certeauian psychoanalytic historiography and pursuant further to the work of such ‘thinkers of the event’ as Alain Badiou, is not, and could never be, knowledge. Rather, in a language that I hope to be becoming more familiar as this study proceeds, this is its, often paradoxical, symptom—which is itself never more than a conjecture, a ‘theoretical fiction.’ For, lacking some finally reliable external referent, the dislocations of discursive re-foundations can only be figured—and beset always by ignorance and undecidability—as event. The tracing of an event’s consequences (such as the particular work of this chapter and the one preceding) however is the work of what Badiou (2005c) calls a ‘militant of truth,’ the vocation of the subject within an ontology of the event: “Militant is a category without borders, a subjective determination without identity, or without concept” (p. 142). Such I develop more fully as a matter of subjective formalism and modes of representation in chapters 5 & 6.
symbolic universe. The form of the ‘meaningful’ *modern subjective supplement* (for this is what it properly should be called) thus remains entirely a captive of its ontological object, of the ‘real’ of its reverberating cosmos of meaning, the poetizing edification of identification. This new cosmos, or ethical settlement, it is always important to recall, remains intractably vested with the manias and dispossessions of the modern deliverance writ large (as of its new ‘rational’ horizon, even if in the form of an address from beyond it). Maintained within the symbolic enclosure of the ‘real,’ this closure of ontological horizons reproduces its conceit in the forms of the *meaningful import of a redolent qualitative totality*. This is to say, it is an *order*, operative as the projective horizon (of meaning) of the implicate ‘limit’ of a symbolic universe. In this new (symbolic) space of the ‘real,’ symbolic enclosure provides for the antecedent domestication of subjectivity proper. This is a shoal to which education is too readily called in modernity, its siren song that of the reduction of subjectivity to its ‘right measure’ of profundity, to inarticulable resonance with received faith and the cynical allocation of ‘depth.’ The well-meant destitution these deliver is of concern here. Effective in educational thought (inasmuch as it is concerned with *the being of subjects*) symbolic enclosure operates as the reassurance of a qualitative venue against which to deny one’s capture within neoliberal audit culture, it is an ‘infinite’ horizon of meaning, or intersubjective medium of plurality, a multiplicitous extension of what remains a duplicitous rationality.\(^{102}\)

I have been describing here symbolic enclosure as a covert form of hermeneutics, in the replacement of governance by ‘originary revelation’ (the *sundering* of symbolic unities) with a ‘meaningful’ reality, one secured within the moralizing probity of what de

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\(^{102}\) This I discuss in the next chapter as the operation of the “implicate anathema” of Platonism that underwrites phronetic ethics (Section 4.2.4).
Certeau (1988) calls “a scientific concern for upholding the truth of things” (p. 217). Arriving with what he calls the “temerity of a scientific point of view” (p. 235, emphasis in original), here must be acknowledged the violence of another voice, that of “a birth through the ear” (p. 235, emphasis in original). This—the superegoic—is a radical exteriority immanent to the new subjective remit, important in that it projects an “insurmountable alterity from which the subject’s desire is modeled” (p. 235-236). Consequent with the birth of the Cartesian ‘ego,’ the ferocious figure of the superego is its governance in the modern subjective remit, itself a hyperbolized subjective symptom of the symbolic enclosure inherent in the onto-logic of modern rationalism.

As indicated, the dimension of meaning (effect of the ostensible ‘mystery’ of symbolization) prefigures a ‘fall’ of sorts, an exile or perennial failure, disassociation from authorial origin—inasmuch as we don’t make meaning as much as co-make meaning with that by which meaning already means (effect of a given ontological horizon in modernity). Participation in meaning as such, as the secreting of a hidden authority, instantiates the (superegoic) law that makes its illusion possible (as the ‘fall’ installs the law of its terms). Begging perpetual correction—for symbolization is always ‘wrong’ in the sense that its constituent incompletion always belies its claims, undermines its referents and destabilizes its representations—the modern subject to symbolic enclosure is arguably far more governed than the (superstitious, ignorant etc.) one it is founded on superseding. For, in the broadly modern ethic as I have been describing it, ‘modern’ desire—as the disassociation from symbolic or ideological
contingency in representation, identification, and their modern objectivism\textsuperscript{103}—is both pivotal and unintelligible. As the ‘alien’ in the ‘alien,’ desire is here a literal ontological consequence of a particularly modern obscurity (of the ‘light’). Part of a process or method—most simply of the deliverance from ignorance, the modern ‘enlightened’ edification—desire before the superegoic injunction instantiated by symbolic enclosure is typically, here following Lacan, the successful fulfillment of its own unsatisfaction.\textsuperscript{104} The perpetual need for correction of a ‘meaningful’ life, visited upon a forever failing subjective disposition,\textsuperscript{105} foremost is the installation of its order, the guarantee of the field of the new ‘social’ or rationalist order in its most profoundly institutional and conservative mode. In turn, this guarantee of a redemption delivered in its denial, of desire fulfilled in unsatisfaction, and by virtue of the paradoxical intimacy of its remove, vitiates its constitutive operations. The impossible unity afforded by the banishment of the subjective as a viable source of ethical genesis and its continuing incarceration within a projective horizon of symbolic enclosure is an ethical consequence in the form of a trap. This is the form which presupposes that creation itself were somehow made, were ‘constructed,’ like the ontology (constructivism) which licenses it in conformity with human dimensions, ones of obedience to what may be known of the known (rather than its

\textsuperscript{103} This figuration of desire is based in the Lacanian one, which elaborates desire as lacunal, the effectivity of a lack, rather than a sort of simplistic correlative cathexis.

\textsuperscript{104} Chiesa (2003) explains: “the satisfaction of desire essentially consists of the preservation of its own unsatisfaction, since a subject remains a subject only insofar as . . . he is a desiring lack-of-being that wants-to-be” (p. 155, emphases in original). Alternately, in psychoanalytic terms, an ethics of the real is less one of the (banished) desire I here consider—one Zupančič (2000) describes as “of fantasy; of the [here sublimated] master” (p. 254)—than of what Freud first termed the drive—which locates the fantasy and subtracts the subject from it so the subject may emerge as a new frame in the Other (see chapter 6).

\textsuperscript{105} This is a subjectivity in ‘need’ of a redemption (recovery of integrity) the ethos is ‘rigged’ to bar—‘objective’ from the first, with subjectivity its excrescence, the ‘filth’ of its institution.
symptomnal status as haunted enigma). Within trajectories of error and correction of symbolic enclosure, the modern concept of education—for the desire to educate is never exempt from the orders within which it is founded, never unsaturated by its ethos—is convened to institutionalize and administer this circuit of a stable production of being. Central to the reproduction of its ethos, education perpetually unseats itself via the shifting vagaries of a supposedly authoritative meaningfulness, of faith vested, symbolically identified with, that is, in an obscure and implicit object—a concept or a code, that is. This anxious circulation of education’s final purpose, its status as methodological, is visited upon the self-legitimating figure (victim/subject/student/other) of an errant unknown (exile from remediation, from the imprimatur meaningful/real), one thereby ‘brought to order’ in advance as subject to the (unheard) command issuing from an exile’s ‘home.’ Thus education ‘brings one home’ to somewhere one only belongs by virtue of being its exile.

The vital insurance of the symbolic efficacy of a particularly modern species of order is a sublimation enforced (as moral, as ‘real’) by the powerfully paltry ‘subjective’ guarantees it generates (the symbolic imperatives of superegoic conformity to operative ‘ethical’ elements—to be responsibly ‘one’s self’ in gratitude to the obscure mechanics of the known, of state, society, economy, knowledge and, indeed, of ethics itself). As the ‘practical’ matters of the disciplining (education) of subjects, these conjoint operations of symbolic enclosure (of meaning and its superegoic adjunct) are surely—rather than the

106 This ‘rule’ of the transparency of knowledge is what Plato regards as the definition of sophistry, as “the rule by which what is known can be known, and what is not known cannot be known” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 33). It is the very failure of Socrates to follow this rule—in being the only man in Athens who ‘does not educate’—which is his commitment to truth, in the Platonic instance of another education, one which clears “the soul of this conceit” (p. 32).
final authority of the knowledge it disseminates, or indeed some unimpeachable rectitude of its project—what make the purposes of the modern institution legible and correct.\textsuperscript{107} Their social and psychic momenta thereby become universal, as the new universe becomes them.

My argument is that the ‘social’ conscience of the riven modern subject—subject to the command of an unheard voice, within the quicksand-vague transports of meaning—is ‘ethically’ compelled to drive its projects ever onward toward the purifying realism it presupposes. It must assume the \textit{carrot-on-a-string} promise of deferred redemptive legitimation—modern rigor’s absolution—oriented only by the hazy compass of that ersatz subjective injunction by which it must perpetually, and forever futilely, correct itself: To \textit{become better what one already is} (in the Neo-Aristotelian educational ethical commonplace).\textsuperscript{108} As it does so, this ‘aggressive’ and ‘neurotic’ (Chiesa, 2007)\textsuperscript{109} subjective itinerary hurtles, bound within language’s system of limits, in Oedipal rapture, toward its predicate: A universe of ‘One,’ expanding by way of a finitude of the immeasurable proliferations of its operations’ confirmations (dizzingly burgeoning

\textsuperscript{107} We may recall here Derrida’s (2002b) characterization: “Teaching delivers signs . . . signifiers supposing the knowledge of a prior signified” (p. 81) connotative of a transcendental position of knowledge and power in education, wherein the teacher “makes himself the representative of a system of reproduction” (p. 75).

\textsuperscript{108} As “what supports the perseverance of any regime, correct or incorrect” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 11), and if in the accord—of truth and happiness—constitutive of the highest achievement of that state, education for Aristotle is “realization through practical reason of the truth of one’s nature” (p. 11). Properly pre-modern inasmuch as it retains a ‘state’ (to which subject is subordinated) to be perfected as master (signifier), this is the retention of the place of God as the virtue of the suppression of the ecstasies of Platonic ‘participation,’ or any implication in ethical founding, by way of an unmediated practicality. So resonant still today, this ontological conceit was contested by Descartes as key element of the evental character of the modern founding (of its status as an incalculable break), the purpose of whose doubt was “to break with the dubiousness of the whole superstructure’ and begin again ‘from the very foundations’ (as cited in Bartlett, 2011, p. 12).

\textsuperscript{109} From Lacan, Chiesa (2007) calls this “radical narcissistic aggressivity” that which “underlies the actuality of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and the reformer”(P. 20-21) in that they visit upon themselves the integrity of an accomplished ethical program, a radical conquest of the messiness of everyday infinitum in aggressive (exacerbated, already split yet integrative) and narcissistic in that the resources of deliverance obtain as imaginary productions of their ‘subjects.’
knowledge, the finality of a ‘social’ justice, vacuous ‘innovations’ which reinforce continuity by way of rhetorics of ‘difference,’ and the paradoxical comedy of a ‘visionary’ management).

The point of this exposition is not specifically that in some way these are wrong—for I do not avow ideology critique here as my method—but rather, more ethically powerful in my view, that they are not what they purport or appear to be, that therein they may be said to express the under-thought, and thus ethically nascent, discursive enclosure of a symbolic totality, of the curious idealism of a meaningful modern concept of life. Consequences of a sublimated order methodological deliverance, the neurotic command of the unsatisfied satisfaction of an obscure certainty binds, proscribes and delimits—within its projective horizons of the ‘real’—education and ethics. This is not merely to say that these are conscripted to the social project, but that the social project itself is founded within an ontological one, circumscripive of them both. However, such an ontological binding is also, in a key piece of my thesis, a specifically modern condition of ethical possibility, articulated so as to disarticulate in new configurations. What it is not however is the realist authority of an implicate fiction of pure freedom presupposed thereby, which need be thought doubly as such: As a projective image of an integrative ontological method, and symbolic production of an organizing predicate (the unitary enclosure of a presupposed ‘One’).

In the enforcement of symbolic enclosure—the mechanisms of the presupposition of reality as available to intelligibility and representation, its meaningful discursive topos and superegoic agency—and the displacement of the enigma of the subject, the occluded ‘modern’ god of method comes to impoverish the discourse it would vitalize with respect
to the creation of new forms of subjectivity and new regions of thought. This is not merely to say that a sort of instrumentalism attends ethical thought in modernity, one variously to be overcome by some more ‘enlightened’ mode, but rather, and more specifically, that thinking of education in modernity is a consequence of the prosecution (consequential self-reinforcement) of an ethic in symbolic enclosure, one whose subject’s exclusion is its founding precondition, and continuing condition of its paradoxical grant of freedom. Mine is actually a simpler point than the anti-instrumental commonplace, one however whose consequences may be drawn out to greater ethical effect if turned toward what I come to discuss as new immanent ethical forms. So too with the consequence of relation, or the implicate commensurability of the figures and operations of the new ‘rationalist’ order of modernity, to which I now turn.

3.1.3 Consequences III: Relations

It’s a matter of…the end of…the absence to self of the unrelated.

(Badiou, 2007a, p. 92-93)

A final consequence of the birth of a modern ‘Age of Reason’ I consider here is

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110 Witness, as one eminent example among many, Hawking’s recent dismissal of philosophy (which we may take in the Platonic sense to be the question of the thought of thought) in science’s unsurprisingly heroic/demagogic knowledge: “philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge” (Hawking & Mlodinow, 2010, p. 5, emphasis added), as if the quest provides for itself, and, burgeoning with self-importance, relies naught on how, for example, it may need un-think itself to proceed. In the promised land of a knowledge which finally is arriving to deliver us from every species of penury—one which philosophers (especially in the broadly Continental tradition) have been provocatively engaged for decades and more—if not having actually become him, we are formally now finally becoming ‘One’ in the godhead, and need no longer think about it.
its re-formalization as an ethos of relations—by which, in part, has been enforced an ethical transformation from fractious theological cosmic contingency to iron law of ‘society’ (here the ontological figure of modern rational-humanist ethical finitude). In parallel with the centrality of meaning to the modern symbolic enclosure, and the object to the being of the subject (and especially its hyperbolized superegoic radical externalization), de Certeau locates a particularly modern repression in the implicate consequence of relation: Subjects and meanings “must be grasped in terms of relations (and no longer as something hidden-and-seen)” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 175, emphasis in original). The founding of a modern ethic relies on the symbolic efficacy of a discursive “relation to an eliminated other” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 40, emphasis added). The elimination here is certainly crucial for, unlike the pre-modern ethic, its ‘other’ is a retroaction, presumed and then entailed, a creature of symbolic enclosure itself, and no longer its mortifying torment, as formerly. This elimination permits the installation of new ethical authorities, new linkages on the model of the fundamental one (or those, as we have seen, to the presupposed ‘real,’ modern placeholder of being). de Certeau is an adversarial interlocutor of Foucault, but here he sounds similar: “Scientific ‘reason’ is indissolubly wedded to the reality that it meets again as its shadow and its other, at the very moment when it is excluding it” (p. 40). The correlative consequence of the modern ethical founding, of this curious ‘wedded exclusion,’ is at issue here because its consideration is a means by which to further articulate the finite remit of ethics and education in modernity (indeed also that of their very binding together, as discussed in the next section).
By virtue of this mechanism of significance, of the implicit linkage of relatedness-to an obscurity (the eliminated/repressed other by which modern reason successively proceeds), the immediacy of ‘facts’ becomes potent. They come to function as indications of meanings, in fulfillment of the circuitry of enclosure among a method and the meanings and objects it confirms and produces. This institution also reverses the positions of this institution and its subject, reversing them as ‘the one who speaks.’\textsuperscript{111} Of course, voice never obtains to the illegitimate, but it is codified as subjective silence in the presence of a comprehensive ethic. The ideologic circuit of relation consequent to a burgeoning onto-ethical order compels de Certeau (1988) to draw the conclusion (with Barthes) that “the sign of History has since become less the real than the intelligible” (p. 42), the intelligible being its offspring, so to speak, such that the ‘real’ itself is no longer a question. \textit{Relation to an eliminated other} both allows this ethical equation of reality and intelligibility \textit{and} creates the blind spot that sustains it. Blind to this linkage itself (the other is, after all, eliminated, withdrawn from thought as a symbolic effect), the consequential ontological mechanism of relation thereafter comes to presuppose further effaced linkage upon whatever it meets (it is a ‘conquest,’ argues de Certeau). Thus we come to the investiture of the modern ‘real’ in intelligibly substantializing its substance as further \textit{affinity and commensurability} instituted constructively in the very fulcrum of what passes for existence.

\textsuperscript{111} This excision of voice is, for de Certeau (1986), more than subjective emaciation or deracination, it is “torture” by which is transmuted subjective speech for “a confession linked to adherence” (p. 41) that restores to the law what effectively happens. The role of education in this mode is to restore to the law of its ethical founding \textit{what ostensibly is}. The subject in this reading is incidental support for the ethical institution.
Relation, in modernity a humanist conceit, is foremost what organizes symbolic order. Symbolic order is what, in displacing the subject to a *knowability*, an apparent *thinkability*, assumes a methodical Faustian debt by way of its projective accumulation of a progressive ‘truth’ of knowledge and society (a complex idealism of metaphysical displaced emplacement, as discussed in the previous chapter). Relation is here not *new*; indeed it remains a fundamental Aristotelian conceit. What is new about it in modernity is its subsumption within processes of symbolic enclosure, its exacerbation as a *sublimated* ethical formality. It is as such that relation becomes binding in modernity, becomes of the order of that which *cannot be refused*. This is ethically consequential in the narrow sense—not solely as of the constitution of worlds, of ‘*ethos,*’ that is—in that the pantomime of free will is no longer admissible as such, despite what the modern subjective parable insists. Such freedom is instead ‘realized’ as an article of faith, and its precarious ethical status as *a performance* is overcome merely by virtue of the insistence of its reality—or, more precisely, of its basic *relatedness to, and implication in*, the authoritative modern ‘real.’ Arendt (1958), in my view, misdiagnoses this authorization as “the philosophic shift from action to will-power” (p. 163), as a shift *toward abstraction*, a sort of Platonic symptom, rather than a more complex one *within* abstraction, within the discursive production of worlds (always an unavoidably discursive—imaginary and/or symbolic—and thus philosophical matter) at the modern advent. Consequently her recourse to its remediation by “the psychological power of the imagination” is fated. However, her characterization of the effect of this ethical consequence is brilliantly germane, when she writes of a displacement of ethical actors “to such an extent that they are not even admitted as spectators to the spectacle of self-
delusion” (p. 235). Perversely, of course it is to modern reason’s ‘eliminated’ but requisite other to which its own auto-infantilism is deposed, as the image of the uni-dimensional simplicity that the ethos incarnates, displaces and subordinates—elemental of the production of the other it maintains. In modernity one can no longer ‘choose’ the devil’s option, one must instead be that which prevents its appearance, be of the palpable material of the ‘real’ which make choice unnecessary (we are already of the order of the true, and no longer need to create it). In ‘moving beyond’ heresy in the ontological founding of a new world, one of a method secured by symbolic enclosure and relation, modernity replaces it with apostasy, and—governed by the form of what it denies—celebrates a new ethical vacancy, a new freedom, an ‘ethical’ conquest, and the conquest of the ethical.

The conceit of relation, thus installed, further disqualifies in advance—as do subjective deracination and symbolic enclosure—that which is not marked by the repressive ontological index of modernity: The Unity which is predicated on its denial as such. Reversed, if the means of unification are divided (are themselves symbolic), unity itself relies on a division (of its integrity as ‘whole’ and its symbolic formality) whose repression remains its very condition of possibility. Bound within this ethical landscape of authority and repression emerge the modern discourses of ethics and education, in a

\[\text{112} \] Here it is important to note that the aprioritization of relation requires innumerable ‘others,’ uncounted ones who ‘don’t fit,’ to sustain its salvific ecumenicism, to retain the field of the ethical institution’s expansion, to save the ethical consequence of relation from exhausting itself. The symbolic function of the preponderance of ‘humanity’ retained in grip of an ontology of sympathy is, I believe, a further consequence of an ethic whose predicate is relation. To remain ‘related’ we require the symbolic effort of the establishment of prior difference. Here, we are all the same is the ‘saying’ (using Levinas’ terms) of what permits the ‘said’: we must remain ‘different’ (or, our inequality is of more value than the equality whose espousal is thereby its denial).
binding whose lineaments are important to consider in specificity now, before concluding with the elements and consequences of the modern ethical settlement.

3.2 A Consequent Conjunction: Ethics & Education

This section is concerned with the question of how to think education and ethics within the modernity articulated in de Certeauian historiography, and to support my claim of the necessity of the question’s difficulty as a matter of ethical inquiry. The difficulty here is that of thinking about their conjunctive binding within an ethos whose elements and consequences are both productive and denying of it, and whose symptomatic status as such defies our attempts to name it, such is the tenacity of its hold on the conventional modern imaginary. To sum up preceding arguments and turn them to key articulations by which to go forward is the purpose here; a segue of sorts, from some conclusions drawn about ethics and education in the modern ethos broadly, to ethics constituted as such within modern educational thought.

To this point I have directed a considerable focus toward evoking and projecting an emergent image of a new ethic borne under the sign of modernity. de Certeauian historiography develops this as one in which religious energies were less overcome than redirected in new (secular) formalities and powerful ethical consequences. This new ethic conveys truth, as meaning, into the re-inscription of the word ethics itself. Formerly
entailing a broad sense of ‘dwelling,’ de Certeau figures the historical movements constitutive of modernity as those by which ethics become directed toward the supervision of the implicate finitude of a social function, or the delimited symbolic totality of a *human* ‘real’ (for the two are indissoluble). Within this complex new ethical assemblage—of an event, its precipitations (ethical elements), and their consequences within a vast historiographical sophistication—we may discover, I claim, a new reading of the modern sense of education: As what fosters and re-founds an ‘ethics’ of the production of a new order, whose ideologically effaced origin is the religious figure of deliverance within what Rousseau (2010) later identified as a civil religion (p. 119). Ontological—in that it is of the modern ‘real’—this disposition demarks a fundamental binding of ethics (in the broad sense as of the production of ‘worlds’) and education. This I refer to as a conjunction, or the conjoining of figures within a single whole. In de Certeau’s analysis of a vast archive, this bound condition may be appreciated as a matter of the reduplicative mechanics of the silent faith of modernity—of its status as a faith—within immediate (available to both ‘utility’ and ‘meaningfulness’) indices of ontological weight, of existential substance. Simply put, education in modernity is bound to deliver an ideologically freighted image of ‘what is.’ Vitally however, this delivery is also a ‘secretion,’ a ‘making secret’ within the Enlightenment project. As the deceptive kernel which sustains conjunction as I elaborate it, *what is secreted* is what de Certeau (1988) calls a ‘linkage’ to the presupposed ‘real,’ enacted among

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113 While usually connoting “being-with” (Hyde, 2004) around representations of the Good, previous senses of the word did not so thoroughly entail *relations among* or even necessarily presuppose them (which I here am calling the *binding of a conjunction*); one important characteristic of such entailments in modernity are the suppression of the contingencies of rhetoric in the assurances of technicity, in the legalism of representation of a rational method’s dogmatic ethos (de Certeau, 1986, p. 208). Affectively, the ‘good’—master signifier of ‘traditional’ ethics—“governs the release of tension, the inertia or repetition of psychic behaviour” (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 119).
the cultural, legendary manifestations of a time to what, in these legends, *is already* controllable, correctible, or prohibited by technical practices. It cannot be identified with its practices, but it is produced by what those practices trace, erase, or confirm in the received language of a given milieu. The traditional model of a global, symbolizing, and legitimating discourse is thus still in evidence here but worked by instruments and controls that belong specifically to the productive apparatus of our society. (p. 220, emphasis added)

This secreted linkage of cultural manifestations and antecedent control, in modernity delegated to a social function, is germane here as what de Certeau simply calls a ‘representation.’ Installation of the ‘real’ as extant image is a symbolic idealism akin to Heidegger’s (1938/2007) concept of “world-picture:”

The *fundamental event* of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word “picture” now means the formation of presenting production. Within this formation, the human fights for the position in which he can be that being that provides the measure for all being, and draws up the guidelines for everything that is. (p. 221, emphasis added)

This is a comprehensive discursive form that subsumes discourses unsparingly within modern ethical operations, including—perhaps especially (concerned as they readily are with the constitution of forms of life)—the discourses of ethics and education. Inescapably *bound* by the secreted linkage of cultural production, of its ethical predicates (those of the ‘real’ prefigured thereby), this is an ethos subject from the first to the

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114 Heidegger’s notion of ‘world-picture’ is perhaps derived from Hegel’s concept of “picture-thinking consciousness” (as cited in Žižek, 2003a, p. 83)—creature of symbolic enclosure in my thesis.
authority of (a) representation. In this configuration’s production of educational discourse, educators may be seen first to be *representation’s representatives*, and it our most profound credential. What we have to contend with here, I maintain, is what de Certeau calls a “story permeated by social practices” (p. 220), as modern *myth* or, broader, a specifically modern imaginary. This is ethically productive for my purposes foremost by way of the comprehensiveness of its integrity, won via the exclusion of the contingency of its production, which is to say, by way of the secreting of the linkage it installs to the authoritative ‘real.’ The ethically operative fantasy of ‘what is,’ the preliminary repression of modern ethics, thus repeats the gesture of the antecedent cooption of its elements—now to be thought of as inclusive of ethics and education. In every gesture marked by its absence, ‘what is’ excludes its own kernel, precisely to the extent to which the secretion effective within the modern ethical settlement (of this linkage and its repressive status in the modern ethical sublimation) remains itself undisplaced. As conditions of possibility for a region of thought, rather than the region itself, we are contending here with the ideological comprehensiveness of a “global discourse articulating practices which it does not talk about but which it must respect, practices that are at once absent from its narrative yet oversee it” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 220, emphases added). We are contending with absences, and what they conceal.

The operation of conjunction is thus not founded on binding which would be explicit, or identifiable, within legitimating discourses. It is at play rather in the lacunae

115 The Castoradian concept of the social ‘imaginary’ (Castoriadis, 1991, p. 67) is resonant with that of de Certeauian *myth*, as a particular rationality’s grounding of social order in a common intelligibility. Ricoeur (1997) similarly discusses ideology—as a “discourse of the imaginary constitution of society” (p. 63)—while Jameson (1981) engages with Lacan’s (not unrelated) genesis of the term—within the (essentially ontological) triad Imaginary/Symbolic/Real, figured as “imaginary resolution of real contradiction” (p. 63).

116 The absence I denote here as contingency, but will, in later chapters, as *actual infinity*.
of the formality of the thinking they express (which is precisely why thinking formality becomes so important to ethical thought). What this means is that, because of the conjunction’s genesis in the suppression of a transmutation, in the re-formalization of various ethical media (formerly religious, and latterly social, practices) as a secretion which authorizes a global representation, the conjunction of ethics and education obtains not on the explicit forbidding of its unbinding, as one may assume. Rather, the constitutive force of binding in the modern ethos is predicated instead in a co-articulation effected by never denying the relation of its elements, by simply allowing their presuppositions and co-implication to endure. Discursive economies of implication do just this: They place within, within a particular order, and importantly also the historical remit proportioned to it. Relation is presupposed, symbolic enclosure effected, subjective deracination enforced, such that the linkages of conjunction are implicated, and the imputation (the mythic ‘cultural production’) of ontological linkages—God’s former domain sublimated—remains unheralded, untroubled, ‘true.’ The binding here obtains from the implicit prohibition of unbinding, from the assumption of this as a condition of participation in the modern deliverance. To a modern heterogeneous reason this is ‘obvious,’ endlessly reconfirmed in seemingly unrelated venues—such that a hydra-like ethic sustains itself variously in the implicative operation of ontological

117 This is also why Freudian historiography like de Certeau’s is so crucial to modernity. Unlike the advent of critical theory, of the Enlightenment’s apparent project of self-criticism, psychoanalytic historiography permits reading modernity itself as its own symptom, permits its approach by means conditioned not by the ethos’ conceits, but via their telling incompletions, their authoritative vacancies.

118 In discussing Badiou’s Platonic critique of sophistry—as “predicated on relations that are linguistically constructed, whose presence is poetically attested and that accords ultimately with particular interests and therefore cannot constitute a way of life” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 9, emphases in original)—Bartlett ties such a prohibition to what is lacking in sophistic education, the “decision for such a ‘way of life’” (p. 9); that, in “training the youth in an interest in interest” (p. 10), a clash of universalisms is staged, “…between universalism or the rigorous formalism of that which is unbound from such pedagogical regimes, and a false universalism which is predicated precisely on the prohibition of unbinding” (p. 10).
acquiescence: As in, for example, how a particular image of knowledge, or a legal formalism (of method), or even a sober metaphysical sleight of hand (concealment of the idealism of the ‘real’), all contribute to conditions which constitutively bind ethics and education in modernity. The modern ethical genesis obtains here in a phantomic linkage of elements (such as education and ethics), a discursive one that—and this is the important point—proscribes as it produces.

Clearly the ethical condition of ideological modernity proceeds to many visible advantages—indeed it is ‘constructive’—as knowledges accumulate, problems are ‘solved,’ and ‘subjects’ liberated; it is indeed unprecedentedly efficacious. However, its acumen is at one and the same time also suppressive, it hums with the quietist finitism of its onto-mechanics. This is the derogation of ethics by way of their ‘realization’ (assumption as codes and concepts as we have seen, but also in the failure to confront significant ethical elements); it is a “stupefying poverty” (Badiou, 2005b, p. 247) in this sense, its binding a breathtaking circumscription of parasitic daring of countless unintelligible—or ‘impossible’—opportunities foresworn, ineligible, null, especially where subjectivity is concerned. What is foresworn is, quite simply, the unimaginable, whose absence is a matter of moral virtue, or the propriety of the modern ethical settlement. Here, the ‘untimely’ concerns of ethical inquiry in education obtain as an axiomatic commitment to a search: To a pursuit within what is immutably given as ‘real,’ within its status as such, as symptomatic elision, symbolic truth of the ‘real’ and not Real truth as symbolic. Subsequent to the ‘pact’ of modernity, conjunction is what de Certeau (1988) regards as an “inverse of normativity” (p. 100). Ordering what is absent, the predicates of modern ontology as such are established in didactic relation to their
subjects: They instruct in their own order’s participation, whose ‘secret,’ their denial, exemption, or making-absent, is his/her very essence.

As I show as this study proceeds, a historiographical figure such as the ‘inverse of normativity’ helps constitute thinking in inventive encounter with modern ethical thought in educational discourse (where, in the next chapter, I consider symptomatically conjunctive the ethics of phronesis and alterity). Its inherent complexity I plumb for two important reasons. First, to do so is to not “already partake of the problem we seek to address” (Godzich, 1986, p. xvii), to not, from the first, recapitulate modern ethical conditions’ founding presumptive operations (elements) and operative ethical circumscriptions (consequences). Second, I am motivated as an ethical matter to be able to deploy ethical discourses otherwise: Rather than to critically destroy them—by way of their own critical conceits, their own production of intellectual ‘others’ or otherness by which to be secured—to subtract within them toward new articulations immanent therein. This approach I develop to discover ways to educate ethically, to wrest modern educational ethics from its ‘ethical’ malaise—oscillation among transcendental temptation and positivist legalism—and cynical subjective fatalism, and to inscribe educational thought most profoundly and inventively thus.

3.3 Education ‘Emplaced’ in a Geography of Haunted Itineraries

This work may now turn toward the bound emplacement of education in ethical modernity, toward its own native ethical investments with new theoretical resources. The

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119 This, native uniquely perhaps to philosophy in educational thought, Badiou (2008a) calls for as “the audacity of thought.” “not to repeat ‘to the limit’ that which is already entirely retained within the situation which the limit limits” (p. 81).
purpose of this section is to direct what has gone before toward ethical thought in education. To do so, I make the turn toward educational thought by considering here its figures and their ontological affiliations in the modern ethic I have been developing, and thus I turn specifically to the conjunction of ethics and education within the modern settlement. Expressed in the realist and utopian figures of what I call an ontological oscillation, the conjunction of ethics and education in modernity will be turned to new ethical purposes, new ethical horizons within existing ones. How the conjunction operates as specifically educational institution within the modern settlement is the theme this section develops. It does so to bridge this work from the question of the modern ethical founding and consequences to its expressions as ethics of education (which I take up in earnest in the next chapter as ethics of phronesis and alterity).

In this and the previous chapters, I have gestured toward what may be inferred as the binding of education in a new ‘social’ order of modernity. Much preparatory work having been done, with de Certeau (1988) I may now be more explicit, to see that education formalized in modernity in a “new meaning” as “an instrument of cohesion in a campaign to maintain or restore unity” (p. 127). Such unity, as I have discussed with regard to the ‘organizing will’ of symbolic enclosure, is expressive of the new social emplacement’s legalism, such that, in modernity, a restorationist fervour attends the enforcement of “rules and social uses [that] constitute the backbone of education” (p. 196, fn47). Assuming a formerly clerical function, educators across the sectors of education (and indeed thereafter also clerics) become “producers of society,” or, more precisely, “the means of an axiomatic of the ‘production of society’” (p. 186) itself, to which Christian discourse had formally (and less ‘formally’) been turned. As one may
expect given the foregoing, this is a function already bound among its object (the objective condition of “society”), its subject (the state), its operations (the enforcement of the legalities of the epistemic moralism of what becomes for us a ‘moderate’ Enlightenment) and attendant referents (of a statist metaphysics of an available ‘world’ and an objectivist epistemologism of its correlative knowledges). As ethical operations and figures, these are all marked by the chimera of modernity’s predominant ethico-ontological motif, one here discussed as productive of the conjunction of ethics and education in modernity: The withdrawing self-guarantee of their own presupposition. Such is indeed foremost what a self-occulting discourse is: A formal arrangement of absences whose availability to thought is foresworn by ethical conditions that make such thought untenable, impossible, taboo. “Dispersed,” as de Certeau (1984) elsewhere writes, such “insinuates itself everywhere” (p. xii). Here it is important to note that education’s assimilationist eschatology—its representation of ‘what is’ to which it is ontologically bound in abscondito by modern ethics—is riven by what de Certeau calls an “insurmountable ambivalence” (p. 174) in that it awaits what it asserts. The guarantee of a re-union (of ‘Enlightenment’) of a ceaselessly differentiating method (of reason and its other) is both promise and presupposition. This ambivalence is tantamount

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120 de Certeau (1988) elaborates a mode of approach to historiographical complexity as attention to the means of linkages of its elements rather than, more naively, as somehow themselves: “the interdisciplinarity we look toward would attempt to apprehend epistemological constellations as they reciprocally provide themselves with a new delimitation of their objects and a new status for their procedures” (p. 291).

121 de Certeau (1988) writes that, as “a crusade of the eighteenth century,” education “colonizes to be sure, but it is also an eschatological quest: it awaits the coming of the confirmation and the effectivity of what it already asserts” (p. 174).
to a constitutive rupture, one consonant with that of the exacerbated mechanism of the modern ethic itself: ¹²²

The educational task will thus ceaselessly perfect its methods and expand the field of its progress in order to surmount the rupture that keeps reason outside of its own truth and forces it to depend on its adversary. Yet this rupture is a constitutive one. It could not be suppressed without obliterating the reason that had been defined through its establishment. In antithetical but homologous modes of domination or seduction, the rationality of the Enlightenment maintains a necessary relation with its other. (p. 174, emphasis added)

The emphasis in the foregoing foreshadows how the historiographical moves toward the speculative in this study, as it emphasizes ethical themes considered above as prescriptive of the ethos in which education may be seen to play a prefigured and productive part (inasmuch as education is to ‘produce’ society in modernity). Inextricable from the linkages of its ethic more broadly, this is as an ambivalent evangelism driven ever onward by inherent tensions—of the existential anxieties of symbolic enclosure, the developmental neuroses of lost subjectivity, the redemptive nostalgias of relation—in a wholly hyperbolic exacerbation, insurmountably conjoined by the paradigmatic necessities of an unavowed constitutive rupture (of reason and its other), and perpetually displaced by the movement of its (ontological) method. A metaphysically ‘social’

¹²² For de Certeau, this describes both the ‘risk’ and the ‘task’ of the Enlightenment: “losing the assurance of a past revelation . . . it must depend upon what the labour of culture already shows” such that reason “must be bound to the exteriority of its future.” Thus “detached from the certitude which controlled it in its founding, the evangelical and missionary mechanism is exacerbated. It becomes its own essence” (pp. 78-79).
emplacement (meaning of the ostensibly sole purview of the human), this projection insinuates education as “a mission . . . that receives its privilege and power from itself, that no longer derives from the heavens above” (p. 178, emphasis added). Myriad considerations of the permutations of power are of course relevant here as it falls to “an elite” to propagate a new ethical administration, but my concern with the re-conceiving of ethics for education from within the conjunction of education and ethics in modernity requires this study remain close to the ontologically ‘modern’ as it finds it in de Certeauian historiographical complexity. This focus is preparatory to the further movements of this study, ones—especially as regards the question of the subject—that continue to resource the domain of ontological thought as constituted here for the purpose.123

The symptom of modern ethical self-dispossession—of a constitutive inability to fully inhabit the ethos installed as comprehensive—which I advance here to examine further is that of an oscillation, in flight to and from itself, among ethical authorities. Since the Reformation and Enlightenment, education becomes expressive of new “modes of initiation and transmission” (de Certeau, 1996, p. 45) within the modern ethical settlement; as such it symptomatically oscillates where ethical authorities are concerned among two ethical poles, which are ontological at base. This, in my argument, is the formal ethical topos of education in modernity. Extensive of its ‘ethical’ founding as whole, and yet also within the ‘constitutive rupture’ of modernity, this is the founding of modern project of education within an ethical self-dislocation’s continuing displacement,

123 Kovacevic (2007), apropos of psychoanalysis as critical theory, inadvertently affirms this gesture well: “the idea that social being determines consciousness is Marxian, but social being is predetermined as well” (p. 70).
among the organization of absences convened for the purpose, elastic movement toward and away from at the same time. As a “geography of haunted itineraries” (p. 45), this eschatological oscillation instantiates the bi-valency of a condition of both exile and advance—it is ‘not there’ and ‘there’ at the same time, moving out from and toward at once, so that it rebounds, like a reverse-polarity magnet, when it approaches too closely one extreme, in the maintenance of the conjunctive arrangement as a (neurotic) whole. Its conjunctive binding is found here as the delegation to education of an ethos’ prescriptive vocation, characteristic and propulsive of its repressed riven oscillation, of the figures of utopia or realism.

The former projects reform based on “a fiction of purity” and effects a denial (of its own status as a model of its symbolic ‘perfection’ or completion), which thereby also corrupts real alternatives by poisoning the well of their thought. The latter, perhaps less duplicitous, is the kernel of conservatism; it is the “hidden figure of cynicism, which authorizes power by its ability to give recognition” (p. 45), of knowledge exclusive of what failed in its very production, of its contingency, in other words. For de Certeau, in both of these founding emplacements (in the ‘real’ of the utopic or the ‘ideal’ of the realist) we may find what he calls the ‘putrescence’ of an institution:

In the first instance, the institution is the putrescence that must be reformed by recourse to more originary innocence, freedom, and purity.

In the second, rottenness is something originary that the institution makes it profitable to recognize, and at the same time covers up. (p. 45)

Education’s ethical function comes thus to a naturalism of coeval ideals or aspirations, in, on one hand, the beatific (the appropriations of the images of the angelic child, of the
righteous reformer, the ‘saintly’—Pied Piper/Mary Poppins—adult and so on) and, on the other, the cynical (the enforcement of an apparently ‘real’—that is, known—world of calculable interests, of preparatory *responsibilization*). In actuality however, as a matter of the discourses of modernity and their ontological foundations, in this singularly modern mode, education delivers the one (the beautific/utopian) to the other (the cynical/realist), in the paradoxical guise of *a liberation into*. As one of the great confusions of education, in this uneasy settlement, characteristically neither is as it may seem.

As important as this oscillating mechanism of ethical figures is to the ethical pursuit in educational thought, so equally is the question of *the subject* to this institution, ‘lost’ as we have seen, “already . . . convinced they are filth” (p. 45), detached and displaced within objecthood and identification, misappropriated from the ethical promise of *subjectivity*, its constitutive medium. A question no longer residing within a generative (self-revealing and undermining) formalism, but delivered au fait unto ethical institution, mediated so as to be re-mediated, the subject (as object as such) is denuded, moderated, pacified in advance and entirely paradoxically foreclosed; free, we might say, to be enslaved. This is surely a startling and thoroughly counterpunctual observation of the age from which we are given the Rights of Man! However, from the bewildered standpoint of such a subject (to a paradoxical condition of gnostic liberation and objectivist government) we may begin to displace the inviolability of our predication,

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124 This is a term I develop further in the next chapter with regard to liberal ideology, or the ‘realist’ mode of subjectivation of a statist ontology, drawn from the work of Foucault.

125 I would hasten to add here this modern subjective condition is not one of alienation, for alienation, in de Certeau’s thought, is itself a re-deployed religious figure co-opted into the modern progress narrative, as the disassociation of the fallen in the familiar triadic path: “past wholeness; present dispersion; anticipated reconciliation” (Markell, 2003, p. 49).
here by way of the Freudian tale of a germinal educational project vested into the
discursive topos of the launch of a new and surreptitious hermetic modern totality. As
noted, this is a modernity whose first gesture is to self-distinguish from any ‘before’ and thereby preserve the law (and its repression) of its ‘universal’ genesis, one properly rather of countless conjunctive entanglements, innumerable absences unmarked, of which education and ethics are but one. Bound in creating a ‘place of signification . . . where everyone can speak’ and exempted from producing history (for it takes on its own ineluctable momenta in the ceaseless dawn of modernity), these entanglements are expressive of a discursivity as a “gigantic machine” (Chaunu, as cited in de Certeau, 1988, p. 74) of intelligibilities, of prescriptive formalities (of the ‘real’ world, of ‘good’ behaviour, the proprieties of desire, modes of development, ‘styles’ of learning, varieties of intelligence, of personality, and on and on . . . ). By way of the specification of the formalities of the symbolic ‘real,’ this is the implicit identificatory power of a new and entirely symbolic cosmology; the refinement of a divided unification, of binding to ‘unlimited’ horizons.

In this analysis, we may see more thoroughly the new region of faith of what de Certeau (1986) calls a “self-occulting discourse” (p. 208), wherein the conjunction of ethics and education is at once (symbolically) extant and didactic. Unseating its prohibition (of the articulation of its discursive linkages) is a move of radicality that

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126 For de Certeau (1988), this modern privileging of the break with the “past” is partnered with the historiographical filling of lacunae in “maintaining, more or less metaphorically, an order of structure” (p. 12).

127 This of the prohibition (or effacing) of its prohibition, which is akin to Gadamer’s (2004) related prescience with respect to the “fundamental prejudice” of the Enlightenment, as “the prejudice against prejudice itself” (p. 273). In de Certeau’s (Freudian) method, such “resurfaces as the presupposition of the models that characterize a type of explanation” (p. 29, emphasis in original).
forbid and make possible. By it we may see that often the most darkening discourses are those whose object is light, and find anew the question of ethics and education in modernity, among the figures of its emplacement bound therein, so as to be able to turn anew to its expressions as ethics of education. The stakes of these inquiries begin and end with the very thought of education, with thought bound in modernity and then expressive of that binding, in order to finally be thought as truly educational, which, for Plato at least, is resident in “an unknown capacity for reason” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 7).

3.4 Conclusion: Toward Ethics From the Night of the Time of the Light

From the elements of the modern ethical founding outlined in the previous chapter, in this one we witness the comprehensive reconfiguration of an established discourse of worship and ideology within a new zealouness, one, in effect, beyond belief. Within modern consequences of subjective deracination, symbolic enclosure and the aprioritization of relatedness, and masked by a reciprocal silence “in matters concerning the meaning of [its] faith” (p. 186), this is indeed a tremendous, and ongoing, ethical accomplishment. The ethical task of education in modernity as such, prescribed by the ‘haunted itinerary’ of the tension of oscillating ontological fictions, is foremost the legitimation and maintenance of its predicates (relatedness, enclosure, objectivism, legalism, epistemism and so on), the movement of its desire away from its very immanency. What de Certeau singularly enables us to think is that the formal ethical topology of modernity, in which education plays its haunted part, ideologically presents and reproduces a universality, a ‘real.’ My thesis is that this requires the confrontation of a contesting universalism as a subjective matter; that only a comprehensive counter-
theorization of the subjective will suffice to contest this ethical settlement. For, alternately, any specifying difference in the objective edifice plays a co-opted part—in splitting reason from its other—in the dissimulative unification of moderate Enlightenment rationality.\textsuperscript{128} The autoimmunity of ideology is not to be underestimated here, as logos (the structures of intelligibility of the modern ethics project) prefigures the sole medium of its identification—the modern figures of realism and utopianism of the ontological oscillation of constructivism and transcendentalism.\textsuperscript{129} In the next chapters, I explore how this seemingly hermetic ethical impasse provides for its own conditions of possibility otherwise. I will do so to begin with in educational ethical thought, with ethical instances where utopian and realist figures reside, by naming their ethics and articulating their linkages to ontological authorities.

For it is my argument that only an ethical itinerary retrieved from the silences of existing ones will be ethically effective as an aspiration of the (displaced) radicality inherent to the Enlightenment. Resourcing in educational ethical thought the silence of the repression of the birth of the modern ethos itself, the absences arranged by its

\textsuperscript{128} de Certeau identifies one of the operations of Enlightenment rationalism as a ceaseless production of difference, in confirmation of its operative rectitude, rather than its putative aim (the movement of knowledge toward a reliable truth, the conceit of its science). Consequently, the \textit{particular} is operative as a \textit{limit to what may be thought} and this is why Badiou (2007) later refers to the “vain and horrible indifference of particularisms” (p. 80): for the premise of the particular (as a specificity already within the capture of a normative order) is already a capitulation to the universals which govern it (here a certain conception of reason, but also the now “global” assignations of capital, or even the democratic, or the liberal-parliamentarian…there seem to be no short supply of universals from which to “let concreteness shine through” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 37)). As I will later expand, it is among universals, their failures and lacunae, that the ethical must be re-thought. The challenge, especially for education, lies in the alignment of the universal and the subjective without recourse to romanticism or relativism; a worthy challenge to the extent that, de Beauvoir observed, “mediocrity is reserved for those who do not feel “responsible for the universe” as a whole” (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 143).

\textsuperscript{129} The notion of autoimmunity I borrow from Derrida (2003), which he borrows from immunology, to describe an “organism responds against its own . . . components” (David-West, 2009, p. 227), the concept here relevant to the ideological force of the modern ethical settlement, as an onto-symbolic installation that orchestrates its topos by way of the absences its figures obscure.
predicates—thought in concert with the reconstituted fragility of its historicity as an ‘event’—will provide a trajectory that this study bears forth within the disarticulation of the now prisable education and ethics, their new status as such, and thus otherwise.

Pursuing de Certeauian historiographical method has allowed for seeing modernity otherwise, seeing it as a ‘sight in a time without daylight,’ without the investments by which it repressively re-founds its ethical authorities. Here we join Freud: “What we take to be our night is offered to him . . . in total clarity” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 290).130 To have begun in the night of the time of the light, in the contingency of its denied founding, is to see how it depends upon shadows in which, as Gallant (1976) writes, “no one lurk[s]” (p. 707), but against which nonetheless “necessity . . . is what never ceases to be written” (Lacan as cited in de Certeau, 1988, p. 236). To this point I have contended with foundational necessities of the elements of the modern cosmological deliverance in order to now be able, within the terms of their consequences, begin to re-articulate them within the thought of one of its persistent products and effects: A modern thinking of education.

130 de Certeau (1989) calls Freud’s historical interventions as the replacement of “legend” with “edifice,” into which “it enters dancing” (p. 309). Fink (2011) describes Freud’s exemplary ‘theoretical fiction’ as such: “the more these terms become vulgarized, one might say, or taken up into parochial discourse, the more they are simplified at the same time. So the more these terms are absorbed into a discipline like psychology, the less content that remains in any of these terms. In order to assimilate a term like the unconscious you reduce it to something that it usually is not, or to its barest bones. We can see this if we just look at certain psychology journals that try to prove if Freud is right or wrong, for example, on the issue of whether dreams are wish fulfillment, or if there really is an unconscious. Of course, in the very presumption that the idea must be studied in this empirical way, they end up reducing the idea to something that it really is not, attempting to “prove” ideas that were never actual hypotheses of Freud in the first place. So I would say that lately there has been a spreading of Freudianism, which essentially takes away any power this discourse originally had.” For de Certeau (1986), the notion of a theoretical fiction, as the darkness within the glare of necessity, simply “brought back the sorcery in knowledge” (p. 8), a movement of return—please note—of what is already there.
Chapter 4 Modern Ethical Horizons in Education: Regime of a Tension

reality is precarious. And it is precisely to the extent that access to it is so precarious that the commandments which trace its path are so tyrannical. (Lacan, 1997, p. 30)

4.1 Introduction

For educators, the theme of the conjunction of education and ethics within a social project expresses a current within a greater flood, one I examine in this study as at base an ontological concern or impasse. The questions that I now pursue focus precisely on how the conjunction of ethics and education lives discursively within educational thought, in order to introduce how an ontological approach has ethical traction as the search for the ethical in educational thought.

For de Certeau, the modern condition is fundamentally one of a repressive linkage of reason and its other, whose enclosing ‘relatedness,’ installed as a symbolic matter, becomes the formal condition of modern ethical thought. As outlined previously, the formalities of this articulation are those of the ‘real’ these authorize, whose figures are realism and utopianism: Of a constructivist empiricity, on one hand, and a sort of idealist holism, on the other.

If one of the prevalent figures of modern ethical thought is that of realism, where may we see it expressed in educational thought as an ethical matter? Where does this affordance of modern ethical thought live in education, and to what effects? How is realism an ethical implication in educational ethics? What more can we learn about the modern ethic in which education is emplaced from the study of its ‘realist’ expressions, and how may education thereby provide a condition, or conditions, of ethicality, of
ethical genesis? To engage these questions, I discuss *phronesis*—especially as exemplified in the scholarship of Noel (1999) and Henderson and Kesson (2004)—in the capacity of a nuanced realist *arche*-authority in educational ethical thought. Sometimes called *practical wisdom*, this is what I hold to be a relevant example of an authoritative ethical discourse in education and educational thought, and, as I will show, it is one which relies on reciprocities characteristic of the conjunctive binding of modern ideology in its *realist* cast.\(^{131}\) The entrainment of phronesis to a sort of intuitive and spontaneous ‘reality’ as the basis for ethical practice in education quite literally invests into its work (constructivist) ontological presuppositions that perpetuate, in one foundational instance, the ethical impoverishment of education. This I discuss in its native scholarship, and then steeped in ontological concern, in the first half of this chapter.

In the second half of this chapter I locate the utopian pole of the modern ethical oscillation as the *alterity* of what Badiou calls the ethical ‘restoration’ of the ethical turn in recent years.\(^{132}\) This I consider in educational thought as exemplary in the work of Sharon Todd (2003, 2008), to work with a well-elaborated and argued instance. With the help of a Badiouian critique of its implication in a transcendental ontologics, I intend to show how the figure of the utopian in modern ethics of alterity or of the ‘Other’ partakes

\(^{131}\) As Badiou (2009a) puts this, and pursuant to the theme of oscillation established in the previous chapter, it is of the order of “the established regime of [a] tension” (p. 73), a more complex discursivity than given in instrumental logic, wherein a cause is antecedent and productive. In the modern ethos, the generative discursivity, as argued above, is at once presupposed and destinal: Both fact and promise, its movements demand exegetical attendance for, as Toscano (2010) puts it, “resistance must be approached negatively, through the distorting mirror of dominant ideology” (p. 91). Thus, speculative polemic becomes a condition for the truth it would avow or, as put by Deleuze (2006): “The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling: another sensibility” (p. 88).

\(^{132}\) To contextualize this, Toscano (2010) describes what Badiou is contesting in this characterization, and by which the ‘ethical turn’ gains much of its “pacifying plausibility” in the denunciation of the twentieth century as an age in which abstract principles led to concrete disasters, as the desire for total transformation translated into massacres on an untold scale. Founded on a neo-liberal evacuation of strong political convictions, the Restoration is at one and the same time “the euthanasia of political passions and the apotheosis of interest” (p. 26-27).
more of the modern ethical settlement that it may assume. In this instance, the modern
conservative ethical settlement develops an explicitly formal ethical rebirth (which I call
an idealism) upon the methodological presuppositions of a rationalist deliverance such
that it ultimately cannot fail to conform to the ‘socialized’ metaphysical legalism,
morality and their mode of knowledge (elaborated at some length here in chapters 2 and
3). Consistent with the paradoxical ethical status of modernity (of the founding of an
order in an element which it subjugates and represses in order to authorize itself), the
ethical impoverishment of education in this second instance of this chapter’s inquiry is
undertaken in the name of an ethical restoration.

In the context of this work as a whole, the effort in this chapter is to read the
ethical investments of modernity within educational ethical thought in order to develop
some new ethical conditions of possibility. To do this, I show how two ‘venues’ of
educational ethical thought—and their mutual co-extension—first may be seen to exist as
a matter of a historiography of modernity. Then I show how these venues underpin the
ethical compass of the work of education, or the means by which matters may be seen or
obscured as ethical by educators, as the activation of their ethicality toward new forms.
This is the broader purpose of this chapter: 1) to examine some contemporary authorities
of ethical thought in education in order to better incite their forms of authority; 2) to
better understand the genesis of conceptions of ethical subjectivity available to education
in modernity; and 3) to have a sufficiently elaborated theoretical edifice on which to base
an ethical alternative in educational thought.
I begin with phronesis, with the phronetic return of 'the thing' (an object of reflection) characteristic, in my argument, of a reactionary move at the (constructivist) core of the modern advent.

4.2 De-Heralding the Phronetic Return of the ‘Thing’

*Realism is a corruption of reality.* (Stevens, 1990, p. 195)

*it is all too easy to show that a broadly constructivist approach to language and reality remains the “almost universally accepted” doctrine.* (Hallward, 2003, p. 161)

4.2.1 Engaging the Phronetic Inheritance

An emphasis of Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) recent work has been on the encouragement and facilitation of “wise curriculum decision making in societies with democratic ideals” (p. 1). They see this to have been diverted in recent years, as “curriculum theorists [have come to] not sufficiently consider the practical consequences of their critical theories” (p. 8). This Henderson and Kesson seek to correct with the development of the “arts of inquiry” of “democratic curriculum leadership” (p. 41) for teacher, and teacher educator, professional development. Their work also seeks to help curriculum theorists who have not made “the pragmatic turn . . . [to] properly deliberate over the consequences of enacting their emancipatory ideas in specific educational contexts” (p. 8). This is a ‘turn’ they place within a Deweyan understanding of democracy as “a way of life” (p. 9), and recover a number of Greek concepts for their
purpose. This recovery of the constituents of the ‘love of wisdom’ points to the concern of this work with theirs. Their ‘arts of inquiry’ of curriculum wisdom takes the form of a ‘map’ of holographic thinking that consists of, and deploys, the concepts of theoria, poesis, techné, praxis, dialogos, polis and phronesis. It is the role of the last of these, as the image of thought in the inner circle of the holographic model they propose, which I seek to take up, one joined with dialogos and praxis at the centre of the ‘democratic education’ Henderson and Kesson advance. It is the basis of the democratic middle road I see Henderson and Kesson charting, to deliverance from the “somnambulism” (Marshall, 2004, p. v) of public schooling in the aging of its late-modern institution. This is their way between the scientific management of Tyler rationale (latterly in the conservative residuum of business, bible and behaviorism) and the reactive tendency within curriculum ‘reconceptualization’ of ostensible overcompensation within the proverbial theory/practice divide. With Aristotelian practical wisdom, Deweyan democratism, and a fidelity to the “everyday issues faced by practicing teachers” (p. xix), Henderson and Kesson’s pragmatism is a profound condition of possibility for ethical thought.

Heidegger observes that “Aristotle must be taken as the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of being with one another” (as cited in Hyde, 2004, p. xviii). Aristotelian ethics are given thus as “the construction of a “dwelling place”

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133 As Marshall (2004) observes, Henderson and Kesson’s project is to “coax institutionally-oriented (i.e. school-based) educators” into the post-reconceptualist curriculum conversation, which is to say also to bring it into what he calls “complex pragmatic contexts” (p. vi.).

134 Of the ‘pragmatic turn’ as such, Henderson and Kesson (2004) proceed from the (rather American) premise that most teachers are pragmatists; they throw in with them without reservation: “We are pragmatists to the core…” (p. xiv). Indeed, theirs is also a hermeneutic consequentialism: “we firmly believe that the ultimate meaning of ideas is located in the consequences of enacting those ideas” (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. xiv). As such, Aristotle suits very well the sort of democratic culture they espouse.
(ethos) for collaborative and moral deliberation” (p. xvii). At the intersection of the being of one who makes this place and the means by which to make it is the doctrine of phronesis. The ‘deliberating well’ of a “practical wisdom . . . apt to act” (Aristotle, 1998, p. 105), obtains in a sort of consensually good “nature,” one derived, according to Aristotle, “by examining to what kind of persons we in common language ascribe it” (p. 101). Thereafter, the ordering of “contingent matter” (p. 103) subject to the deliberations of practical wisdom may bring it into accord with “human good;” it “makes it right,” by which Aristotle adds, it “attains the true” (p. 108). Caputo (2003) observes that, in this is “pretty much the beginning of ethics,” adding that Aristotle observed, anticipating near-endless future difficulty and an amenability to ideological subterfuge in modernity, “that when it comes to ethics we are not to expect too much precision” (p. 169).

Noel (1999) helps fill out the picture of phronesis or practical wisdom in contemporary educational thought by outlining its varieties along threefold lines: a “rationality” interpretation; a “situational perception and insight” interpretation; and a “moral character” interpretation (p. 275). The first primarily concerns the form of reasoning at issue in a sensitive attunement to the distinctive particularity of educational situations, the second concerns the play of generals and particulars in the discernment of what is at stake and what needs to be done in a given educational situation, and the third is concerned with the moral virtue required by a practitioner of phronesis—the phronimo. In a diversity of approaches, phronesis expresses the desire in education to engage with situations with due care and attention beyond both technical rationality and scholastic ethics. Anticipating phenomenology, phronesis has modes of rationality, intersubjective

135 This in contradistinction to sophia, sometimes translated as theoretical wisdom.
modalities and subjective moralisms. Phronesis thus names the broad attempt in education toward a kind of responsible engagement with educational particularity, an engagement that purports to muster subjective resources to deepen and enrich a responsive educational practice. You see it animating the work of tactful and reflective educators, those who work at their craft as if it were the artifice of a formal production, who respect and prize the lessons of experience in the application of a sort of ethical trial and error, as well as theorists like Henderson and Kesson (2004), who worry about the diversion of curricular theory into abstraction. As a species of realism, phronesis conveys the scientism of modernity into a humanist field and this is what I seek to examine as an ethical destination in educational thought.

For my purposes, phronesis, or the phronetic ethic, serves as well to underline predicated (or presupposed) similarities inherent to what I have been calling the modern settlement of the ‘conservative’ or ideological Enlightenment, its conceptual realism and thence, most profoundly—and mutably—its constructivist ontologies. As a means of what Foucault calls the ‘responsibilization’ to realism, phronesis expresses and promotes the ethical nexus by which, as we have seen, de Certeau figures education and

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136 Founded in what Caputo calls “the reversal of the relation of principle to situation” (as cited in Wyschogrod & McKenny, 2003, p. 9), phronesis since Aristotle has emphasized the phenomenality of “sensation” against “rationalist bias:” “…no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of sense: sensation is necessary for and subserves the interest of thought” (Wyschogrod, 2003, p. 59). The phenomenological elaboration of such ethical predication is a modern development of phronetic ontological predicates, characteristically in a naturalist dialectic between “principles and cases” (Caputo as cited in Wyschogrod & McKenny, 2003, p. 9).

137 Burchell has used Foucault’s term with potent resonance in thinking the liberal project, one useful also for thinking the connection of liberalization and ethical alterity: ‘responsibilization’ here refer to “the ways that forms of liberalism seek to integrate individuals into the practices of their own government…liberalism, particularly in its modern versions, constructs a relationship between government and the governed that increasingly depends upon ways in which individuals are required to assume the status of being the subject of their lives, upon which they fashion themselves as certain kinds of subjects, upon the ways in which they practice their freedom” (as cited in Coffey, 2003, p. 224). This is subjectivity as the choice to not only conform but also to administer (as a kind of pedagogy of sociality), the order of power to which it belongs.
ethics conjoined, or ontologically bound (in that they share the same ‘world,’ and its presupposed implicated orders of being) in modernity. I wish to consider how this bond installs the implicit ‘realistic’ *metaphysics* of immediacy, exclusive *legality* (the result of the government of that which phronesis would surmount, i.e. in that it succeeds something more odious, and thus remains circumscribed by the law of its inverse) and indeed its frequently overt *moralism*. Further I am interested in how phronesis edifies a grounding, and accumulative, knowledge, of *ethics itself*. For, in my argument, phronesis would thus remain thereby participant among the consequences of modernity’s symbolic displacement (which we have seen in the foregoing as the displacement of the Real as the ‘real’), its subjective destitution, symbolic enclosure and the retroaction of relation. These I consider here briefly from Noel’s overview. More comprehensively however I am concerned with phronesis in the work of Henderson and Kesson (2004), for whom phronesis is a sort of ethical hermeneutic for educators—one falling roughly among the latter two varieties identified by Noel (the intersubjective and the moral)—which generatively brings together its themes and lacunae.¹³⁸ Their work is especially attentive to educators’ concerns (as opposed to Noel’s, which is more perhaps among those of philosophers’ of education) and, as such, may offer a clearer window into the enactment of phronetic ideals.

My argument is that the neo-Aristotelian corrective to perceived theoretical excesses of curriculum theory, and its basis as aspiration to a democratic ontologics (a plural reality grounded in the ‘love of wisdom’), is immanently undermined to

¹³⁸ Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) theorization of phronesis draws on a diversity of thinkers, especially including Coulter and Wiens (2002), Garrison (1997), McCutcheon (1999) and, more broadly, Dewey (1916, 1934) and Arendt (via Greene (1988)).
To demonstrate how, I follow in this section how the amenability of the phronetic remit has recently been fundamentally challenged on two main grounds. First, it is undermined in regard to its putative subject, that being the privileged developmental subject of experience’s accumulative wisdom (the reward of a sort of right conduct and disposition), what we may call the enriched subject of wisdom. Second, phronetic praxis as ethical authority is dislocated with regard to its ontological constitution, that is, and drawing especially upon the work of Badiou (2005b, 2008a) in what has come to be thought of a situation (a sphere of action) in representation, from which to derive and effect tactful phronetic judgments. In the sections that follow, I address these grounds in turn to help better understand phronetic ethics in education. I articulate them increasingly in terms of their ontological predicates in order to then confront the modern ontology of their forms as the matter of the security which binds them—which I call the implicate anathema of anti-Platonism. These explications and confrontation I enact foremost in order to create new conditions in ethical possibility from phronetic onto-ethical predicates, and also, in concert with my engagement with alterity of the chapter’s second half, to denature the broader ethical settlement of which they both are a part.

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139 A characteristic example of this is Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) Socrates, whose “love of pragmatic wisdom” (p. xii) they evoke to guide their work in curriculum affairs. In my submission, this is to misread the significance of the figure of Socrates. For upon him, so late in life, was not forced the fatal choice because he “loved wisdom” but because he insisted to the last upon the immanent undoing of this sophistical profession. This is what made Socrates the enemy of the state: That he managed to make the ‘love’ of ‘wisdom’ anathematic immediacy. Bartlett (2011) adduces this point thoroughly: Socrates was “convicted of being as nothing to education” as a “failure to be ‘sophistic’” (p. 33) where sophism is precisely here what reduces love to the dimensions of the known (‘wisdom’). Thus, the Socratic position is actually one of “being present to sophistry but not itself sophistic” (p. 30). The intimacy is easily misconstrued, thence ‘unanticipated ethical effect.’
4.2.2 The Phronetic Subject

Henderson and Kesson (2004) elaborate phronesis as a modern ethical disposition, indeed, for them, it is a “stage in the development in the process of application and understanding of democratic decision making” (p. 185), which teachers may assume in practice of the ‘love of wisdom.’ The phronetic subject is also thus an index of “cultural maturity” (p. 199), and the “more robust phronesis” (p. 56) of modernity—a sort of holographic representation of a ‘diverse’ or ‘plural’ democratic virtue—presupposes the ontological sociality on which its democratic morality is founded. Indirect, in my submission, in its ethical significance, its cant is proverbial: “We are social beings, and intelligence is a social characteristic . . . we construct ourselves in relation to others and we grow in self-understanding as we reflect upon our relationships with others” (p. 57). In this section I look more closely at the subject of phronesis by contextualizing it ontologically, by contesting its (unavowed, resisted, sublimated) ontological predication as of the conservative ideological settlement discussed in previous chapters. As an inadvertent articulation of subjective destitution, the phronetic subject is a sophistical condition of ethical possibility in education.

In my thesis, phronesis presupposes and maintains a sufficiently self-transparent subject to retain and cultivate his or her discernment, or ‘modes of inquiry’ (p. 200). This foremost so as to preserve the accord of virtue and deliberation; to retain, in other words, the pride of place of experience as a form of democratic capital, or that by which sociality may be enacted. Here the phronetic educator retains an affinity with modernity's statist deliberation discussed in previous chapters (of the state as the subject of practice), and its juridical and administrative—destitute—subject (see also Brown, 2005; Cheah, 2010).
The (democratic) institution is here ‘the one who speaks’ in the voice of the phronetic subject. My claim is that phronesis, in educational praxis, is this voice.

One is certainly impelled to ask if every subject is equally exposed to the ‘real’ of phronesis, if indeed its intersubjective agora expresses first the elitism of the consensual essences of Aristotelian morality; if, in the distributions and allocations of what Bourdieu (1986) calls various (social, economic, cultural) types of capital, phronesis is the guise of a privileged consensus. We may assume the answer is that not all subjects are so equally endowed, and that different backgrounds and emplacements in ‘social space’ endow cultural and social capital asymmetrically, that structural predicates prescribe phronetic conditions and thence contribute to the fatalistic exile from ‘the ethical’ in its phronetic instance (this in the indices of its implication that some societies, communities, and cultures are less mature than others, and that democracy’s less vaunted instance is as an elitist pedagogy of the ‘free’). Even more important in my view, because of its indexical authority of a (modern democratic) ‘real,’ phronesis may be of concern as an instrumentality of symbolic control. To engage productively with this contentious claim, I articulate phronetic ethics ontologically.

The phronetic ‘subjective’ regime is consistent with the modern repressive conceit in as much as it is a chimerical enforcement of ethical norms, of those of a putatively more subtle and sensitive (intersubjective) world, to which the phronimo is subject. This is not the heart of the ontological concern with phronesis; it is rather its sophistic deferral, in that it broadly implies that social adjustments will correct ‘imbalances’ of what is presupposed to tend toward ‘communal’ equilibrium (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 57), to which phronetic reconciliations are both response and symptom (of democracy’s
organicism, its ostensible tendency toward self correction). More relevant to considering phronesis as effective of the modern ethical settlement is its dependence on identification, its predication in recognition, and especially its constitutive reliance on what Lacan calls the Imaginary. It is through this avenue of analysis that I believe a fuller picture of the subjective implications of phronesis may be approached in articulating how the ‘social beings’ of phronesis defeat subjective possibility in its name. This is the argument I wish to bring to the fore here.

For Lacan, “all relations to concrete objects in reality are filtered through the Imaginary” (Chiesa, 2007, p. 211) and via its agency are granted a sort of potential for epistemic commensurability with their fictive ‘real,’ or the ideological conceit on which their completion relies. Crucially however, one can see that the Imaginary is also the “alienating identification” of a privileged image, a “metaphysical mirage” of sorts, and, as such, is a compensation for presupposed, or originary, helplessness—this of the divestiture from the Real of the signified, from the ‘final’ reality of the world (empirical or otherwise, inasmuch as we are always dealing with symbolically mediated reality). The Imaginary thus deforms its subject by at once legitimating its totality (of the finite screen of its projected ‘world’) and concealing its deceptiveness, its projective genesis and operations (and here one surely cannot mistake resonance with the de Certeauian historiographical genuses of modernity itself). The concern that thinking the Lacanian Imaginary donates to thinking phronetic subjectivity is that phronesis implicates its projective and illusory constitution on the authority of its continuities, or those of identification: Its reflexive (cognitive), narrative (experiential) and social (democratic) validities. In these, phronesis is a circular wager on its own status as comprehensible,
which it vests into “problem definitions and solutions” such that the “democratic frame of mind” (p. 57) may engage and ameliorate them (or render them properly comprehensible, or legitimate in a democratic sense). This phronetic investiture thus requires a certain sorcery, which Henderson and Kesson (2004) avow when they describe phronesis as having a mysterious “intuitive dimension,” one broadly responsive to human “needs, desires and interests” (p. 56). Indeed, they cite Dewey’s archly Aristotelian recourse to “affective intuition” underwriting all inquiry, guided by “a distinct feeling for the quality of a situation” (p. 56) as exemplary of phronesis.

While there should be no doubt that the “embodied judgment” (Coulter & Wiens, 2002, p. 15) of phronesis is an attempt to overcome more unsavory and insensitive alternatives, and indeed also more ‘abstracted’ ones as well, we should also note its perfect fit with a constructivist humanism characteristic of modernity, to the realist pretension of its role in the modern conjunctive ethical oscillation. The authority of an Imaginary world is here a subjective dispossession as a matter of the intuition and embodiment of social ontology. Positing explicit subjective destitution (failure of culture to attain the image of the democratic ideal) is to thereafter discipline its image of thought to it, as ‘self-construction’ (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 57) in the image of the social ideal. As such, phronesis is a vector of the ‘advance’ of a sort of ‘soft,’ or ‘softer’ rationality (indeed of an ostensibly subjective one), one subject to an exilic obscurity of the far side of the mythic thought/feeling divide. As a species of realism, in this aspect phronesis shares the ligaments (its immediacy, its deferral) of the binding of education and ethics in the social project of modernity.
In Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) language of phronesis, it is not difficult to locate obvious markers of a constructivist association. Constructivism I describe here as the movement along the invisible continuity of the modern deliverance of its methodological ontology, the image of progress in ordinal succession, an inexorable movement toward.\textsuperscript{140} Discussed in previous chapters as a mode of modern ethical probity, this is an institutional—to use de Certeau’s word—ethical (and subjective) destitution in that it effects a constriction within operations it presupposes. Germene here is that, for Henderson and Kesson (2004), there appears a perfect fusion possible of a constructivist predication, one among the intersubjective process of surmounting dualisms (or dispensing antagonism) and the production of functional citizens of democracy (phronetic subjectivity being hospitable both to a wise teacher and a good citizen-student). Unsurprising perhaps given what we have seen in de Certeau of the ‘formalities’ of modernity, their language remains that of (socialized) religion: Dualisms are promised ‘reintegration’ within the democratic co-construction of a third, or ‘intersubjective,’ world, of ‘intuitive’ de-socialized, psychologized (and then re-socialized) indices, markers of the imagined immediacy of the idealistic good of conceptual realism (it is ‘right there,’ because it has to be, because the totality in which it is inscribed allows ‘it’ nowhere else to be—such is always the bivalent ultimatum of realism, here a moral matter). Typical of constructivist correlation of thought and world,

\textsuperscript{140} The modern ontology whose character, elements and consequences are explored in chapters 2 and 3 is essentially constructivist, founded on a step beyond, a movement foreword.
this is the alignment of the mask of an abstraction, of the ‘concrete’ good, with that of a thought, or concept, of the ‘affective.’

I argue that this ontological operation—of the idealism of ontological realism—is expressive less of a (phronetic) truth than the deployment of its implication (as the truth of the ‘real’) in defense of a consensus. This is one where intuition and imagination reign ironically, less as the promised deliverance-from, than apologies-for the odious artifices of abstraction. Ostensibly a way to encounter complexity with attentive subtlety, phronesis here relies on problematic ontological conceits, ones effective of the civil religion of modernity, of its statist realism. The realism of its putative sphere, or ‘world,’ pacifies the subjective remit by way of an implicit social didactics, whose parallel is what Toscano (2010) calls liberal social pedagogy, or the conversion of “unmanageable political rage into docile . . . desire” (p. 42). One need not imagine the rage to imagine phronetic realism as subjectively docile, prescriptive of denuded modalities of desire, cautious emplacements of anxiously ‘good’ practice, and careful habits of thought. Under the muscular sign of the democratic good, subjectivity is associated with imaginative sensitivity, intuitive attentiveness, and the careful fostering of a modest rationality, the ostensibly subjective grounding of phronesis partakes of precisely the forbidding of unbinding (from the guarantee of the apparent object) on which the modern conjunctive settlement relies (see Section 3.2). From there, by perhaps its most challenging concept—de Certeau's ‘inverse of normativity’—we may glimpse the phronetic aspiration as the arrangement of absences (of the infinite remit of the subject,

\[141\] I take the view that dualisms ‘overcome’ become new ones, among the dualism and the agent of their overcoming. I prefer to ‘read for symptoms’ which Badiou advises Pascal invented, whereby the dualism is no longer party to a simplistic dialectics, but rather to a subtractive one, which reads its efficacy as symptomatic of something else and explores subtractively (rather than imposes additively) that connection.
of the radical incompleteness of knowledge, even the abyss of reason and the contingency of thought) characteristic of the neurosis of the modern sublimation, of its disavowed riven status. Further, the subjective binding of phronesis may be seen to be typical of the haunted emplacement I describe of the modern ethical itinerary of education—as the withdrawing self-guarantee of [its] own presupposition (see Section 3.3). The unbinding of the phronetic world and its subject is prohibited by the spectre of presumed alternatives: Of the odious government of what Pendlebury (1990) calls the “unreality” of “free-floating fantasy” of abstraction, which for Noel (1999), belying an oppressive phronetic naturalism, is simply “artificial” (p. 286) (the ‘real’ being the imaginary object of the world, in whose governance the subject is deposed). Henderson and Kesson (2004) tie their resistance to such apparent Platonic excesses to the remediation of a psychology of the dysfunction of democratic citizenship (p. 58), and thereby effect the completion of the installation of the phronetic aversion (to ‘ungrounded’ theoria) to within practice (beyond the artifice). As an article of faith in it, ‘practice’ is where irresponsible ‘theory’ is unwelcome, a democratic therapeutics to whose success is held the status of the subject. In this articulation of the pietistic ontologization of phronetic discernment we may see that nothing governs more than the threat of being governed more, and that phronetic freedom is an ideological response, a symbolic identification, to what Foucault calls the “blackmail of the Enlightenment” (as cited in Villa, 1996, p. 174), and Zupančič (2000) ethical ‘terror’ (p. 236).

142 For Foucault, the ‘blackmail of the Enlightenment’ consists in “the insistence that one take a stand ‘for’ or ‘against’ bourgeois democracy, enlightenment rationality, and so forth, before delivering the specifics of one’s critique” (as cited in Villa, 1996, p. 174), which is precisely what underwrites phronetic ethics in Henderson and Kesson (2004), as the “democratic psychological disposition” to which phronesis is bound as modern ethics.
The promised phronetic subjective reintegration (of ‘having known’ the right thing to do) is thwarted at the level of ontology from the outset. Tellingly, the dualistic nemesis of abstraction returns, like the haunted repressed, in the very terms Henderson and Kesson (2004) use to outline the phronetic obligation. Despite the overcoming of the subject/object divide promised by phronetic ethical commitment, they apparently cannot help but advise that educators “have a moral obligation to observe these children and the classroom dynamics carefully and objectively” (p. 58, emphasis added). The subject remains in a compact with its object (the ‘world’ on which the powers of phronetic recognition are realized). As what they call a “democratic psychological disposition” (p. 57), this subject is indeed the ‘ethical’ simulacrum of its object. Rendered attuned and more aware in compounded relation with a world and its superstructural intersubjective supra-reality (where the mythic ‘good’ of wisdom, against abundant evidence to the contrary, is hoped to reside) the phronetic subject takes the form of ideological deception. In ontological terms, it is important to articulate how.

Modern phronetic subjectivity, as evidenced in Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) guide to teachers’ ‘curricular wisdom,’ imagines intelligence as a “social characteristic” (p. 57). It appears in their work as the moral category of a democratic tactics of sifting among relevant and less relevant viewpoints worthy of inclusion in a social world, one led thereby by the ‘modest’ phronetic supplement. This is the phronetic commitment of

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143 Zupančič (2000) regards terror, in the strict sense of the term, as founded upon a logic she describes thus: “terror occurs when one takes the effect that the event (or the ‘encounter with the Real’) has upon the subject for one’s immediate objective, believing that in producing this effect one will also produce the event itself, the Real” (p. 236). The production of the ‘real’ of phronetic identification follows the logic of terror as such, as the (psychological) effect of the democratic ontological imperative (of the unity of an ontological multiplicity), which is thus an exemplary superegoic instance of modern symbolic enclosure (see Section 3.1.2). For Zupančič, and here as phronetic ethics, terror is what ‘catches us by the throat’ in the snares of a “‘simulacrum’ of ethics.”
what McCutcheon (1999) calls in education “knowledge constructors,” who co-create something called “socially constructed knowledge,” which becomes vested thereby with the ontological authority of modernity. The intuitively available spontaneities of this production resonate in the reassuring moral harmony of the Aristotelian ‘many’—democratic postulate par excellence—that populates modern constructivist ontology as that to which the phronimo is subject. Deliverance from the terror of the ‘One’ via the obtuse and proliferative ‘dimensions’ of a progressive consensus, phronetic subjectivity is an ontological conscript of a social project, as well as avatar of its ideal. As the subjection of knowledge to its apparently mutual process, this phronetic attunement—rational, intersubjective and moral—is effective of the ‘perfect grip’ of the atomistic constructivist faith of modernity.  

It is the subordination to the ontological ‘great chain of being’ that extends (but never fails) infinitely, it is the constructivist ontological method predicated. While bestowing the seal of freedom (from simpler tyrannies), phronetic sophistication variously undermines this grant by acceding, from the first, to implicit symbolic enclosure and correlative relatedness, and the profound a-subjective reciprocities of sophistical intersubjective gnosis (of a ‘common’ knowledge, or its processes). In Noel (1999), one may also find underwriting all forms of phronesis tacit reciprocities among reason and situation, knowledge and experience, and then knowledge and moral character. Knowledge is the agent, and the subject's sacrifice to it is requisite in the enforcement of a ‘real,’ or—and here is the disavowed, or ideological, deception—

the authoritative fiction thereof. As I elaborate in Lacan’s debt further in the next

144 In Badiouian terms, constructivist ontologies prosecute the reign of representation over presentation, whose “perfect grip” in the most fundamental terms “leaves everything as it is” (Hallward, 2003, p. 159) and submits the new (whether the student, the political, the amorous, the scientific or the artistic) to the proof of its method, of “a case according to the law” (p. 160).
chapter, in my argument this constitutes a subjective ambit massively and profoundly shackled, bound in the obscurity of too many abstracted ‘immediacies’ and the univocal plurality of a Brigadoonesque ‘reality.’ Subjectivity, here phronetic, is bound by the *implicate infinite* it defers (as the social, as ‘incomplete’ knowledge, as obscure process of which it is part, indeed of subjective ‘presence’ as wisdom, tact, reflection etc.). It is deferred to an infinite implication, presumed result of a process, which in turn renders its procedures retroactively correct. An idealistic circuit, it is the ideal which authorizes its operations. An instance of modern ontology in both guises, phronesis projects an ideal in order to secure its projection. To this *implicate infinite* phronetic incompletion is delegated, rather than assumed—more radically and ethically productive—as its own immanent disruption, as the unconscious within the mercurial phronetic conceit.  

The reciprocal alignment of knowledge and the good of a socialized logic of reality is a familiar motif by now, it is the touchstone of modernity wherein the human assumes the cosmological duties of the divine, but what is compelling to finally note here is the degree to which phronesis in educational thought thereby prescribes a profoundly confused notion of subjectivity. This is one of subjectivity of obedience first to the threat of the failure of the social order, but whose very law-abidingness (in becoming of the

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145 Further to this point, in the first instance, this is to say that in the modern (constructivist) ontology of what Badiou (2008a) regards as an implicit ordinal succession—of the “explicit operation” of movement along a continuum, “fixed once and for all” (p. 90) by way of its “ordinal ramification”—an “inductive mastery” obtains in the realm of the concept, one which retains it in equivalence with its object(s). This equivalence, characteristic of the modern sublimation of the previous chapter with de Certeau, “avoids all mentioning of the All…freeing it from the paradoxes of inconsistency” (p. 90). In the second, we find in a notion of immanence a universal condition—“the universal is only that which is in immanent exception” (Hallward, 2003, p. 122)—whose “anguished confusion” (p. 126) forever enstates the risk of “disastrous distortions” of “spontaneous” (as in constructivist phronesis) and “dogmatic” (as in transcendental alterity—see the second half of this chapter) criteria of truth (p. 130). Neither continuity nor disruption is “pure” in this ontologies, both a betrayal of their immanent infinite constitution and its necessarily “blind recognition” (Badiou, 2005b, p. 387).
many, in becoming to knowledge and the rationalities with which it is acquainted) makes its prospect as subjectivity troublingly more ‘knowable’ as it becomes less ‘thinkable.’ As such, we may consider phronetic subjectivity foremost an emblem of its order—see Badiou (2011) on the desubjectivizing ubiquity likewise of the ‘Democratic Emblem.’ The phronetic ‘subject’ is in this sense a priest (of the concept of the ‘real’ world, of ‘reality’) assuming the mien of a democrat (activating the paradoxical freedom of its image within a purely formal prescription), an ideologue playing the part of free-thinker, a conservative imagining themselves a ‘liberal.’ Predictably, given the foregoing considerations of the ideological realist conceit of modernity, such subjects enforce their terms—about knowledge, reflexivity, the ‘world’—in contiguous presuppositions, as what Žižek (1989) calls “real acts” (p. 245). I want to consider the enforcement of such presupposition now—as the instantiation of ‘worlds’ by way of their formal logics in educational ethics—with regard to the second phronetic reduction or prejudice, that of situation, or ‘world.’

4.2.3 The Phronetic World

If subject and object are retained in the idealistic obscurity of phronetic re-integrative deliverance (a symbolic conformity to an ontological procedure elevated to the status of subjective virtue), and the subject—co-constructor of knowledge, enforcer of

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Of a “strictly symbolic nature,” a “real act” for Žižek (1989), “consists in the very mode in which we structure the world, our perception of it, in advance, in order to make our intervention in it possible” (p. 245). Like my thematisation of modernity itself, such a “previous restructuring of our symbolic universe” is “of a strictly formal nature; it is a purely formal ‘conversion’ transforming reality into something perceived, assumed as a result of our activity” (p. 247). As promised at the outset, repeatedly thus I draw my reader to the material otherworldliness of my field of concern, with an eye ultimately less to its ‘proof’ or verification (for such, with Fink viz Freud in a previous footnote, may, in this domain be something of a fool’s errand) than to its ethical promise.
overcoming of dualisms, priest (martyr, saint?) of the democratic good—is statist (to-identification, to-deliberation, to-discernment), what of the object of phronesis? What is the situation, the ‘sphere of action,’ whose qualities are presumed available to the Deweyan feeling for moral inquiry and ‘imaginative’ phronetic intervention? Must it be doomed to the modest conceits of recognition, and particularistic passivity beyond? Does its resignation as the exile of a lack of alternatives, and from the lost reassurances of self-identity, only exacerbate and redouble the perversely self-reflexive phronetic impulse such that its horizons constrict in the isomorphy of their institution? Why is the world of phronesis reduced to a “problem” (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 58), for which phronesis provides “solutions” (p. 58). The Real problem of phronesis, and the condition by which to think its ethics further, is that phronesis presumes a necessary world by which to orient rationality, to stage imagination and to shore up the virtue to ‘advance’ its progress; it presumes a world its virtuous agent’s social nature already ‘knows,’ one whose difference—“unexpected” or “unforeseeable” (Van Manen as cited in Noel, 1999, p. 287) yet always “concrete”—is admitted, and tamed thereby: A difference already known, already coopted methodologically within the status of belief. The phronetic world is one we may believe in, and this is its naiveté, its ethical chauvinism.

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147 In preparation for the next chapter's theme, I mark in passing Badiou’s (2005b) conception of discernment, as “founded upon the capacity to judge (to speak of properties), and classification is founded upon the capacity to link judgments together (to speak of parts). Knowledge is realized as an encyclopaedia. An encyclopaedia must be understood here as a summation of judgments under a common determinant” (p. 328). For Badiou it is the assumed common determinant that is newly in question in late modernity.

148 As a ‘mode of living’ in excess of a ‘form of government,’ for Dewey, democracy subsists as a feeling for inquiry and intervention he calls the perception of “the full import” (as cited in Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 57) of human activity. It is this feeling of fullness beneath Deweyan democracy to which I refer here.
To help understand this apparent auto-restrictive element in phronesis, in this section I consider its situatedness as an ontological matter, as of an *intensive* ontological investment or predication. Broadly speaking, this refers to ontological constitution—or how something, or collection of things becomes ‘real’—pursuant to *the qualities of its elements*. My argument advances such ontologies as ethically problematic inasmuch as they always requisition an external index by which to organize, hierarchize, their elements—they *transcend themselves*, either implicitly (as in constructive ontologies) or explicitly (as in transcendental). Intensive ontology is ontology of identity, and this is its inherent and profound limitation, indeed it is an ethical betrayal of sorts. Its logic is analogical deduction rather than apagogical (negative inference) or aleatory (a matter of chance): Intensive reality is *like* what is ‘real,’ the good is what is deduced provisionally from its declared or constructed instance. A founding matter is presupposed upon what I discussed in the previous chapters as constitutive incompleteness. In this section I begin to develop the *extensive* alternative by seating phronetic presumptions upon the extensive situational inherencies of the *null set* or *immanent infinity*, to ontologically estrange phronesis at the level of its implication of situation. Theorizing phronetic representation as an ontological commitment allows us to return to phronesis with new purchase within the modern ethical settlement, by which, I contend, it may be thought otherwise.

Badiou's concept of situation is helpful to this end, for it stands in instructive contrast to that presupposed by phronesis, which he would argue is borne of the prevalent
‘pre-Cantorian’ ontological consensus.\textsuperscript{149} What I think is striking, and in this section bring to the fore, about the contrast among the two views of the phronetic world is the juxtaposition of its circularity, its self-blindness duty to see, on the one hand, and the ‘post-Cantorian’ logical openness, on the other, of a simple refusal to submit to what I call the ‘conceptualism’ of phronetic ethics (Badiou calls this refusal the logic of the "No, but . . . :") ‘No, it does not adequately name its object, but it is not simply ‘wrong,’ in that it remains unavailable to correction merely by a new instance of the same authority’).

This is not a refusal of ‘appropriate’ knowledge per se, but rather of the ethical pretences (of the assumed ‘real’ implicated, assumed and effected) within which knowledge is emplaced in the modern settlement, and which phronesis expresses as an ethical authority in educational thought.

Situation for Badiou is not an imaginary instance to be calibrated to an accessible image (so as to be remediated) by some elusive combination of rationality, imagination and virtue. It is rather foremost and irrevocably an ontological ‘One,’ given in thought by a more general and prior notion of ‘presentation.’ Situation is not intensive, not to be thought in terms of the qualities of its elements—a determination which forever promotes discrimination in the more odious sense, as judgments are founded on prevailing, and

\textsuperscript{149} This is a reference to the permission implicitly accorded to linguistic totality as a sort of projective screen of reality. For Badiou, “Cantor's work stands . . . as the philosophical event of our time” in that it confirms, by “radical invention” a latency (matheme of Lacan’s famous “passion for the Real”) by which the last century was “secretly governed:” That “every situation . . . is essentially infinite” and “because these infinities cannot coherently be collected together in a single Unity, the consequences of Cantor's theory confirm the essential point, that ‘God is really dead’” (Hallward, 2003, p. 9, emphasis in original). The implication of this demonstration is, perhaps first in epistemological modernity, that knowledge (whose being is the unities of identification) is constitutively failing, and that this deliasion is of the order of “truth [which] is the undoing, or defection, of the object of which it is the truth” (p. 53). Cantor liberates thought from the conceits of its reconciliations with its objects in order to posit truth otherwise, which Badiou takes up under the rubric of ‘the Event,’ a complex and immanent subjective condition and axiomatic avowal.
exclusive, regimes of identification, that is, as they express conformity to situational transcendental where their ‘reality’ is concerned. Situation does not consist in the vague sum of attributes appended thereto (for example: I am not all you take me for, all my story of me identifies; religion is not creed, spirit and community etc.; nation is not demographics plus history; school is not socialization plus individuation and so on…the disassociation of formal excess—symbolic failure—is definitive rather than substantial identification—imaginary success). Following Cantor, for Badiou situation is to be thought as more quantitatively rigorous: It is to be figured instead as combinatorial and extensive, with ‘belonging’ as its sole operator (by which a single addition or subtraction utterly alters the whole); situation is not a determinate of inherency, is not ‘intensive’ in his parlance, it is not an identity. In other words, situation is not, and could not be, constructed, or constructible, it is neither aggregated ‘quality’ nor temporalized succession of unities. Because of this, and alarmingly at first, situation must be thought (for Badiou’s is a thesis about discourse) ontologically and quantitatively undecidable. As such, situation may only be figured in the materiality (or that by which the symbolic fails at comprehensiveness) of the waning of its identifiable particulars (like those derived from Henderson and Kesson’s work (2004) on phronesis)—elements, 

150 Exacerbated in late modernity as the ‘Passion for the Real’ (a phrase borrowed from Lacan), whose purificatory zeal is the ‘proliferation of semblances,’ Badiou (2007a) names as typical of situational transcendental predicative concepts like race, nation, earth, blood, soil, money, family, elections, love, and science. For him these express the impossibility of subjective novelty (for more on which, see S. 5.2.2) by way of predication (situational transcendental of intensive ontologies), of a ‘new Man’ founded in the hostile nihilism of lost origins.

151 One can note here the parallel of the constructivist ontological investiture here, among situation and subject (where the latter may similarly be thought intensively, either as amalgam of attributes—in the asceticism of the “beautiful soul” in moral or character education (see Zupančič (2000))—or their temporalization, as in IB curricula or the personalization of the new BC Education Plan).

152 As belonging (the ontological operator of situatedness) “cannot be the result of having an identity, of possessing any particular property,” situation invariably “exceeds the predicates of encyclopaedic knowledge” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 154) and is thus qualitatively undecidable.
abstractions that comprise it as an authoritative fiction of the ‘real.’ Situation becomes available to thought, in Badiou’s thesis, by way of the founding exclusion of the null set\textsuperscript{153}—the inclusion of which constructivism, as predicate of the continuities of sense, bars. This is the root on which constructivist ethics like phronesis must trip, and then deny in order to remain authoritative in the modern fashion, which is to say, facilitative of the advances of progress and conscience. In this argument, the incompatibility of the divergent ontological predicates (of intensive and extensive discourses of situation) both unseats phronetic authority and releases its suppressed ethicality (as immanent ethical conditions—see chapter 6).

Phronesis in the intensive reading of situation—as ontologically re-presentative—is statist\textsuperscript{154} in that it presumes (or enacts the presumption of integrity by omitting the anti-constructivist caveat of the void, or the inherent zero) that the excluded may be included; that, with the right measures of rational care, imaginative acuity and moral attunement (Noel), the right application of democratic proceduralism (Henderson & Kesson), situations may be sufficiently ‘known,’ commanded, brought to the service of the subject. What the phronetic presumption elides is that such inclusion (of incompleteness, or void, or the null set, indeed of the possibility of the utter transformation of the addition of a new element, thought of which extensive ontology permits) must be considered already accomplished, that it already is and that, as such, it is inherent within everything that would thereafter comprehensively include (become wise, just, prudent, masterfully pedagogical etc.). The axiomatics of an infinite (or extensive) concept of situation, its

\textsuperscript{153} From set theory, this is a way to figure the constitutive incompletion that Badiou argues Cantor establishes as incontrovertible in thinking being.
\textsuperscript{154} Here state is ontological, or prior to the historiographical statism of the previous chapter, by which a civil index is appended to being.
‘school of decision,’ is foreclosed by the constructivism of quixotic idealisms like phronesis. Ontological idealisms, here of a phronetic ‘real,’ do violence to the infinite axiomatics of the Real of any situation by way of the anterior presumption to force a holistic inclusion on what can never thus belong, or on what belongs by being impossibly (unrecognizably) exceptional, voided, indeed—in the terms of the situation itself—undecidable (Badiou calls this a situation’s ‘generic extension,’ or the truth by which it comes to be, and is transformed). This argument underscores why onto-logic—of ‘undecidability’—is a necessary supplement to the inherent pedagogics of constructivism: In how it unseats the apparent authority of the constructivist juggernaut within phronetic implication and (its intensive) ‘beyond.’155 The ‘irredeemable excess’ of situations, in Badiou’s terms, makes phronetic logic neurotic, riven by its already being sundered, altered, and dissembled by the situation its deliberative judgment would seek to (ostensibly more humanely) master. A mastery in the name of the human is, I would submit, ultimately more duplicitous than what it would purport to surpass, by virtue of the indentured moral self-assignation it avers, its vector as what Lacan calls ‘university discourse.’156 As we have seen, of course the category of the ‘human’ has been for this purpose from the first (see Douzinas, 2013).

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155 The contention of ethical promise flows from ontological universality as Hallward (2003) derives it from Badiou: “Only ontology—since it proceeds without any reference to what is situated—can claim to present a general theory of situations as such” (p. 93), its starting point, is to be “beneath the distinction of the real and the possible” (p. 57), and thus a thinking which expressly confronts the myriad ideological conceits of the ‘real’ which is the project here.

156 From Kovacevic (2007), the key points of difference among discourses obtain in the move from a sovereign figure of tyrannical power in the master’s discourse, to one disseminated in the more sophisticated structures of control and surveillance of the “ritualized seduction by knowledge” (p. 128) in the university discourse. Where formerly serving the master involved physical bondage—which importantly did not eliminate “the horizon of rebellion” (p. 130)—the university discourse requires much more in the further disciplining of the mind: “The old master cared only “that it worked,” whereas those who extol university discourse in contemporary circumstances want not only the results, but also the love of those who work for them…they want their subjects to worship the beauty of their servitude.” (p. 130)
Articulating the formal duplicity of the intensive ontologics of phronesis helps to understand the Janus-face of humanism, its dual service of the ‘humane’ (as in phronesis) and horror (as the persistent ‘human’ effort to *include* the ‘good’ as a perverse exclusion, as the inhuman quality that finally, ‘really’ makes us human). The constructivist disposition is predicated upon a methodological modernity, or what would ‘include’ that which, by so doing, conforms to, and reinforces, the indices of inclusion. This is in contrast to its obverse: Of that which, more modestly—and extensively, or *quantitatively* without predicate—may only be thought in the more ethical formulation of a rationality of quantitative ‘belonging’ rather than qualitative ‘inclusion.’ This subtle difference, one upon which everything hinges, we must maintain even though, and especially because, *what additionally belongs* is properly and ethically always *nothing*. This is the implication of extensive ontologics on which every foot must trip.\(^\text{157}\) By virtue of this voided, and voiding, implication, provisional reconciliations with contingency such as the phronetic concept of situation outright deny contingency (inasmuch as it is un-founded, or founded on nothing), and indeed also the generative status we must accord it in founding a concept of subjectivity, if indeed an ethics of the subject is our aspiration. Intensive and representational, the stakes of the ontologically statist world presumed by phronesis are no less, and by its assumption *educators may unwittingly become representation’s representatives*, conditions of *impossibility* of the subject in education.

In the Badiouian ontological challenge to a substantial (ideal) concept of situation—that by which phronesis is vested in ‘realism’—the ‘realization’ of the extra-symbolic, the presumption to include or identify on intensive, or qualitative, grounds, is

\(^{157}\) “Only the nothing is not suspect, because the nothing does not lay claim to any real” (Badiou, 2007a, p. 54).
at once a *vain indifference* and a *universal horror*. Indifference here is to the intrications of symbolic efficacy and mutability (of the bases of thinking change), and horror is the consequence of its denial of its status as such, its stupefying reduction and neglect. The latter is no hyperbole, for the flattening of the contingent gap between situation and its representation, the inadmissibility of undecidable presentation, permits signification's metonymy to creep imperceptibly from familiarity to monstrosity—the dread spectre of abstraction itself here in sheep’s (phronetic) clothing—as ethical grounds fail to provide the security increasingly delegated to them, as ‘good’ slides into ‘evil.’ This is a charge startling perhaps to a view which accedes to the phronetic presumption, but that is the point here: To find ways to unseat a specifically modern complex of ethical authority for the sake of its natal inherencies, for the sake of an ethics suited to the comprehensiveness of the term. Here this is expressly to call something unbelievable forth from the totalizing weakness of ontological holisms, especially, as in the case of phronesis, in educational ethical thought.

Having examined the constructivist implication of ethical situation or world by way of the Badiouian provocation to it, it is further important to attend to the means of its persistence. To do so, I consider next what is putatively being overcome in the ontologically statist and constructivist—and latterly social-democratic—prejudices of phronesis. To consider the ethical drama in which it plays a part as instance, expression or authority, is, as we have seen, to consider its formalities—the forms of its thought—and how these are sustained, how they may further a deceptive enforcement secreted within benignity. For, tautologically perhaps, the constructivism authorizing phronesis is first a construction of itself, of its own Imaginary projections, rejections and anxieties.
Its lack—the void, failure of its assumed totality, or totalizability—proscribes a dumb affixture to invariably sundered objects in the ‘naïve realism’ of one pole of the conventional modern settlement, as introduced at the end of the previous chapter. To identify those elements by which its constructivism is sustained is also to denature phronesis, to recover its contingency, and to rehabilitate its impulse to justice toward new ethical aspirations.

4.2.4 Phronetic Security Confronted: The Implicate Anathema

\[\text{the security of the anticipated guarantee is always already there.}\]

\((\text{Zupančič, 2000, p. 203})\)

I have considered so far in this chapter phronetic ethics in terms of its subject and its situation, and I turn now to its modern ontological anchorage and historiographical purchase in order to begin to ‘realize’ it otherwise within the modern ethical settlement, to develop it on an alternate, and extensive, basis within that settlement’s articulation. The contention to which I devote this section is that phronesis partakes of the constructivist ontology of modern realism on account of a legitimating antipathy, that is, it derives authority by virtue of being better than something else—as a move beyond (so entirely characteristic of the implicate constructivist promise) a less acceptable, or putatively ethical, condition. A figure of conscience and progress, I want to argue here that what phronesis overcomes is primarily a version of Platonism. This is a problem in that we are unavoidably governed ethically in the image of what we assume to have
overcome. The *implicate anathema* of Platonism comes into view as an apparently irresponsible ethical idealism (the ornamental *subjectivism* of the subject), and as a projective monological rationalism which eclipses the plurality of the phenomenal world. These are instances of the conservative ‘reason’ that phronetic rationality both presupposes and enacts. Typical of modern ideology, and intimately characteristic of its constructivist ontology, phronetic reason first supersedes what it ‘knows’ or assumes, it further rejects what it is able to identify, or ‘knows’ to be wanting, corrupted—it is founded, in other words, in the retention of what it is posited to overcome. This circularity (of a method and that which it remediates) I wish to examine as a *dislocation*, whereby to think ethics in education is to owe a debt to phronesis from the Real (obstacle to symbolic completion) which phronesis instantiates, or the discursive ways its own ‘subjects’ and ‘worlds’ provoke its own generative dissolution. It is not we who fail our ethical ideals, but they who fail us. Viewing phronesis askance, as a sort of incidental condition of ethical possibility, is to look toward the means by which it provides ethical security, as to see how it binds is to render it less binding. In my argument, it is in the *obliquity* of ethical investments like constructivist phronesis that ethical discourse begins.

Like so much critical thought, phronesis is first a *positionality* proscribed by its intellectual objects and rivals. Henderson and Kesson (2004) identify its anathema as “the dualistic nature of nature and knowledge . . . articulated most forcefully by Plato” which finds its current expression “in the separation of theory and practice” (p. 56). This presumed distinction (of nature and knowledge) arrogates to phronesis the function of that which reintegrates the life-world by dispatching its alienating abstract prejudices with superior conceptual (and extra-conceptual) instruments. These are ones attuned to a
‘real’ imagined as a more mature construction, and provide also the educational amenability of phronesis as a more august—read here ontological and not merely the vogue of the psychological—form of developmentalism. The phronetic reintegration of nature and knowledge—the naturalization of knowledge and the conceptualization of nature (both of which obtain formally in the symbolization as being of the ‘real’)—is characteristically set in the moral affirmation of an intuitive accord. Reintegration of this entirely ontological sort accords not because it is sui generis, not because it somehow magically a priori is true or real as hope would prescribe, but rather, less prosaically, because it accords with the right sense, or intuition, of the ‘real;’ in phronetic ethics this is intimation of integrative virtue, a responsive, tolerant rationality and the existence of an intersubjective medium. This is the constructivist ‘circuit’ itself: Of a condition (world and subject) that accords with conceptual instruments ever better fitted to them. The accord that ‘reintegrates’ ‘Platonically’ estranged nature and knowledge succeeds because it equilibrates with the ‘concrete’ it presupposes, it presupposes conditions that it cannot but calibrate to its indices of the ‘real,’ simply because it posits them as extant, substantial, ‘counted’ within a given situation. Characteristic of the eschatology of conventional modern reason, phronesis is the affirmation of what it

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158 Henderson and Kesson (2004) develop the “intuitive dimension” of phronesis as “the cultivation of responsiveness to people’s needs, desires and interests” (p. 56). Such intuitive accord is with the resonances of interiority, in the fiction of a shared consciousness (as if consciousness were, from the start, a commensurable medium rather than the split indicated by its etymology, con-sciencia being knowing with or as two). This is a modern invention as well, or one of its more romantic investments in self-overcoming, and one productive of the presumed consensus which allows politics to devolve into accounting (i.e. that, commensurability secured, politics becomes merely a matter of counting votes, as ethics, in parallel, is merely a matter of applying rules). This is the de-politicising agency of moral affirmation.

159 This usage conflates Badiou’s ontological lexicon (presentation of the ‘existent’ consisting in that which ‘counts’ as ‘One’ within a situation) and the famous aphorism (misattributed to Einstein) emblematic of qualitative dogma of certain progressive educational thought: “Not everything that can be counted counts. Not everything that counts can be counted” (Cameron, 1963, p. 13).
presumes. Its intuitive spontaneity, its troubling ‘obviousness,’ is entirely consistent here with the re-integrative promise characteristic of what Badiou (2005b) calls the ‘poetic path’ of ‘western’ thought:

It is clear then that there are two paths, two orientations, commanding the whole destiny of Western thought. The one, referring to nature in its original Greek sense, receives in poetry appearing as the emerging presence of being. The other, referring to the idea in its Platonic sense, subjects the lack, the subtraction of all presence, to the matheme, and thus separates being from appearance, essence from existence. (p. 125)

The Heideggerian, and we may add phronetic, recovery or corrective of the apparently un-thought ‘Platonic’ allows us to think a schism, or ontological impasse, with Badiou. In his schematization is pitted, in one orientation, a figure of presence, as an “initial openness, the evidence of things, prior to any kind of human ordering and mastery of the given” against, on the other, the Platonic absence, or void, “the lack, the subtraction of all presence” of the pure multiple (Hewson, 2010, pp. 149-150), which is also to say, of infinite immanency. Crucially here the former comes to light, as the light of modern reason, in the positivistic assumption of immanence in the modern, methodological ethos: That this is the true world; modern naturalism’s ontological monstrosity, this is “an explicit operation, fixed and for all” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 90).

160 This is, it should be emphasized, characteristic of the theme of ‘symbolic identification,’ which Kovacevic’s (2007) describes as “vicarious sharing in . . . received mystery and power” (p. 74) and which relies on no resemblance whatsoever. Psychoanalytic theory here, I think, supplements a mathematical—that is, founded on the succession of ordinal numbers—understanding of the intractability of constructivist ontology.
However, devolved from an intimation perhaps of the second ‘destiny’ Badiou identifies, presence may be thought to be ‘lacking,’ incomplete, riven, in-excess-of-itself. This suggests to Heidegger, and also the ‘intuitive’ phronimo in my argument, that being is veiled in its enframing, that it appears in its own concealment. This is to suggest that it is the apparent Platonic conceit (of abstraction-from) that reveals the obscurity of the phenomenal truth of the presence of being. The inherent exile, or that of its positivization, of this immediacy gives over phrnetic ‘being’ to the liberation of ‘tragic’ analytics of finitude, to the fatal conceit that what is given is what (mysteriously veiled by inevitable abstraction) is—and to distillation within a poetics which ‘expresses’ the repressed secret within the ‘particularizing’ profits of meaning. This is tantamount, in my argument, to no liberation at all, but is rather the further circumscription of intensive specification, the further legislation of subject and world by a constructive model (the abstraction that, suspicious of itself, guarantees itself in the inverse). Positivistic phronetic rationality’s convocation is thus the remediation of an aestheticized consensus of globalized difference as itself ‘real,’ as the proverbial ‘meaning of life.’ This is the promised reunion, the chimerical guarantee of its “horizontal structure” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 72), I posit at the (ultimately poetic) base of constructivist phronesis: Formally, it is itself the itinerary of deliverance of an entirely modern faith. As such, phronesis is governed by the analytics of finitude of an ontology of inversion, one proscribed by a ‘transcendentalizing’ reduction to the dimensions of presumed objects (intensive ontologics’ legitimacy), and too the deferred ‘limit’ of their paradoxical ‘infinity’ (or that to which, in them, it never reaches: The infinite as implicate but never attained, not denumerable but implied by unending succession, of intensive qualitative plurality). This
is why I call phronesis a ‘conceptual realism’: It invokes a poetics of the ‘real’ within an intuitive scheme of ontological abstraction; it is one however whose impasses instead are those of actual, or Real, ethical import.

From a Badiouian view, only by way of the anti-Platonic conceit, by way of ontological reduction to a sort of poetic exile of the truth of the immediate, phenomenal, world, could the worried faith of phronesis subsist.\(^1\) It is predicated on the narrative of tragic exile that it seeks to correct (always a suspicious story, as ‘solutions,’ this one conceptual and ontological, remain invested in the conditions for which they are conceived to remediate). By virtue of operations such as phronetic discernment, critiques of the excesses of past oppressions in educational institution may habitually mislead themselves in perpetuating older falsifications deposed within new guises of meaningfulness, in re-installing a finite world, but one ‘better’ calibrated to the newly received ‘good’ a constructivist ethic is forever productive of. In my view, such ‘impassioned’—for passion is the current vogue of the ‘real’ in the modern idiom of educational ethics—credentials ring increasingly as hollow as the faith they express, though they indeed seduce with the promise of a destination attained, an itinerary confirmed, a virtue accomplished. The machinic instrumentalism of scientific management is not so removed from various new humanisms (among which I number phronesis) as these may suppose, as these latter ‘fall for’ their (constructed) objects no less, in a sort of ethico-ontological rapture, or the possession of constructive ontology—one which ‘is grasped by’ to the precise extent to which it ‘grasps’ its world. Thereby,

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\(^1\) Indeed, for Badiou, anti-Platonism assumes many forms in the contemporary philosophical inheritance; these he identifies as “the vitalist (Nietzsche, Bergson, Deleuze), the analytic (Russell, Wittgenstein, Carnap), the Marxist, the existentialist (Kierkegaard, Sartre), the Heideggerian, and that of the ‘political philosophers’ (Arendt and Popper)” (as cited in Bartlett, 2011, p. 14-15).
such humanisms no less sacrifice critical, speculative and ethical potency for the siren’s song of a reassurance, to the neurotic modern reassurance that a guarantee yet remains, that a veiled ‘good,’ hopefully imputed in phronetic ethics, is what it purports to be. Something more, or better perhaps, something radically other—an ethics dislodged from the ostensibly modest phronetic confidence—is called for, one to be numbered among the ethical aspirations of education, but thought otherwise, thought within an infinite remit, and decisively not merely implicative of one, as if infinity were a quality like any other.

As a modern ideological efficacy, and a disciplinarity engendered thereby since the ‘replacement’ of religion with reason, the implicit figure of the guarantee in my argument is the most persistent binding of education and ethics in the constructivist ontological universe of modernity. It is thus the ultimate phronetic ‘value’ to education in ethical terms because it is that—as authoritative ethical condition, as ethical correction—within which the universe may stripped of the honorific of ‘reality’ in the axiomatics of the Real, made ethical, rather than merely known as such. The constructivist guarantee, of a methodological ‘God that does not lie,’ is not merely an ideological mask to be stripped off by the ethical educator in search of the ostensibly ‘more’ real ‘real.’ This would be premature, presumptuous and fated. It would also elide the complexity of the condition I put forth—of what phronesis actually satisfies, rather than how it may apparently err, for example—one I wish to draw out of an analytic of modernity as the linkage of an implicate oscillation, an intimately ethical articulation

162 Chiesa (2007) is exceptionally clear on this point: “By securing the Other’s (potentially deceiving) discourse to “something that does not deceive,” we move from the plane of the mere feint—at which the psychotic is stuck—to that of fictions.” (p. 112). The Other here of course being knowledge, the objective profit of the modern rationalist settlement, to the paragraph’s point such a fiction is not the opposite of truth, but rather provide its very structure, or that of its symbolic mediation.
wherein each element specifies the other, rather so much as subsist in itself. This linkage is the key to the modern ethical anemia in my argument; it is what allows, more than respective independent ideological investments, their persistence as the repressive modern cosmological horizon of ethics. This is important to bear in mind as I explore the poles of the ethical oscillation (among the realism of constructivist phronesis and the utopianism of transcendental alterity): To hold in view how, as formal constituents of the modern ethos, their mutual articulation reinforces and presupposes each other, how they specify and sustain each other. This I contend is central to thinking ethics in the educational milieu of modernity otherwise: That its ideology—(relational) symbolic production, metaphysical dispensation, legalistic moralism—is that of a binding forged in the fires of the modern advent itself, is of the inherent and ineradicable nature of modernity. This is to say that a co-articulated ontological linkage is more than a matter of shared progenitors for, as developed from the last chapter onward, they exist together (related as each other’s implicate other) in contemporary ethical discourse in education. Facilitated by shared modern ethical conditions, a certain image of ‘reason’ and of ‘religion’ operate interchangeably as each other’s foil and straw man, here in realist and utopian forms of ethical rectitude in education: Of (phronetic) ‘reason’ and ‘the ethical good’ (of alterity) respectively. This thesis is becoming important here as I move to the second area of ethical concern of this chapter. For the twin absence of the modern ethical oscillation, the companion integrity of modern ethics is a common failure that prescribes modernity as a tension, one whose casualty is the subject.

If in education the realist pole of phronesis conforms to and expresses the constructivist ontology of a conservative and ostensibly secular rationalism, the utopian
effects a reach to a higher plane in modern ontology. The *transcendental orientation of thought of being* I turn to now as the remedial stance (as specified in the logic of the oscillation) to the constructivist (whose own remedial humanism we have seen expressed in phronesis). In the ‘ethical turn’ of late modernity, ethical authority is, instead of the (veiled, processural, intuited) reality of the apparent world (reunion of subject and situation), rather its *alterity*. This is an ethical authority whose master signifier or licensing sign, like the objective ‘practicality’ of the intersubjective sphere of action or ‘world’ for phronesis, is the *concept* of the ‘other.’ In considering ethics of alterity as a way to study the modern counterpunctuality of realism and utopianism, of constructivism and transcendentalism, indeed of phronesis and alterity, we may begin to see that the *figure* of separation—of exile from an authoritative other—can, especially within the modern ethical enclosure, be that which binds most closely.

4.3 The Ethics of the ‘Ethical Turn’

*The inner light always gives a manifest answer to whomever consults it.*

(Weil as cited in Bensaïd, 2011, p. 41)

*The conquerors of the world . . . they bring education.* (Rimbaud)

The work of Todd (2003, 2008) that this study takes up she describes as “a philosophical investigation into the ethical possibilities of education” (2003, p. 1). As a way to philosophically underpin social justice education, or education as social justice, Todd seeks to articulate an ethics which will cement that bond, which will make of
education that which will “ameliorate social harm wrought through inequitable practices and structures” (p. 1). Turning to the work of Levinas, to the image of responsibility it projects from engagement with the horrors of the Holocaust, Todd (2003) seeks to develop an ethics of nonviolence in education on the basis of “the Levinasian understanding of the Other as infinitely unknowable” (p. 3). Todd proposes this in response to the intimation that “education may not be an innocent purveyor of knowledge...[that it may be] caught up in the very practices of violence that it seeks to remedy” (p. 8). Thus, her re-establishment of ethics for education takes the form of the question of how to “problematize the triangulation of ethics through knowledge without giving up the capacity of education to be transformative as an ethical practice” (p. 8). In this difficulty, for Todd, ethics in education is received either as ‘a programmatic code’ or a theoretical ‘branch of philosophy,’ knowledge-forms to be remediated by a problematizing alterity, or the ‘re-framing’ of our attention in “reposing the ethical question otherwise,” from learning “about the Other” to learning “from the Other” (p. 9). The viability of the ethical authority and efficacy of this theoretical move is the concern of this work, along with its emplacement, or binding, within a broader movement of ethical forces in modernity.

Todd (2003) elaborates a vision of the ethical for education that takes for its aim a “more complex picture” (p. 13) than on offer in conceptualist realisms like phronesis, which, for her, advance the prejudices of “the imperium of consciousness” (p. 141), of making the world adequate to thought. Todd’s reply is to return ethics to “the magnitude of violently lived realities” by developing ethics as “a discourse for rethinking our relations to other people” (p. 1) in order for education to take up the responsibility for
social justice.\textsuperscript{163} Here I consider Todd’s ethical alternative in educational thought as its important ethical counter-current, its corrective’s correction in recent educational theory (inasmuch as it would remediate the turn of educational ethical reconceptualization toward phronetic rationalism, to confront and undermine the premises of its conceptual realism with the immediacies of a call to justice). This apparent dialectic in educational ethical thought I seek here also to better understand as part of the modern ethical ‘oscillation’—of the co-articulation of constructivist and transcendental ontologies—whose theorization I have been developing in this study. This both helps to more fully inform ethical thought in education with the generative problematics of the ethical formalisms of modernity, the stakes of which in my argument is the fate of the subject, its formal conditions of possibility in education.

In my view, Todd’s (2003) ethics typify an especially Levinasian variant of what has come to be known at the ‘ethical turn’\textsuperscript{164} in educational thought and beyond. I take it up here first in the form of a question: Does the ‘ethical turn’ also unwittingly recapitulate the displacement of subjective condition of ethics, or the place of the subject, in educational ethics? The question leads me to the following discussion of how it may be possible that an ethics which returns a careful subjective impetus to ethical thought

\textsuperscript{163} The realities to which Todd turns education’s ethical thought, in contrast to the democratic concern of Henderson and Kesson (2004), include “homelessness, poverty, sexism, racial injustice and genocide;” these are, for Todd (2003), “the reason why education need concern itself with ethics” (p. 1).

\textsuperscript{164} The “ethical turn” (Voloshin, 1998) in the humanities and social sciences—and also within the Reconceptualist movement (see Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, Taubman, 1995) in curricular thought—has in various ways sought to animate and widen the ethical remit of the educative project, to cast its horizons away from the inertias of the automatisms of scientific management and, more contemporary still, the globalizing neo-liberal imperatives of commercial-scale education in the industrialized world. Along with Todd (2003, 2008), a few of the more recent figures in this effort along conceptual lines broadly identifiable as those of the ‘ethical turn’ in educational thought include Biesta (2001, 2008, 2010); Chinnery (2001, 2009), Egéa-Kuehne (2001), Edgoose (1997, 2001).
may betray its subjective promise, and how this very betrayal may then become ethically productive in educational thought.

The first ethical article of Todd's (2003) move toward a new ethics is what she regards as the fore-fronting and vouchsafing of the question of ethics itself—unlike in phronesis which dictates a less explicitly ethical disposition (of discernment, of practice, of tact and attunement). For Todd, the ethical is also a sort of talisman for the Good, it is the ‘good;' in Learning from the Other (2003), for example, they are synonymous. This is an affiliation, as we have seen in de Certeau, of a particularly modern cast, one where virtue transmutes into sociality, of the good rhetorically a matter of being together. I would initially observe that ethics as such are moralistic and regulative from the start; it is implicitly immoral to be unethical. It is illustrative, and symptomatic, in my thesis that ethics itself is moralized from the first. The ethical thus is a matter of relatedness, of “finding the right kind of relations” (Todd, 2003, p. 11), as if relation will secure the good, and not the other way around (as implied in phronetic ethics, where democratic psychology will secure its ideals). In Todd's exposition, and resonant of the previous section's concern for the non-deceptive apriori within constructivist ontology (the world, the subject-self), ethics again partakes first of the figure of the guarantee. For all its decisive urgency to engage the problems of injustice, Todd’s is a guarantee of ‘hope,’ whose installation is of course the formalism of the hoped-for: To be “hopeful,” Todd writes, ethics must be “anchored” in the “tangibility of people's lives” (p. 1) such that

165 Here I note echoes of Section 3.1.3, on the ‘modernization’ of relations. As Peter Hallward (2003) puts it, in Aristotelian science we witness the “presupposition of the more fundamental unity of the faculty of relating itself” (p. 215), and in modernity this is dispatched to the unconscious (the presupposed totality) as made possible by the modern discovery of consciousness—such is the curse and gift of Descartes: That the modern production of reality, as an ethical instance, enjoins both its wholesale renovation and repression.
education may be re-thought, or *re-imagined*, ethically.\textsuperscript{166} The good is born in Todd from a sort of law, or legality (insomuch as this is validated as beyond question, immutable, or received as a sort of unassailable mandate, inviolable) in the figure of *difference*: The difference of radical alterity is an “ontological given” (p. 2) in Todd's ethics. Knowledge of it is a kind of anti-knowledge, or an inverse knowledge of the symbolization of what is *not* known. In service of this, ‘difference’ signifies what we find in the early Lacan (see Chiesa, 2007) as ‘Other of the other,’ the ineffable beyond of the founding object of rational knowledge, the ‘beyond’ of the identifiably beyond knowledge. The now-identifiable ethical predicate, this ‘infinitely unknowable’ for Todd is what *accounts for* difference.

In the shadow here cast by modern reason’s auto-generated ‘other,’ the ethical turn's assurances of ethicality via figures of otherness and difference must here too appear suspect.\textsuperscript{167} Despite the generous imaginings they spawn (in the moral reassurance of the ethicality of being), and the hopeful foreground they erect (against the sublimated narrative of violence and harm they background and are devoted to surmounting), appeals to an unknowable other (of difference) can seem to founder on their own un-avowed limits.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{166} Security haunts and directs Todd's (2003) discourse at every turn. It colours even her identification as ethical the Levinasian responsibility she proposes, in supposed “weakness” against the more hardy and reliable ethics of codes and principles (p. 141).

\textsuperscript{167} From the second chapter: The founding of a modern ethic relies in discursivity “in relation to an eliminated other” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 40), and further: “nature is what is other, while man stays the same”—finds the “social space [where] an ethics is developed,” in the “progressive unveiling” (p. 220) of a *model*. The other is already implicated in the project it is deployed to confront.

\textsuperscript{168} Scarry (2002) is helpful on what she regards as the problem of ethics’ of alterity’s ‘generous imagining.’ She argues that “…the problem with discussion of “the other” is that they characteristically emphasize generous imagining, and thus allow the fate of another person to be contingent on the generosity and wisdom of the imaginer . . . [giving] one group the power to regulate the welfare of another group” (p. 106).
It is my contention that, considered ontologically, the flight toward the infinite of an ethics that would secure themselves as moral, as Todd does within ideal instruments, always flees itself. Do we so surely know what this infinity is, this infinite of ‘the other’ we infer as a figure of the hopeful guarantee of difference, and that it would provide the reassuring ground of ethicality? Might it not best be considered otherwise before presupposing its concept moralistically (as that which subjects should be governed by and produced in alignment with) as the wellspring of the immutable and proper ethical medium? These questions, and the problem of the infinite on which they founder, I believe dog ethics such as Todd's.

To examine how Todd's ethics (2003) of alterity express certain ontological presuppositions, in a troublesome transcendence of both modern and traditional geneses, I want to consider how the relationality (this time of a transcendental, rather than constructivist, type) on which ethics of alterity relies permits vagaries, slipping significations, and obscurities, and to consider how they may cloud the ethical horizon they would be grounded for the purpose of clearing. I will consider such permissions via what I call three redemptive ‘implications’ of such ethics, three discursive, or formal, venues wherein they are authoritative, and redemptive by way of their implicit guarantees. These I advance as discourses of respect, tolerance and the self. I argue that these discourses are all to some extent both presupposed by and follow from, an ethics of alterity such as that proposed to educators by Todd. As such, Todd is unable to provide a way to not perpetuate their ethical finitude, their authoritarianism and indeed their religiosity. Of intensive transcendental onto-logics, respect, tolerance and the self all,
like Todd’s own transcendentalism (of an ineffable otherness native to ‘the Other’),\textsuperscript{169} perform an ideal circuit of specification, legitimation and confirmation, one that makes their ethics contiguous, all of Weil’s “inner light” (as cited in Bensaïd, 2011, p. 41), in an especially modern way. As such, the ethics of alterity come to assume the comprehensive appeal of a catechism whose symbolic function is the implicate guarantee of God, the social and knowledge respectively. With these transcendental efficacies—of an ethics of alterity such as that proposed to education by Todd—this part of the chapter is concerned.

4.3.1 Implication I: Respect (as Redemption of God)

In de Certeau’s historiography of modernity, the other is reason's detritus, the imperial outlier by which the modern rational conquest maintains its ceaseless production and consumption of difference. The respected other, in this caution, is first the conquered one. In the modern deliverance, there is no respect without first the conquest—the modern sublimating (ontological) operation is not dispatched by ignoring it. Rather, the inversion of the relation (for first we again see the figure of relation obtains) among reason and the figure of the other is not its overcoming but its continuance.\textsuperscript{170} In this, respect manifests as an auto-exonervative magnanimity made possible by the excision of the question of conquest (or power) from that of relation: We did not conquer you, this is not an ascendant order of a particular hierarchy, what matters instead is that we are to be

\textsuperscript{169} Todd (2003) writes that moral significance derives from the question of whether the “otherness of the Other” is supported by ethical relations (p. 15).

\textsuperscript{170} With distinct a de Certeauian resonance, Markell (2003) observes with regard to the Master-Slave relation in Hegel that the injustice of its contradiction between dependence and independence is “accommodated” by “spreading it out over social space” (p. 111). Respect is such an accommodation within the asymmetries of alterity.
thought related. Respect for the other partakes of this configuration of relationality while assuring itself that a measured balance—in education, for example, between pedagogy and coercion, liberation and confinement—can be found whereby the ‘right’ sort of relations are to be accomplished, and secured. I submit that this objective is the persistent ethnocentric idealism of a tutelary ethos, one which would permit the continuation of imagining (for imagining, or re-imagining are actions central to what Todd advises for teachers) an ideal of pure relationality. This is precisely what may said to be permitted by the symbolic enclosure de Certeau outlines as characteristic of modernity, as the implication, the placement within discourse, of a symbolic totality, here of the otherness of difference. Respect confirms this derisory utopia (of a world made pure by respect) as an ethical idealism. It is one whose smoothness of operation, is the condition for the suppression of thought—inasmuch as thought disarticulates, and a totality, a pure implication of a totalizing whole (like the symbolic integrity of ‘difference’), is, by definition, that which lies beyond disarticulation. Such binding to a surreptitious totality (it is, after all, figured as ‘unknowable’) is similarly refracted in Enlightenment psychology whereby, since the late-nineteenth century, the romantic idea of the imagination reproaches and/or supplements the 'associationism' of positivist empiricism (see Zaretsky, 2004, p. 20). The romance of imagining a more ethical world by way of a relation of respect with an (or any) other here suffers historicist and ontological blind spots, especially in its reliance on the linguistic fiction of a better, or more rightly imagined, world. These are the concerns of this discussion of an important

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171 Expressive of the “capacity for finitude” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 97), the holism of “nature” is in modernity product of the construction of the “total exercise” of the “existential guarantee of number” wherein is assured the—here ‘respected’—‘One’ and its deferred guarantor of an infinite beyond succession are together presupposed.
implication of ethics of alterity, and how these blind spots permit a sort of religious restoration (the redemption of God) in affinity with discourses of commercial capital and authoritarianism.

Respect in my argument connotes a certain sociality (in that it is of the social corpus, of its mode of proper functioning) continuous with that de Certeau locates at the heart of the modern project. In this function, respect is part of that secular religion which papers over the incompletion of the project to which it is beholden, cauterizes it with a received totality (recall that the modern advent was a balm of sorts, and that education is bound ethically therein to the continuance of this remedy). Respect in this instance disqualifies symptomatic truths of ethical founding, of contingency and inherent quantitative excess, and in their place puts ‘ethical’ substance and operation, as once more overtly was a mediating function of formal religion. As explicit religion however, one could, and can, challenge the gods to which one is subject, one could ‘steal their fire’ and induce their own non-self-coincidence, their own instability as condition for new thought, new subjectivities; in accordance with the mechanisms of respect implicated by ethics of alterity which valorize, essentialize and cauterize difference, one is no longer permitted to consider that the gods even exist—such finally is their precondition and guarantee. This precondition and guarantee is that the divine, the integrity of the

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172 Certainly the statutory ‘goal’ of the education system in British Columbia encodes this operation: “It is the goal of a democratic society to ensure that all its members receive an education that enables them to become literate, personally fulfilled and publicly useful, thereby increasing the strength and contributions to the health and stability of that society” (School Act, 1996). Society’s purpose is to educate for the increase of its own strength, health and stability. The metaphor is that of a homeostatic organism which promulgates, via education, its own wellbeing. To invert the metaphor, of course we find the implication that education conceived by any other goals is—aside from un-sanctioned by law—anathematic, is (social) weakness, sickness and tumult.
symbolic order that organizes the universe (one here reduced, of course, to social and human dimensions), is *already accomplished*. The fire—of the immanent instability, or non-self-coincidence, of order—is no longer ‘there’ to be stolen. It is extinguished in advance and replaced with the simulacral residual of an ethical procedure, with a process of social good under the sign of respect. The concern is that this is a species of ethical poverty, one that falls to educators where *thought of the other* is the inchoate ‘moral weight’ of the ‘ethical’ government of respect, and the destitution of subjective conditions of possibility.

Closer to local experience from such broader movements of the rationality of conquest and its logos, one can find respect implicated in perhaps more familiar arrangements of control. The idea here is that discourses of respect have fostered the issuance of reciprocal demands, ones implicit as the de-politicization of the asymmetries of unequal encounters. For hundreds of years, pre-dating—and preparing the way for—colonial administration, the discourses of commercial capital in what is now Western Canada (developed in similar excurses in the east) staged a theatre of power along strict disciplinary lines marked in their application by the signifier respect. As a disciplinary tactic, Harris (1997) notes that respect “rests on fear” (p. 45). In this instance as the support of the fur trade's emphases on management, order and property, respect is that by which the other—here the traditional modern other of the aboriginal—is “made to behave” (as cited in Harris, 1997, p. 49). Its anathema, it should be noted—as for de Certeau's reading of modern rationality—is violence. Respect is a means by which
subjugation is accomplished against the assumed threat of greater violence. In Canada's historical specificity, this emerges implicit in the myth of a less violent country, as instrument of the oligopolistic autocracy that fostered it, and the ideology of anglo-conformity that produces its norms (see Palmer, 2002). Respect, certainly in this part of the world, can be said to have had a lengthy agency in discourses of institutional control, where the figuration of the other is a means to commercial ends (at best) or simple conquest (more odiously perhaps). The transmutation of respect into a multicultural and institutional value—as is common in education where ‘respect’ appears as an ethical injunction on gym walls, over innumerable blackboards and school entrances—as a means to overcome its inherent disciplinarity (its command to submit) deploys the very master's tools in a blinkered hope they thereby may become somehow less the master's (now finally brought to the service of the ‘good,’ as dewy-eyed utopian ethical idealism

173 This is very prevalent in Todd (2003), where “thinking more carefully” about alterity (to which one is always already responsible) is repeatedly set against the spectre of violence and harm. Indeed, for Todd, the name ‘humanity’ itself is a “responsibility” that is “forged out of trauma and the ever present threat of violence” (p. 8). The equation becomes familiar, and forms a basis of the affinity of ethics of alterity's with the guilty liberal warning to respect (identity; discrete and corporate or ineffable and ontologically statist) or else (injustice & disorder!). The promises of recognition are mostly thereafter therapeutic, however, as Markell (2003) has shown as regards Jewish recognition and the Prussian state in the nineteenth century, such accommodation can depoliticise as prelude (in that case) to genocide. Similarly, as Marinucci (2011) and others—especially Foucault (1990) —have shown that the emergence of the (here ‘respected’) identity category itself (in their case of homosexuality) which permit oppression: “Regardless of its origins, the emergence of homosexuality as an identity category resulted in a contrast between heterosexual desire as normal or natural and homosexual desire as abnormal or unnatural” (Marinucci, 2011, p. 20, emphasis added).

174 As a frequent element of moral and character education, respect may be seen to be an exploitation of the education system for conservative ends of a ‘social’ good, it functions to cast “failures of social economic and political structures” as matters of “personal attitudes and behaviours of individuals” (Purpel, 1999, p. 83) and to move discussion “away from controversial realm of ideological dispute toward the safer and presumably more consensual realm of desirable personal traits” in order to “convert social and political issues into educational and pedagogical ones” (p. 83). Respect is here another way of ‘saying something to say something else’ by which de Certeau advised operates the ‘inverse of normativity’: It casts an ideological, political, and indeed ontological matter (inasmuch as we have seen the social to be ontological in modernity) as one about curriculum and instruction, about how schools ought to ‘make us good.’
would have it).\textsuperscript{175} The switch of the master’s tools for a civic benignity is accomplished by implicitly insisting that He (the great paternal unknowable) can be good after all, and that the other (his figure, as easily you of the me/you couplet as God) is redeemed thereby, restored to a hopeful condition (the redemption of God!) in which I participate via the enforcement of a creed of respect. In this regard, respect occasions piety that belies the ethical guarantee of alterity, in that respect formally knows the other it both commands and edifies, because it is respect that puts it in its place.

With final regard for respect, one need look no further for its implicate perversion, for its own vicious Janus-face—perhaps too well known to children subject to the complex ethical norm of respect—than in the instance of the rebarbative German noun which, in literal translation, is perhaps most familiar as an injunction: Achtung!

4.3.2 Implication II: Tolerance (as Redemption of Society)

Toward a more located consideration of their difficulties as an ethical animus or destination, a second implicate figure and mechanism of ethics of alterity that I want to consider here is tolerance. In contrast to the muscular conjunction of difference and relation in the case of respect, tolerance comes to appear as what Brown (2006) calls “nothing more than a simple and benign strategy of peaceful social cohabitation” (p. 77). Unlike respect, which readily assumes the aspect of an imperative, tolerance beguiles in apparent passivity, its laissez-faire pseudo-humility of a generous ‘value’: Rather than

\textsuperscript{175} One may recall here the Polish proverb that “Hope is the mother of the stupid” (as cited in Haven, 2008). More philosophically, Castoriadis (1991) regards ‘non-trivial’ hope as a “philosophical monstrosity” corresponding to “that central human wish and delusion that there be some essential correspondence, some consonance, some adequality, between our desires and decisions, on the one hand, and the world, the nature of being, on the other” (p. 102-103, emphasis in original). In the Greek inheritance of western modernity, for Castoriadis, hope is what makes cosmos of being, and installs the ethical predicate of an “assumption that being is ultimately good.”
determine the other for purposes of respect, tolerance invites an ostensible indetermination, as if difference itself were that to be tolerated without the other-producing norm, in whatever form it may take (thus would also come to appear the straw man of the reactionary constructivism of the other pole of the modern ethical oscillation: Relativism!). Tolerance is a sort of magnanimous incantation of the more aggressive demand for respect, one that befits politics of multiculturalism, whose cant presupposes a formalistic subjective legalism as welcoming to all. It arises however from an enforced relation to presumed difference. This is surely itself a determination: For it is surely conceivable that somehow in the scandalous equality of a voided condition we are justly, productively, truthfully (ontologically), the same. Such an implicate determination of tolerance (which I characterize as a utopian ethical idealism) activates its concept in surprising and powerful ways, ones not apparent by (structural) design, not visible, that is, by virtue of the correlative reductions of the moderate ethical settlement of modernity. Tolerance is effective, in other words, in formal ways at profound variance from how perhaps commonly assumed, and it is this internal variance which we may here resource for ethical purposes.

What then are educators perhaps unwittingly installing in avowing a tolerant politics, in espousing, typifying and fostering tolerant subjectivities, in conveying its ontologically transcendental prescription of difference via explicit or implicit pedagogical and curricular ethical commitments? How does the tolerance of this difference act in

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176 Here again Toscano’s (2010) study of the ways liberal order deploys a self-justifying idea of the fanatical is instructive, in that he clarifies the scandal to a liberal order of the search for expression of equality, wherein however “equality is a kind of anti-nature” (p. 33).
ways its proponents may not suspect? What shoals may its apparent depths conceal, and how are these more broadly implicated in the ethics of alterity in education?

I want to advance that tolerance is a figure of liberalism’s “deceptive Imperium” (Brown, 2006, p. 23) by which identitarian truth is institutionalized as the authoritative concept to live by (if respect is the symbolic redemption of God, tolerance is that of identity, and society in its collective image). It is so installed by way of the incorporation of the language of tolerance into the contemporary ethos of cultural pluralism. Identitarian truth is here evidenced as a categorical humanism, evolution of Lockean individualism, by which the ‘differences’ of a bio-powered zoo-politics (of a finite and determining bare catalogue of species-types of the human animal) are treated as exhaustive of subjectivity (p. 44). Individuation is the effectuation of difference, of a pre-given truth category. This is difference prefigured, of course, and thus managed as an element of a tactics of social control, inasmuch as the differences of tolerance precede their subjects—to which these latter may naught but conform as a condition of admission, of inclusion in the social body, a part of the symbolic code of its constitution, its unconscious constitution. To be included, we might say, one must be different, but, formally, in the same way. Differences, typically ethnic, racial, and sexual (though it matters little to discourses of tolerance), are thus essentialized as ‘practices and beliefs,’ as ostensibly a matter of a common apriori (in the ‘practice’ of a democratic polity) or privacy (in the ‘personal’ convictions of an apparently interior belief). Difference as such is both presupposed in discourses of tolerance and assigned to places of predetermined future politics.

177 Toscano (2010) identifies its anathema in a fanaticism “to be exorcised in order to move from an intransigent politics of conviction to a pluralist ethics of responsibility” (xxiii).
In Todd (2003) it is my contention that difference is ‘ontologized,’ is the “ontological given” (p. 2) of the ‘infinitely unknowable.’ What becomes of such an idealistic guarantee where discourses of tolerance are concerned? With what may it inadvertently align? My argument is that tolerance resources the authoritative figure of the other of difference (the obscure unknown other of the other) in two ways, and that ethics such as Todd’s not only offer us nothing to confront these reductions, they are complicit in them by virtue of the philosophical support they provide. First, discourses of tolerance implicate the subjective charge of a social management (the circumscription of the subjective as a social matter, as a matter of the social ‘good’) and, second, they supplant religion as social catechism, in the redeployment of their ‘spiritual’ elements within a discourse more duplicitous and circumspect—and thus more manipulative—and indeed ultimately more powerful.

In its managerial aspect, tolerance deploys difference in the statist function of managing the demands of the marginal “in ways that incorporate them without disturbing the hegemony of the norms that marginalize them” (Brown, 2006, p. 36). In this marginalization/incorporation, typical of the formal ascendancy of practice as social apriori, tolerance recapitulates the terms of subjectivity as subject-to a state power—of the ontological ‘what is’ (the ‘real’) of the ideological ‘here and now’ (its form as necessary, and total, which is also to say not also otherwise). This operative emplacement within a ‘social’ space (a world of selves and others) is one of either empirical positivity or an ideologically devoid (de-voided) criticality, such is the facility of identity, as indeed of intensive ontology. Thus the managerial function of tolerance prefigures and regulates the movements of difference within a remit of established
formality, one presumed thereby (as the liberal ethos whose recent security is tolerance). In the ‘tolerant’ establishment of identitarian truth, the subjective is also powerfully dilated, along with its circumscribed conditions of possibility. Subjectivity is disempowered in the tolerant ethos of transcendence, which is to say, by the government of ‘difference,’ the managerial consequence of the presumed split of the one from the other that Todd renders as ontological truth. Indeed, tolerance’s symbolic function is to imply that a juridical mechanism is already in place for this managerial function, and that subjects are already the beneficiaries of its benevolence, in its debt for the provision of (the myth of) a secure world of stately procedure.  

Bloch has clarified the statist emplacement of a tolerant alterity with acuity—and in the foreign language so common as the ethical—as

“a great instrumental organization for the control of the inessential,”

armed with a “purely administrative Esperanto,” and whose only

“justification . . . is the simplifying, frictionless functioning of its organizational method, placed in the middle of illogical life, its only, entirely instrumental logic, the logic of a state of emergency.” (as cited in Toscano, 2010, p. 89)

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178 This conservative deployment in the political ethics of otherness may be seen in what Toscano (2010) calls the “facile historicist thesis according to which liberalism simply and gradually grew in extension. . . . while retaining an intact original inspiration” (p. 2-3). Further receded perhaps, this Plato was the first to reject (and Aristotle later recuperate and essentialize) as the form of the implication of a third operator mysteriously ‘behind,’ or ‘accounting for,’ difference. The problem of the failure of self-identity Plato could not reconcile with a disimplicated third term (like the ‘other’). A panoply of sophistical reconciliations with otherness persist as what Brassier (2011) calls “resurgent irrationalism—phenomenological, vitalist, panpsychist” (p. 50). Its ‘cognophobia’ is a symptom characteristic of such ontologies that would forever seek first to secure the field which they would resource for ethicality, one ultimately as other than thought, ineffable, inaccessible, and yet somehow authoritative, non-duplicitous.
In this element of the ‘senseless’ social ontology of modernity, the ethical turn is reactive to the threat of the loss of civil order (and in this is indeed a thoroughly secular religion), which makes it capitulation to administrative formality un-resisted; it signifies a perpetual movement toward its own restoration of the obscure idealism of a self-evident ‘good’—one whose question tolerance assumes, that is, does not pursue: Its freedom is from and not for. In Todd’s ethics, the emergency is of course of the world and not of the logic of her response, but this analysis of discourses of tolerance evokes, in my view, their resonance, their philosophical co-implication. The good of discourses of tolerance is of the social vocation of education in modernity (outlined initially here with de Certeau), its only radicality are its pretence and its rhetoric (that a tolerant world is a different world, a world of ‘difference’), while its (transcendental) logic and (managerial) formalities are profoundly conservative. This is a schism, among the putative and the effective, entirely characteristic of the modernity that ethics of alterity would purport to cast at a remove, but in the repetition of its most fundamental gesture: To conceal an (absent) founding. This concealment is of the authority of the figure of difference (recall that in Todd it is asserted, its concept figured as wholly proper to its purpose)\textsuperscript{179} that, in the same gesture, becomes its own re-placement (substantialization) as mechanism of the production of the social good.

In its ostensibly spiritual aspect, tolerance assumes a different function than that of an administrative implication: It becomes personal. Tolerance convenes a privacy by which to interiorize subjectivity, it “necessitates that a constitutive element of our

\textsuperscript{179} This move typifies what Badiou (2005b) calls ‘idealinguistry’ (p. 47) whereby being is held as represented by a linguistic construct assumed adequate to the purpose, which he instead calls the mistaken adequation of thought and being through language.
Encounters with difference are to be staged within, in the increasingly regulated and specified domain of the self, as part of the diagnostic logics of moral self-development, of a broader demographic regulation of being a member of society for which one is thereby responsible. The responsibility of this emplacement is boundless, it is ultimately that of ‘civilization’ itself (which ironically is of course the very division, the ultimately intolerant antecedent, of exclusion). Tolerance is thus a superegoic imperative—it is the voice, the ‘birth through the ear,’ that specifies a subjective ‘world’ of conformity with the administrative sociality of Empire (for it is hardly honest at this juncture to not name this discursive—political, intellectual, moral, spiritual, educational—configuration when exploring the forms of contemporary ‘western’ ethical thought, in ‘traversing its fantasy’ which Lacan would claim as ethical act). In Todd’s ethics (2003), the intimacy of the self-other proximity is readily transferred to a personal relation, on the model of a ‘difference within’ by which is secured the ethical.

180 This apropos of Žižek’s (1989) explication of the “objective status of belief” in Lacan, the thesis that belief is “radically exterior” (p. 34-35), a product of practices which one thinks one does, but which rather specifies—via the integrity of their own status—what one is and believes. This figuration would incidentally help explain why the conundrum of the new is so perplexing for educators: If you ask how they can purport to believe in anything new when it, by definition, is nothing they can know, rather than admit they indeed do not, or can not, believe in it in truth, they are bedevilled instead by the unsettling intimation that ‘they’ themselves are not doing the believing in the first place. The problem of the new thus becomes a subjective condition by way of its objective failure: You know you cannot ‘already know’ it, and this incites subjective un-belief (in the discomfort of the question: Why do I believe I do?) as the ethical moment.

181 One can see the affinity of discourses of tolerance and respect here in the commonality of ethics of alterity, in that both begin intensively, with identity, and regulate (as ethics) as the consequence.

182 The Lacanian operation of the traversal of fantasy, connotative of the non-demystification of Lacanian ethics (the inaccessibility of fantasy to its absence except as re-inscription), posits the turning of ‘ideological symptom’ as the jouissance of hegemonic fundamental fantasies (of the ‘real’) into ‘nonpsychotic sinthome’ through a moment of separation from the Symbolic and thence its subsequent re-inscription (Chiesa, 2003, p. 189). An ethics of the traversal of fantasy takes the creation of new coordinates of reality as its aim.
Tolerance's spiritualized aspect combines with that of its statist managerialism in both suppressive and productive ways. In the first instance, what is suppressed is the deviance of what we may conceive as creative subjectivity, whose absolute condition (of impenetrable, indiscernible, otherness) is inadmissible on account of its failure to produce a credential of its relatedness, its failure to be something recognizable. The Manichean rhetorical scheme of tolerance purifies its first term (the tolerant entity) by producing the intolerable (or simply that which cannot be tolerated according to prevailing norms) in rendering juridical the question of difference: What is to be tolerated is to be adjudicated, and difference thereby managed, and desire turned toward acceptable (read: accountably known) purposes. Here a formal nihilism (of willing to the nothing of finite limits of social and spiritual identity, instead of such limits’ incoherent contingency), tolerance enacts an ontological commitment in that it is productive of a global Imperium, one of its ontological character, of its enforcement of a ‘real.’ In this key ontological aspect (which aligns the ‘global’ and the ‘universal’), as the statist secular faith of ethics of alterity, tolerance is its implication, one that “articulates the global moral superiority of the West and legitimates western violence toward the non-west” (p. 37). At once a technique for organizing and managing large populations, the discourse of tolerance is also one for deploying imperial power—as touchstone of the simple moral superiority of the “broker of the civilized” (p. 37), steward of the possessed inviolate of liberal freedom.

\[183\] This in as much as creativity at its most important and profound cannot but be revolutionary, cannot but transform the way knowledge, art, science, love, politics, subjectivity, and indeed change itself, are understood, in stark contradistinction to the tepid exhortation of the neo-liberal university to ‘start an evolution.’

\[184\] One could say tolerance is the imperative of the neo-liberal imperialism enacted within university discourse (pace Lacan), whereas respect is that of the liberal hegemony (hitherto and contiguous), in the master’s discourse. This ontological reading of tolerance is in excess even of the regulation of vulnerability and aversion within state power, which Brown (2006) calls “liberal legalism” (p. 165).
In short, tolerance presupposes alterity in order to manage it, to know it, to ‘include’ it. As such, tolerance itself is neither tolerant (in that it promulgates exclusion and imperial chauvinism), nor tolerable (in that it assumes and effects a world to manage, an administrative world). Typical of Enlightenment rationality in the predominant modern settlement, tolerance effects the repression of difference (extensive, voided, *in-different*) along the lines of the (imaginary, utopian, formal and symbolic) same. My counter-position is that modernity be otherwise permitted, as an ethical commitment, to appear more within *the failing sameness of difference* (its own non-self-identity), and that this is a more generative figuration by virtue of the promise it holds for *its seizure* by a *Real difference* (an ethical counter-idealism which I consider more fully in the next chapters).

As the formality of social redemption, the ethical micropolitics of tolerance in educational discourses are important in that they are implicated well beyond their ostensible ken, they are decisively not merely the matter of a code of conduct—but such is the remit of the ethical: In doing good, or seeking good, we express the world(s) we inhabit. For ethics are first the installation of worlds, and next the articulation of this as a condition of subjective truth, and it may be that the implicit challenge for education is to displace its implications and inventively assume the consequences of the ruin of their imperia.

4.3.3 Implication III: The Self (as Redemption of Knowledge)

A third figure I consider here as an implicated mechanism of alterity—operative in the ‘ideological’ or conservative modern ethical settlement (as of the transcendental or utopian pole of its oscillation)—is none other than that of *the self,* placeholder of the
modern lost subject. The contention here is that the very modern notion of selfhood both conveys alterity and conceals it, making it an ideological trope of modernity par excellence.\textsuperscript{185} Unlike respect and tolerance, which explicitly prescribe and proscribe the nature of the ‘right’ relations they presuppose, the notion of the self conveys their operations wholly implicitly in the hypostatic formalism of an entirely assumed ideal object (i.e. one without a subject, which curiously in late modernity is precisely what passes for the subject: ‘le moi!’). The trouble with the notion in the late modern idiom—like the non-deceptive a priori of phronetic realism—is that it accords with other figures which guarantee what I refer to as the possessed inviolate. Discourses of the self foster the assurance that, against the inhumane cruelties of the modern world, the intimate congress of me with myself is sacrosanct, a final redoubt against the incursions of dehumanizing scientistic modernity (and its political commonplace, the totalitarian spectre). The egoic imaginary (as the ‘self’) here bears alterity as the inverse of the antinomic shibboleth, as the other of the inhuman order.\textsuperscript{186} While this basic incarnation of what Brown calls identitarian truth surely vouchsafes the guarantee of the arcadian sanctuary of ‘place of one’s own,’ it does so at significant ethical cost for educators who may espouse it as ethically germane, as an ethical ‘fact.’ Part of this cost is the reduction of subjectivity to ideal and obscure dimensions.

\textsuperscript{185} Apropos of this section’s theme, we may recall from de Certeau (1988), on whom this study relies for its topos of modern rationalist ideology, the provocative characterization within that of the “I” as an “essential mark of fantastic discourse” (p. 112) and the ‘other’ as the “localization of myth” (p. 45)—which, I would hasten to add, is less to over-determine each than to invite thinking of them otherwise as ethical condition of possibility.

\textsuperscript{186} This may, in my view, instructively also be thought as the subject’s neurotic alienation in language, its castration, in Lacanian terms, whereby a ceaseless nostalgia haunts psychic life for a lost congress with the immediacy of phenomena, for the Shangri-La of language.
More bombastic was Nietzsche's dismissal of the 'little changeling' of the modern self, as the 'great stupidity that we are' (see Bingham (2001) for its consideration in educational thought), the concept of the self I wish to consider as a mechanism of alterity is more paradoxical, as befits its deployment in ethics of alterity of the sort elaborated by Sharon Todd. Therein, as a figure of Levinasian 'proximity,’ the unique relation of self and other provides—via the ‘command’ of the other—the basis for the disruption of the ostensible ‘self-identity’ of the self. By virtue of the paradoxical ‘disinterestedness’ of a relation assumed (self-other being a neutral given) in order to be ethically sundered, ‘proximity’ is taken to liberate the subject from “those screens and filters through which we encounter other people: Defensive posturings, movements of identification, interpretations or knowledge of the Other” (Todd, 2003, p. 12). This is as if, and this is the void of the scheme, the distinction self/other were beyond the ontological, transcendentally given and exempt from the perils of identification, as itself a matter of ‘possessed inviolate’ knowledge (recall here my discussion of the new status of knowledge in modernity). In my argument, it is this state of ethical exception (of the division self/other which creates ethical proximity) that needs to be displaced if we are to assume its true ethical mandate in educational thought as a subjective condition.

In Todd’s (2003) ethics of alterity, the rhetoric of modern ego psychology provides the basis for its own self-overcoming. The mystical other—the signifier difference as the obscure, ‘spiritual’ quiddity of the modern self, its qualitative depths—of deliverance from egoic ‘narcissism’ is approached by way of an imaginary self-abnegation, by undertaking the performance of the dissolution of the self. The other, here reward of the loss of the self’s imaginary guarantee (and its inherent pedagogue),
assumes the form of the promise of deliverance from unrecognizable disarray, from ‘psychotic’ diffusion within a symbolic medium haunted by its own incompleteness, from what Todd (2003) names “the wound of subjectivity's inherent violence” (p. 20). The other secures a self haunted by an other (indiscernible, indifferent) it thereby avoids. This is the paradox of a promise which consists in the imperative to “maintain a relation of exteriority” (p. 15)—to transcend, that is—with the object ‘self.’ This exteriority is the basis on which, one may recall, hope may be secured as the self-confirming ethical prescription (as that which signifies ethics as something ‘ethical’). It is also that which is intimate within the self, its own native mystery, as Atman resonates with Brahmā, the other which donates to the self its vitality. Todd here expresses the ethics of alterity’s powerful religious affinities (or their transcendentalism) in the implicate image of a fallen figure redeemed by a vast (‘exterior’) not-self, or prelapsarian ‘pure’ self of holy will, by which it denudes (or represses) an apparently ingrained propensity to wickedness.187 This wicked propensity is that of diabolism—or being two, that is, not of the one-object prescribed in the relation self/other, the one to be edified—which, in the argot of civil religion, is really the simple disobedience of not being one with orders of power. A pre-conscious ethics of this sort, as a matter of discursive formalities, or given structures of ‘worlds,’ relies for its staging on the ‘little changeling’ of a conscious (self) as its venue, object and mechanism, wherein the shadowy figures of divine proportion with which it populates its exculpatory theatre play. The ‘self’ is the compensation for the mortification of a subject ‘lost’ in representation, and also for the finitude of its already

187 This is, of course, a wickedness that I would claim is created by the transcendental ethical operation, whose effect is an other it loves (the good it emulates) and hates (the evil of its desire, or love unaccounted for).
being bound within the self/other couplet; as such, the self may be thought the woundedness of the subject. It is the form of its compensation, a dispensation of ethical hope, a deliverance from a fallen condition assumed. Paradoxically, given that such deliverance is from a (modern, ethical) condition thereby installed (of symbolic neurosis), this is a deliverance both suppressed and presupposed; it is its own denial, one accepted because of its mutual guarantees—that one ‘has’ a self, and that it was, is, and will be again, ‘good,’ at one with the other (or God as de-anthropologized symbolic force).

The further difficulty with the relation incarnate (symbolically assumed) of self and other as an ethical figure is that its mechanism of alterity—the positing of the self in order to ‘ethically’ overcome it—participates in a number of operations not contemplated by, or indeed in view of, the front of house show (to extend the theatrical metaphor), much of which is again at root political. This should come as no surprise given the status of the ethical turn in ‘ethicizing’ modern rationality, in submitting its condition as social ontology to the didactics of a transcendental restoration.

By the idealistic mechanism of a self to stand against, to mitigate, relate to, therapize, celebrate, and ethically submit to a proximate assumed other—for education, the ‘real’ worlds of ‘adulthood’ (‘responsibilization’ in it) and ‘work’ (the labour market)—the other becomes a sort of quintessence and paragon, an ethical figure of inherent surveillance and regulation. The other, typical of conservative Enlightenment in modernity, becomes that by which, and in relation to, the self orients its auto-constitution as a project of knowledge. In this, we come to the paradox of the liberal apriori ‘free’ moral subject: Its self-legislation. Its freedom is conditioned by its anterior predication as that which may already ‘be’ free (thus the motif of return comes to attend that of
freedom, as we launch into what we ‘already were’). As a way in which we might view how progressive, or emancipatory, educational ethical aspiration prefigures the subjective, Brown (2011) calls this "modern democracy's normative presumption" (p. 52): Of the instantiation of the self—here the liberal ‘subject’—in a single hypostatic form, of ‘becoming free.’ This is a subject Rancière (2011) calls a “litigious object of the political” (p. 32) and it is not an entirely new insight: The Rousseauian social contract avers the paradoxical realization of freedom in its surrender (see Brown, 2011, p. 51).

What is of greater interest here for educators is rather the notion of the self as an emplacement of alterity, that it is the fixity of the idea of the self, its apriori assumption, which authorizes the empowerment of the other (which I cast as a statist order, or even simply the order of that which is thought to educate) which guarantees it in circular co-specification (as the self is by virtue of the other). This is a paradoxical empowerment, one by way of a socializing moral-developmental inculcation of auto-regulation. That self and other in this circularity should be co-specifying, and co-extensive, and even parts of broader mechanisms of (transcendental) ontological control, should come as no surprise to a view of modern ontology as of sublimation. The difficulty is to articulate their aspects and functions. This, of course, is to thereby disarticulate their enclosure, wherein the question too readily answers, or exhausts, itself: What sort of self to be? The generous answer is ‘any one you may want,’ but this is subject to the identitarian caveat, which implicitly adds, ‘provided it is already recognizably one of the colours of the ‘human’ rainbow,’ provided it (this who you are) plays by its rules and furthers the realization of its imaginary figures (being grateful for elements of identity as the means of suffering their enclosure). Character education performs this reduction explicitly by
reducing the virtues to a checklist. It is however the auto-regulation of the self, and this is a key point in the sense of self I am developing (of an *implication of alterity*), which *makes the other possible* in all its imaginary finitude: Implicitly the other—and here we must include Todd’s Levinasian other—is constituted as an ineffable, inviolable security, and a psychological guarantee.

This formal sleight of hand at the seat of consciousness (of a self guaranteed by a mystical other of which it is the unavowed product) thus installs a grossly over-determining order, to the comprehensive disempowerment of the subject. This is a subject whose ambivalent empowerment is nonetheless being ‘taught’ as autonomy and responsibility and full ‘adult’ social participation. The point to bring forward as ethical provocation is that we find here the constitution of a subject that has, or is, a discrete self as *itself* a very precise mechanism of social control and disempowerment (or the implication of a transcendent—and unthinkable—other). It is ideological to the extent to which its fiction is given, assumed a-historical, without contingency, as a constituent pillar of identity, source of legal rights, and a chip in the game of recognition (of the accumulation of Capital). It is thus to ask if this specific and inverted expression of alterity as an ethical matter is an appropriate destination for educational thought, that is, if it is to minimally be put in question in its capacity in the ethical search, or the quest that has long been ethics.

For Todd (2003), the falleness of the self, its implication with the other which both edifies and defeats it, must be confronted, ‘faced’ as a sort of hamartia, a tragic or fatal flaw, to be overcome *not* by a particular concept (of the virtue of a ‘good’ person, for example, in the lexicon of ‘character’ or moral education), but by the more ephemeral
and surreptitious operation of a ‘responsible orientation’ which would engender the ethical good via a corollary self-transcendence. One does not need to know what the good is to be a self-subject to Todd's ethics of heteroptic alterity. One must merely, in a perversion of the Kantian imperative, act as though your actions may be programmed by it, and deploy the hope it provides like insurance: That, if it becomes necessary, it is indeed the good the hope promises, and not—and here its propulsive anxiety—the horror it, often as not, has concealed. As the ostensibly infinite vastness of the transcendental non-self, we are to believe that the other may be our deliverance from the egoic contagion. But its ‘mochlos,’ its lever, or point from which it leaps—to borrow from Derrida (2002b)—is an abyssal Moloch, one which in unwitting abandon invites as ego-ideal the ruling ideology, or that which structures and naturalizes the ‘real’ in and as normalcy, for such is finally the ‘mystified’ other. The obscure otherness of the ‘self’ (it is, after all ‘mine,’ and is, as such, ‘what I wanted’) puts to rest its own constitutive incompletion (which I would otherwise claim for the ethically germane); it, like respect and tolerance, activates alterity as ethical idealism, which, by definition, takes for ‘real’—like Todd’s ‘difference’—what it presupposes true. This may also be thought as a definition of utopianism, in that it is expressive of a symbolic order which need not change to be ethical, to be of a world.

188 To deepen this contention briefly, the anathema here may be construed simply as a ‘rule’—of the other, of the idealism of alterity—whereby one may again consider, in the words of a the famous phantom street-artist, that: “The greatest crimes in the world are not committed by people breaking the rules but by people following the rules. It’s people who follow orders that drop bombs and massacre villages” (Banksy, 2012).

189 Here I resource Kovacevic (2007): ‘What is truly utopian is to think that (symbolic) structures will remain the same” (p. 200). This he further regards as the “reckless narcissism” of “believing what one cannot imagine at present cannot possibly exist” (p. 221).
4.3.4 Alterity and the Guarantee of Decidability

My argument in this section of this chapter advances the alterity Todd would espouse as ethically authoritative as consistent with the relations implicates in phronetic subjectivity. Both perform the function of what Badiou would call an emblem of the social bond, one of the social ontology of modernity.\(^{190}\) If the ethical obligation of education is foremost to new conditions (as discussed as axiomatic in the introduction, as what gives the lie to all that would comprehensively ‘be’), it depends upon articulations of existing ones, upon the sundering of their implicit spell, upon, as the Russian saying goes, “a past . . . more unpredictable than the future” (Boym, 2001, p. xiv). Thus, ethically we wish to be in the vicinity of broken spells, of the transparencies of the phantasmic ‘real,’ and foremost always those of governing ethics—because it is their logics whose incompletion offers the most forceful way ahead, in the immanency where ethics begins.

If, in the first half of this chapter, I contested the spell of the phronetic within the weakness of its own presumptions, with regard to ethics which align in education with Todd's (2003) we may find a sibling contradiction in what she calls ethical “modes of relation that resist codification” (p. 9). Like the authoritative figure of difference, or the ‘Other’ absent “knowledge about” it (p. 8, emphasis in original), what is known here is its status as that which resists codification in ‘modes of relation.’ Yet: If these resist codification, how does one know that they are indeed modes of relation? If we take an

\(^{190}\) As Badiou (2011) advises, “to begin to apprehend the reality of our societies, it is necessary as a preliminary exercise, to dislodge their emblem” (p. 7). He is here referring to the concept of democracy, but I think the same master-signifier-like explication obtains in education (as throughout society) in the concept of relation we find in both aspects of the articulation I have been calling the modern ethical oscillation among ethics of constructivist and transcendent ontologies.
ideological reading and put it another way we might ask: How is relationality thus itself not a codification? Evidence for this supposition of codification, and for its negative enforcement, of the absence it instantiates as ‘inverse of normativity’ it constitutes within an ethical ensemble, abounds in Todd's work on this subject. Todd’s ethics of the other are, at a minimum, explicitly not knowledge, not rational principles, not sameness, not otherness (but rather, paradoxically, its otherness), not inhuman, not ir- or un-relation or disjunction, not univocal. The codification of the field of ethical limitation, or recitation of what it is not, is broad in Todd’s contribution to the ethical turn, but one thing ethics are thereby also not is undecidable. As such, hers is an effort to wrest into view a decidable ethics with which to confront dehumanizing modernity’s late sophistications, but in the all-too evident rationalist ethical paucity taken for granted by transcendental anti-Platonism. The (onto-ethical) trouble is that it is its very decidability that partakes of the exact modernity it would confront, and which is its implicit guarantor. Todd's effort here is the ‘divinization’ of the limit, of the division, of the differentiation, whose identifications are predicated on the multiple alienations of finitude (the fatal weakness of intensive identitarian truth), and which they cannot but compound. This, incidentally, is why such ethical admonitions convey both the appealingly tragic pathos of a game already lost (a passion play of eternal suffering), and of its player reciprocally ‘divinized’ in the figure of the tragic subject (see Safouan, 2003, p. 72). Thus also the comic cliché of ennobling earnest ethicality, of the self-parodic philanthrope or pedagogue—one edified by the fantasy of the good they have rigged the game to produce (whose accidental consequence is rather the proliferation of figures of ‘evil’). As with the equally sober phronimos, the ethical educator of the restoration of the good of alterity
really shares foremost in a modern neurotic pretence to the guarantee of a heedlessly non-self-identical rational order: They are modernity.\(^{191}\) I maintain, pursuant to the infinite condition of education's more generative (ancient, Platonic and newly, more radically, modern)\(^{192}\) vocation that such dispensations are to be thought as ethical mainly in their very non-self-identicality, in their status as symptoms, and not in and of the ethical horizons they would therefrom project. That is to say, the argument is not really with the content of phronesis and alterity as ethical authorities, this analysis shows that their form is what is at issue, the way they come to appear authoritative, integral, credible and discrete. However, as undecidability could not become a sort of knowledge (but rather only its voided status), the question of non-self-identicality is not an epistemological one, not one to be submitted again to categories of self and other, same and different, abstract and concrete, practical and theoretical. At base, and despite sophisticated rhetorics of both democratic ‘wisdom,’ and ethical ‘proximity,’ this is a question inherently elided in tactful phronetic reconciliations, in the bargains of the holist ‘ecstasies’ of alterity. It is a formal ontological question of the regimes in which such become intelligible, it is a question of the void and the excess of the conjunction of ethics and education, of the preservation of such authorities’ integrity, and especially of the ontological settlement of which it is a product, that of the modern oscillation of

\(^{191}\) Here I recall the ideologic of the modern advent explored in the foregoing chapters, the unification of its disassociations, its production of repressive subjection, of ‘otherness’—located now in the tension of an ontological oscillation which serves, in my argument, foremost as formal warrant to the delimitation of the ethical field.

\(^{192}\) Radical modernity here resources radical enlightenment, but especially more recent developments in the “mathematical conditioning of thought whereby the most rigorous thinking of being passes through the most contemporary discoveries in mathematics” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 2) and the ‘ancient Platonic’ references the investment against ‘state education’ by which to “re-establish education's proper form” in truth, as distinct from “the practicalities of power and pleasure,” as a “lifelong task everyone should undertake to the limit of his strength” (as cited in Bartlett, 2011, p. 7).
constructivist and transcendental orientations of thought. Such formalities are the concern of the next chapter. For now it will be sufficient to observe that the first concern of ethics in my submission is to avow a thinking (of, or in, modes of relation, which is to say, within ethical logics) that neither magically resists codification (transcends) nor proceeds from a sublimated given (constructs). The first concern, and a hard won destination for a point of departure, is rather first how to think these ethico-ontological siblings, or, in other words, is how to consider modes of relation ethically or, how to finally become ethically modern.

4.4 Conclusion: Ethics of Models of Reality

This chapter has concerned itself with certain ethical authorities in educational thought which express what de Certeau calls figures of realism and utopia, both of which I have shown to be products of the modern relation of reason with the otherness it produces and redeems ethically. Springing both from the same riven root, the ethical hyperbole of a constructivist faith (one subsumed as realism in the deferral of a successive method, or a method of succession) and a transcendental one (of the cast off, or transcended utopic guarantee of the secular divinization of an infinite alterity) share the modern a priori of a (withdrawing) guarantee to a striking degree. Consequently, they both partake of a perverse naturalism that fits the world to its concepts. They are the ethical inherency of intensive ontologies (of quality, identity, process), which maintain the presupposed probity of the limits of each in the characteristic finitude that makes their
settlements possible. In Kantian terms, they obtain foremost in “having the objects of one's representations under one’s control” (as cited in Toscano, 2010, p. 125). A subject and a situation for phronesis, a self and other for alterity: These are the occupations within educational discourse of an authoritative ontological tension, and it is in this relation, made possible by the finitude of the modern ‘social’ conjunction of ethics and education, that ultimately seeks for self-confirmation, as ‘ethics’ itself, a self-confirming ethical guarantee (which is then as such ethics’ fatal undoing). This guarantee is of the order of reality, that is, of a model of the ‘real,’ and the ‘tension’ of modern ethicality is the contest is among ontological models fitted to each other, fictions of the ‘real’ laying competing and commensurate—in that they are founded in the same ethical media of ontological finitism—claims to it: In the phronetic proceduralism of ethical realism, on one hand, and in the transcendental faith of the divine ersatz of alterity, on the other. The problem for the educator inquiring into the ethical conditions of the modernity in which s/he finds him or herself is that the modern ethical imaginary projects, or expresses, these competing symbolic regimes of reality—and their products and operations (subject, situation, relation, respect, tolerance, self)—as imaginary totalities (objects or facts), rather than the symbolic contingencies (fictions) which, I would insist, they instead are. If we otherwise were to resource the radical implications of Descartes’ symbolization of the divine, we may find another avenue opening for ethics in the instigations of the Real itself, and another subject thereto (or infinite others). To where this would return us with

\[193\] Brassier (2011) avers as more pernicious constructivist ontologies: “the subordination of every difference to the identity of our current concepts is more not less dogmatic than the transcendental presupposition of an extra-conceptual difference between concept and object” (p. 56). The pretence of an ethics is thus more ethically tractable than its complete subsumption, for it allows the subversion of the pertinence of presupposed questions (instead of their comprehensive dispatch).
respect to reality is as yet unknown, and necessarily so. It lies, like all great ethical aspiration, and along with all great education, in a disjunctive parallel among the two; it lies beyond belief.
Chapter 5 Toward a New Ethics of the Subject in Education

because there is something in the world that demands a hearing, and because as yet there is nothing adequate to hearing that demand. (Clemens, 2010, p. 28)

we have to protect the fragile new idea of what is a truth. To protect the new truth itself.

So, when the night falls, we do not sleep. (Badiou, 2006b)

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold, first it is to assert and contextualize the subjective as the remit of ethics in education and, second it is to begin to explicate the forms of such ethical thought as educational.

In the first instance, I have three objectives. First, I elaborate reasons for the subjective as ethical venue in education, to provide a schema by which to engage with the subjective as ethical therein. Second, to support the schema I propose, I resource from Freudian psychoanalytic thought forms and themes by which to think the subjective as ethical. I do this because developing parallels among psychoanalysis and education lends to the latter’s thinking of the subject a force and clarity indispensible for its elaboration. My third objective is to show how subjective formalism is already in effect as such, how it already exists as modernity, or ways to be a subject in the present era.

The second purpose of this chapter is to identify the conditions of possibility for further subjective forms, to begin to see how the subject could otherwise be, and how this is or is not an educational concern. It is my contention that in this movement we might
indeed begin to respond to ‘a call beyond hearing’ as ethics, and not religion in its oscillating modern forms (as either of transcendental alterity or the rational immanentism of a constructivist ontology).

If this chapter then marks a long-promised departure, it is one that should not be mistaken for a destination, but rather a step within a complex ethical settlement toward its manifestation otherwise. If I may prise apart goals and purposes, it is the ultimate goal of this chapter (and the next) to show how the axiomatic decisiveness (heresy of anti-Platonism) of formal ethical thought is a matter of subjective constitution, of its place of emergence together with the “frail new idea of what is a truth” (Badiou, 2006b).

For it may well be here—in the question of the subject and the infinite to which modernity paradoxically brings—that we find ourselves together, perhaps for the first time, where definitively we had, and could have had, no idea we could be. And this may be what sustains and nourishes the desire—one of an infinite condition—to educate, one which may provoke and inform educational desire itself, and invite it anew to truth.

5.2 New Ethical Contexts

5.2.1 The Subjectification Conception of Education

To begin articulating subjective ethics in education, I advance a view of education as a subjective matter. In this, I follow Biesta (2011) in arguing for the centrality to education of the question of the subject, with his argument that the “subjectification

194 Recall this study’s movement from the historiographical (chapters 2 and 3) through the speculatively critical (chapter 4) to the affirmatively inventive (chapters 5 and 6), the latter being the beginning of a development of a new ethics in education.
conception” of education exists in tension with its “socialization conception” (p. 142).\textsuperscript{195} While the latter may be seen to circumscribe the educational commonplace of older ideal ‘social project,’ Biesta proscribes the former within the ambit of what he calls ‘emancipatory’ education, within citizenship education and civic learning. This is a cautious circumscription I can appreciate in light of his purposes, but not entirely endorse for the purposes of my argument. My contention is that the question of the subject is inescapably more expansive than as an ethical technics of thought in education (by which to realize emancipation), it is instead ubiquitous in how education is projected more broadly, as an ontological matter of education’s implication in the ‘real.’\textsuperscript{196} This is to say that there is no education without a comprehensive subjective implication; even the most determined ‘socialization’ conception of education is prescribed as a matter of subjective form (which indeed may help explain its stubborn persistence). Within this contention lies the nub of ethical opportunity, where subjective ubiquity becomes the wherewithal to re-think the ethical ‘binding’ of modern education. The question of the subject is to be broadly assumed anew in education, in order to renovate what has become of ethics in the finitism of prevalent self-images—realist and utopian—of modernity. Subjectivity, in other words, is too comprehensive to delimit it to an ethics of education in the form of emancipation; a subjective condition already obtains, and can be dismissed neither in

\textsuperscript{195} With respect to how students “are, be and can be” (Biesta, 2011, p. 1), the “task of bringing newcomers into an existing political order” of a socialization conception of education runs the risk, warns Biesta (2011), of becoming mere “training . . . or even indoctrination.” A subjectification conception in contrast appreciates the significance of the question of subjectivity as one “at the border of the socio-political and educational order” (p. 1) where the conflicts which inform the horizons of subjectivity are staged. The moment of subjectification, to my reading, becomes therefore broader than one intended within pedagogy or curriculum, and resides more properly in that of the character, expressions and contestations of an ethos itself.

\textsuperscript{196} Consistent throughout this work, this usage is briefly touched upon in the glossary to this work (p. vii) and more comprehensively outlined in S. 1.4.2.
unproblematically tying education to the social project, nor in the restriction of the question of the subject to that of the ‘emancipation’ of the liberal subject (this commonly in critical opposition to the ‘dehumanizing’ pincers of education within the behaviourist residues of scientific management on one hand, and the spectre of an advancing neoliberal threat, on the other). The ethical conditions of possibility of the overburdened liberal subject—seen with de Certeau in the second and third chapters as a freighted admixture of expression and repression—are of ideological provenance that, as a matter of subjective formalism, may be ‘turned’ by ethical inquiry to the richer promise of an affirmative ethics.\textsuperscript{197}

Despite its devolution into the commonplaces of learning’s instrumentalities, or into the mysticism of ethical idealism, education remains a field in which the question of the subject still may be legitimately raised, where the production of subjects retains a recognizable signification. As a distinctly ethical opportunity however, subjectivity does not necessarily deploy a transcendent position vis à vis the subject/object duality; it is my argument that subjectivity, as a performance of life itself, insists finally on the duality’s dissolution, it is the open region of ethics. This is one where both the subjective and the objective no longer suffice to confront the changes with which we are visited, which we would rigorously avow (as a hearing with as-yet \textit{nothing} to meet its demand) in order to not presume to govern them in advance. This is to take the categories subject and object as \textit{immanent} conditions of possibility for education and beyond—inasmuch as we are concerned here with ethics, or the constitution of worlds. As indicated at the outset, such

\textsuperscript{197} While this chapter is devoted to establishing ethical contexts which contest those prescribed by the modern ethical settlement (of the ‘oscillation’), the next is to the performance of the ‘turning’ described here, with the agency of immanent ethics of generic ontology, explicated there as a matter both of mathematical formalism and comic realism.
a condition’s concern may be engaged only as a matter of subjective thought, of thought subtractive of its objective conceptual processes and transcendental forms. As such, ethics is a response in thought to the conditions of possibility of new conditions. It is that by which may proceed a response, which is to say, an ethics.

To elaborate a subjective dispensation as ethics is clearly to initially unsettle the 'objective' donations of thought, whose transcendentals populate the orientations of the modern ethical 'oscillation' discussed previously. By insisting thus on their subjective remit, ethics made available to new conditions are cast as that (subject) which is of them. The newly conceptualizable condition of an immanent, and local, operator of the infinite (discussed further in Section 6.2), makes such a conception of subjectivity possible. In this, the domain of the subject is necessarily first that of thought, of the Idea. This is held—against the anti-Platonic anathema—as that wherein an entirely subjective ethics is the vitalizing of our most mutable condition of engagement with the conditions of existence. It is also to hold that ethics of the predicative object (phronetic process, transcendental alterity) remains at base subjective.198 In this I am figuring the subjective as that which names quantity in excess of itself, knowledge unknown to itself, ‘naked’ meaning, a condition without predicate. In the Badiouian elaboration, it is by way of thought alone that a subject can ‘void,’ or subtract, itself such that formal objects (worlds, selves, rationalities) may also be said to—which is to say so that they too may be

198 Where the phronesis of Henderson and Kesson (2004), and Todd’s ethics of alterity (2003) are concerned, my argument here is not simply that these are of ‘objectivist’ wolves in ‘subjective’ sheep’s clothing, that they hedge their ethical bets by appealing to objectivist guarantees (the ‘hallucination’ of constructivist process and the ‘humiliation’ of transcendence, respectively) but rather that these are not subjective enough, that the subjective basis of their objectivist cant is suppressed, that subject and object, in other words, be permitted to assume some sort of relation.
permitted to transform, to remain constitutively not entirely of ideological capture or, in subjective terms, to begin to be free.

Of course, the subjective itself is over-determined, predetermining, received, normative, of a ceaseless moralism. However, as for the educational thought itself in which subjectivity may be haphazardly implicated ethically, all of this may be thought within a generic ontology as more a condition of possibility than one of its foreclosure: For the incitation of a subjective condition for ethics is first to continue. One decides for an infinite condition, declares and announces its voiding ‘mediacy’ (for the void is not immediate, it ‘exists’ as a subjective matter in determined worlds, ‘founds’ them as absences specific to them), and thereby accedes to its immanency (its presence as constitutive absence, as ‘exclusive inclusion’). This is an immanency solely within the play of masks of the finite, where objects thereby subsist within a new representation, and by this we may think genesis, or the coming into being of new worlds, new subjects. These new worlds and subjects are the concern of education, its foremost ethical one, in my thesis. Having contested the ontological filiations of what becomes the socialization conception of education (education ‘emplaced’ in modernity and subject to the ethical oscillation of constructivist and transcendental ethics), to re-think the subjective I continue here with how Hallward (2003) characterizes it in (and cites from) Badiouian thought:

Subjectivation is not a learning process. A subject is, from the beginning, induced by a truth, and a truth is, from the beginning, qualitatively distinct from the impurity of opinions and interests. From the beginning,
“subjective thought is to be strictly established from the subject itself, without passing through any kind of objective mediation.” (p. 286)

Thus the subjectification conception of education must be a matter of a decisive avowal, like the subject itself in Badiou’s work; it begins as the decision for it and, like the trajectory of this work, searchingly against the settlement of objectivist cant, rationalist or theist or otherwise. As militating in resistance to ‘statist’ ontologies (or those which make our representations ‘behave’), Hallward (2003) further helps explicate the Badiouian disassociation of the figure of the subject from the ‘Romantics,’ to whom (along with the nominalism of ‘social justice’) the subject is largely delegated in late modernity:

knowledge of structured finitude is no motive for reverence for an infinity that exceeds us. Such knowledge is not the spur to something else but the material through which truth will emerge. In the absence of any objective knowledge of infinity, the truth of infinity is available only to its subject.

(p. 76, emphasis added)

In the figuration of subjectivation in contradistinction both to learning and to knowledge, which are conceived instead as elements by which subjectivation may occur, these two passages effect a pivotal displacement that supports a context for the subjective in educational ethics. To clarify, consider how Badiou aligns romanticism with knowledge in the second passage. Recall the earlier discussion (in chapter 2) of the gnosticism of ‘conventional’ modernity, and that, within this formality of knowledge, romanticism comes to be a symptomnal flight: Of subjective reestablishment by way of the indubitably modern ontological formalities of a positive subject, of an objectified subject
presumed for a moral purpose (of being what it should, which is also to say, what it already is). By virtue of mysterious and administrative operators—such is the conventional subjective adventure—this figure somehow has the audacity to overcome his or herself, and/or align their world better toward its rightful distribution of presumably nascent recognitions, or those presumed by virtue of the conflation of being and the ethical good. This romantic subject is one nonetheless specified according to the reciprocities of its model, to an imputed instrumentality of being (which makes of its materials what is intended).²⁹⁹ My thesis is that the subject, assumed in the rigor of its infinite implication, needs be no such obscurity.

Similarly illustrative in establishing the challenges of the subjective as ethical context, we also find in the cited passages the issue of the emergence of truth through, and decisively not as, knowledge. This matter I will consider more directly in the next chapter with regard for figuring the ethics of a subject to truth, and thereafter to the question of its mode of representation under such condition. Most pertinent for the present purposes of establishing the formal context of a subjectification conception of education is the contention that the truth of infinity is no learning. This suggests—from the Platonic sense—that learning can only be a sort of by-product of a procedure of truth, in which is founded “education’s fundamental constitution” as a matter of an “unknown capacity for reason” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 7, emphasis in original). The real challenge of a subjectification conception of ethics to conventional educational discourse derives from

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²⁹⁹ Analogous is the fatal presumption that ‘eyes are for seeing’ when there was no sight before eyes, subjects are presumed ‘for-becoming’ as if being were as instrumental as misperceived Darwinism posits biology.
the intransigent unmanageability\(^{200}\) of a fidelity to the infinite condition upon which it is predicated. This is the difficulty of the refusal of any reduction to ‘proper’ dimensions, to ‘teachability,’ to ‘curricularization,’ and certainly moralization as ‘virtue.’\(^{201}\) This eminently ethical conception of education (in that it forefronts the ethical search as educational) stands resolutely against the socialization impetus of a modern conception of education, wherein a subject ‘learns’ most basically by way of a proliferate and disavowed ontological requisition (to learn, that is, ‘the reality’ of the world), as the conformities to symbolic and imaginary formalities of the ‘real.’\(^{202}\) Learning in this very particular sense is first the enforcement of the subjective destitution inherent to the modern ethical settlement\(^{203}\)—whereas subjectification alternately could instead be said to begin variously in its confrontation, or provocation, to become something else. While certainly such may necessarily be confrontation within the contests of universal

\(^{200}\) Added to unmanageability Badiou cautions of the misdirection of a concept of truth in ‘suture’ to its conditions (as if to transcendentalize the void), that although truth as a subjective inscription of the void in situ, emerges through knowledges as their alteration, it is finally not of their domain, not of the art in which it is expressed, not of the science it would found, not of the love in which it is deposed, or the political sequence of its apparent expression, nor certainly is it not finally of the thought which would circumscribe it. It remains, as voided generic extension, only their alteration, the place where they succeed in non-coincidence, and to literally incalculable consequences, of which the subject is a finite set.

\(^{201}\) In the sophistical instance Bartlett (2011) derives from Plato in Badiou’s instruction, virtue is reciprocity of subject and state, “…wherein the man best fitted to the state will result in the best state for such a man” (p. 48); it is the recapitulative operation of “sophistic teaching” which, by “charming the youth” with ‘memorable identifications’ and ‘quantifiable results’ (touchstones of the fabled ‘real world’), perpetuates as a moral matter the sophistic conceit of wisdom and the (psychotic and anxious) control of errancy, the state, in other words, whose form is constituted precisely to foreclose its own immanent excess, as the security of knowledge already in a presupposed form. In contradistinction, truth is the indiscernment of virtue, is the not knowing of what knowledge is made, such is Socratic pedagogy.

\(^{202}\) These as discussed in the second chapter broadly as the legalism of a metaphysical eschatology and the moralism of an epistemological probity, and in the fourth as subjective deracination of relatedness within an ontological symbolic enclosure expressed within con-jointly articulated expressions of these (in phronesis and alterity) as ethics in educational thought.

\(^{203}\) Consider the formal analogue of learning in the sense articulated by Rancière in the Ignorant Schoolmaster (1991), as first of incapacity: The first thing you learn is that you lack, that you do not know, that you are deficient, in need of fundamental correction, in need of becoming one who has learned, in exactly the manners prescribed. This is subjection as impropriety, to which institutional correctives are brought to bear.
abstraction—of, as here also for example, an ethos’ ubiquitous metaphysical predicates of legalism, morality and epistemologism, and further of the closure of symbolic identification within ontological correlation, and certainly of an anti-Platonic subjective destitution itself—confrontation need not be restricted to dense theoretical commitment. It may indeed likewise consist in countless moments of ethical decision to subtract from ‘everyday’ finitude, in fidelity to new ethical conditions decided—or ‘forced,’ to use mathematician Cohen’s term for the insistence of generic ontological extension of the inclusion of the indiscernible—and thereafter pursued as consequences of this decisiveness, as new subjective itineraries. If new worlds are born in the ruins of the old, what forever remains is to invent new ways to think this. As I will show in this chapter and the next, all of such generative resistance and refiguration is made possible, indeed is made absolutely unavoidable, to a subject of an infinite condition, as an ethics of an infinite condition.

Thus, to elaborate a subjective basis for ethics in education is necessarily to speculatively grapple with both the finitude of its socialization conception’s proliferation (in figures of realism and utopia of constructive and transcendental ontologies) and with the voided infinity of its subjectification conception. This latter objective remains neglected to this point in this work. In order to remedy this, I extend this chapter’s contextualization of an ethics of the subject in education with the question of where may such provocative and dangerously ‘voiding’ thought of the subject already be found?
5.2.2 Psychoanalysis and Subjective Impossibility

I have never known the impossible to be much trouble. You start off with the impossible, and that is a blank sheet on which the possible may be written. When people talk of things being easy or even difficult, it's then you have trouble.

This is so impossible that you'll do it. (Burgess, 1980, p. 314)

In part because of its inherent disposition within a field beyond the subject’s own immediate apprehension, beyond the legibilities of self-transparency and the submission of the subjective to proscriptive ‘responsibilizations,’ psychoanalytic thought offers education the most elaborated existing schema for thinking subjective ethics. Since its genesis in Freud, psychoanalytic thought has figured the question of ethics, particularly in the question of the persistence of moral law (Lacan’s ‘big Other’) inscribed in ethics as insuperable with human subjectivity. This has allowed for both a thinking of ethics—supplementary to its unthinking assumption in a given ontological guise—and its reconstitution therein—here in the question of the subject as an educational concern, and ethical thought as its medium and condition of possibility. Throughout much of the previous century however, psychoanalytic thought has waged a mostly losing battle with more conventional ego-psychology—which I have here earlier allied with liberal ethics—for the ‘soul’ of educational discourse where subjectivity is concerned. Zaretsky (2004) contends that even Freud enabled this ascension in catering to his reception in North America. To a significant degree in psychoanalytic thought, it has fallen to Lacan and his heirs to wrest Freud’s legacy from both its own tilt toward conservatism, and the
subsequent secondary domestication of its radicality in liberal and neoliberal ethical discourses. Of the recasting the subject away from its own transparency, Hallward (2003) describes the pertinent move in late modern thought (of which psychoanalytic developments of the subject play a key part) as a disassociation: “the disassociation performed by Marx, Freud and Nietzsche and radicalized by the most inventive descendants (Althusser, Lacan, Foucault and Deleuze) of genuine, active subjectivity from normal conscious experience” (p. 4-5). This is a disassociation whose obverse obtains in the formalities of possibility, ones made possible by the ethical prevalence of finitism, itself made obvious by the ontological fact of totality variously foundational to the modern settlement. This second contextualization elaborates the subjective from psychoanalytic thought as impossibility, in order to contribute to my argument for its radicality as the fertility and justice of ethics in education.

It was indeed Freud who presciently included education (and government) with psychoanalysis among the ‘impossible’ professions, a theme that Britzman (2009b) has best developed as a matter of educational thought. Impossibility here foremost denotes a properly complex condition, one of immanent indetermination or not elusive of constitutive incompleteness, and whose predication rejects in advance more substantialist conceptions of truth as of presupposed worlds, or selves, or indeed any other correlative

204 Chiesa (2007) adds an important supplement to this description, namely that it was in fact Descartes who presided over the “formal birth of the unconscious” in the history of human thought, yet as only “implicit” within the principle of self-consciousness until Freud (p. 39). This indicates something important to the question of inherency or latency; that it is only by way of what putatively bars access (the sign of language, the ‘One’ of ontotheology) that its condition may be won, thus Lacan’s avowal of truth as obstacle. For Badiou, in the end the subject is thus necessarily authorized “only by a prescription that nothing founds” (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 129), no figure, no ground.

205 From these Freud advises one may only expect ‘unsatisfying results.’ Britzman (2009b) explains as such: “Freud saw in the work of psychoanalysis, governance, and education the interminability of trying to influence others who have their own minds and tied these relations to practitioners’ unconscious resistance, to the fact of their natality, and to the psychical life” (p. 3).
ontological substance of the adequation of thought and being.\textsuperscript{206} Clemens (2010) elaborates the \textit{impossibility} of subjectivity, as a matter of ethical discourse, as caught in being \textit{conditioned} by having to attend to the profuse chicanery of the signifier, on the one hand, and the abstemious formalizations of the letter on the other, between poetry and mathematics” (p. 28, emphasis in original). I will briefly consider this contention here, for it helps clarify an ethical thought utterly disjoint from its commonplaces.

The risk for education in a modern condition of ontological occlusion—of the sublimate guarantee of constructivism and transcendence and their ethical offspring of phronesis and alterity—is that each of the alternatives which instantiate impossible inherencies as ethical conditions are \textit{inaccessible}, barred by \textit{the implication of an ethical alternative} in the tension of what we may call codes and ideals (or concepts). The Real impossibility (or the impossibility of the ‘real’) here, or the element in which ethics may be founded without first specifying, never emerges over, or within, the ethical horizon. This is a condition of the co-articulation of the modern ethical settlement I have advanced: The deferral of impossibility is inherent to a conjunctive ethical condition, the implicate alternative ‘standing for’ in the other (alternately constructivist or transcendental) what is therein ‘impossible,’ unfigurable, voided. We swing from God to ‘Man’ and back—although the master signifiers are genderized instead as male and female, science and humanism, lawful ethics and ethics of care etc.—so as to never accept how what are both founded in fails us, so as to never be able to assume a comprehensive ethicality, which is to remain ‘merely moral’ in mortality’s most meagre conceit. As a normative ‘inverse,’ an arrangement of ethical absences, what I am

\textsuperscript{206} Acutely here it is Badiou (2001) who asks: “If our only agenda is an ethical engagement against an evil we recognize a priori, how are we to envisage any transformation in the way things are?” (p. 13).
describing here is a co-specifying ethical dynamic whose production of an ethical medium is rudimentary discourses of possibility, and a consequent subjective impoverishment (such are codes and concepts finally only what we already know). To help clarify this complex point, to consider each of the ‘impossible’ difficulties (of difficulties of impossibility) briefly in turn will help to better develop a subjectivist ontological dispensation in the guidance of speculative psychoanalytic thought.

The ‘profuse chicanery of the signifier’ clearly refers to language, its slippery play of meaning, its persistent duplicity and ideological amenability, by which I mean its comprehensive conspiracy with the ideological subsumption of the problem of (an absent) founding. No ‘common’ or ‘plain’ language is sufficient to overcome this particular difficulty, this impossibility—it must be assumed instead as their inventive confrontation, by way of the lacunae of normative settlements, by the cracks in the light that let the darkness in, to put it lyrically (in the inverse of Cohen’s romanticism).207

Akin to Benjamin’s (1968) “task of the translator” (p. 69) we are enjoined to exist within meanings that we cannot author but are condemned to convey.208 Some avow escape from the problem by championing idiomatic proliferation and learning many languages (with a nod to a ‘measurable’ ‘cognitive’ benefit of early second language learning), as if the secret of each will reveal itself in alchemical relief from the others, or, in a more utilitarian way, so that a presumably more adaptable intellect will render its bearer toward

207 Kovacevic (2007) describes here the impossible as confrontation with the Real: “The real is the source of alternative political and other articulations, excluded in order for ideology, masked as objective social reality, to be consistent and operative. The inclusion of these articulations is both impossible and impossible to bear from the standpoint of the existing symbolic, since it entails the annihilation of its limits” (p. 196). The L. Cohen lyric referenced speaks to cracks in opacity, through which enters light.

208 “With its emphases on the differential, fragmentary and inorganic character of languages Benjamin’s theory of translation can be seen as the antithesis of the community based on the natural and intimate common bonds. As an antidote to the modernist nostalgia for the being in common, translation becomes a safeguard of sorts against the complicity of this nostalgia with fascism” (Ziarek, 1995, p. 182-183).
a programmatically elastic sort of neoliberal security. The problematics of poetry consume us inasmuch as we are subject to language, no matter whether indeed of a single one or, in the paradoxically confounded liberation of Babelesque elasticity, of many. In part by virtue of the commitment to multiplex proliferation of idioms, the precise indication of an impossible condition (of language) rarely comes into view, except as the subjective formality of a sort of surrender, as if the sophistries of language were somehow too needlessly complex for a clearly more immediately 'real' condition. The articulation of impossibility in language is however a condition of possibility of subjective ethics in education with which I am concerned, as those of an infinite condition.

Twinned with the poetic ‘impossible’ of linguistic complexity stands another, even more foreign element to the anti-Platonic distemper, also properly figured as impossible. This Clemens (2010) designates as ‘the formalization of the letter.’ In an era which may be distinguished by what Ricoeur calls a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’—by which, Benhabib (2003) advises, within every great idea is assumed concealed a base motive or dangerous historicity—thinking ethically by the spur of ontological mathematical formalization (as in Badiou’s work) appears as a sort of otherworldly abomination. In accord with so little of recognizably (or ideologically) ethical concern, a politics of the logics of ethics founded in the mathematical may scarcely breach the edifices of legitimacy; or may minimally only do so within the most denigrated precincts

209 This is not to argue that the proliferation of languages, or the commitment to its maintenance, is not desirable—for I am surely with those who contend the opposite—but rather it is to say that such a commitment is no substitute for thinking the ethical conundrums of language, no acceptable elision of the ontological impasses of, the impossibilities vested in, the ethical conditions of what Žižek (2006), following Lacan, calls “desiring beings of language” (p. 354).
of a stereotypic academicism. While the normativity of a homogenous medium consequent of a presumed totality (the implicit ‘good’ of unity) may reluctantly admit the brittle disquiet of language, it appears steadfast against the less poetic and more explicitly formal attentions to the questions of existence (mathematical rigor providing for a formalism of the formal itself). First with de Certeau and then with Badiou, here have I argued that the purposive neglect of this particular inversion of normativity, this particular ontological sophistics, is foremost to the denigration of the subject. In order to be ethical, rather than instead the moral postulate of an order, this neglect, this not knowing (what the sophists know), relies upon the most rigorous figurations of heterogeneity; for this is the truth protected when ‘the sleep of night’ befalls us, and for which indeed Socrates was prematurely to it consigned. This is a thinking—characteristically insisted upon as ethical venue in psychoanalytic thought—wherein the subject may emerge not entirely in the effectuation of presupposed models (themselves formalizations) as if they were ‘real.’ These, in Lacanian terms, are entirely symbolic ‘ontologics’ (that is, they depend upon stabilized conceptual formalities to elaborate the self-referential systems in which they obtain, as ‘discourse effects’ of wholly imaginary meanings, and wholly ideological ethics). To confront these, a more rigorous formalization is required, one in which impossibility becomes less, not more, elusive.

With the likes of Cantor (on the set theoretical ‘orders’ of infinity) and Cohen (of the necessity to force, or ‘decide’ into to being, the generic or indiscernible) by way of Badiou, we may resource a far-reaching ethical thinking perhaps more productive and inciting to re-thinking ethics than within the paradoxes of the implicative lacunae of language. Licensed by a formal rigor unavailable to the domain of language, and not of
merely another (now ‘mathematical’ pace Carnap) language, by way of certain contemporary mathematics we may participate in the absolutization of contingency itself—that is, in its necessity as a universal condition, and basis of any specific designation. This necessitates the reconceptualization of reconceptualization itself as, most important for my purposes, the ethics of a subjective remit. Employing the psychoanalytic term, Badiou (2005b) describes as the subjective ‘symptom’—to which he willingly assents—the arbitrariness of choice. This arises as an inevitability of the post-Cantorian ontological condition, of the Real as first of a formal dislocation (which, as we know by now, Badiou calls the ‘event’) of ontological order by the interposition of disruption by immanent multiples of inconsistent multiples, of constitutive or generic excess. Thus, of unsurpassed import to this study, what Badiou discovers in mathematical formalization is that *quantity*, “the very paradigm of objectivity, leads to pure subjectivity” (p. 280, emphasis added). In this axiomatics—for such lacks any objective confirmation except as symptomatic in mathematical formalization (via Cantor-

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210 It was an influential thesis of Carnap (see Badiou, 2006a) that mathematics is to be thought as merely another idiom, a language among languages, rather an inventive confrontation with being unto itself. The implications of this distinction are profound for the status of mathematics in ethical thought.

211 Apropos of Badiou, this Johnson (2009) describes at the “difference between change-category statuses” (p. 31) assigned to any given multiple or multiples. In other words, *what comprises the change of transformation is a new way of understanding change itself*, for which new names must be found/created. Hallward (2003) provides an instructive discussion of Badiou’s concept of change as “a blending of Kuhn’s emphasis on innovation and Lakatos’s emphasis on commitment” (p. 210). With Kuhn, Badiou holds that the instance of truth in change (as a matter of scientific knowledge) “begins with an “anomaly”’’ that violates expectations. The ‘rethinking of objectivity’ which results, for Badiou, diverges from the Khunian ‘relativism’—of what Lakatos regards finally as a “matter of mob psychology” (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 211)—and instead fore-fronts *refutations* as intimate to change. With Lakatos, Badiou aligns around the subjective imperative at work in change: “What really count are dramatic, unexpected, stunning *predictions*” of a “sustained creativity or “resourcefulness”...driven by *suspicion* of all established knowledge” (p. 211, emphases added). As for Badiou’s notion of fidelity, “in order to preserve an effectively unlimited creativity” this view of change requisitions “the confrontation of form with its real limit or impasse” (p. 213), such that, Hallward allows, “Badiou has never strayed from Lacan’s neo-Cartesian prescription, that (modern) scientific thought begins at an absolute distance from any knowledge acquired through sensory or imaginary “intuition”” (p. 213).
Gödel-Easton for Badiou)—subjectivity is the ontological prescription of the quantitative excess of ‘being’ over the merely ‘existent’ (and thus is its literal impossibility in terms of the latter). The disassociated subject of psychoanalysis is re-associated in mathematical formalization by Badiou as the material infinite (more on which in the next chapter’s discussion of the subject-to-truth). Such articulations of a variously impossible condition provide ethical provocation in that they expose, as an ethical question, the terms of what would otherwise remain obscure in ideological deferral: Flight into abstract idealist fantasy, or the precise means of its ethical confrontation? As a point of departure for modern education’s ethical thought, this confrontation with ethical institution brings into view an otherwise sublated decision, brings into view an “un-thought conceit” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 37), a choice we may be making where ethics are concerned, even though we may not know we are making it.212

Beyond the wresting into view the subject as an ethical question in thought, from the affordance of the ethical disassociation of psychoanalysis and the thinking of the impossibilities to which it permits approach, it is my argument that here is a further domain wherein ethics in education may find new conditions. Here these subsist in discourse as a disruptive conception of truth, one consisting in a subjective incitement, one that is neither merely ‘engagement’ (as the liberal anxiety of educative participation would figure it) nor ‘fulfillment’ (as a more commercial spiritualism would). It is an incitement first faithful to the conditions of its own medium, of a place in discourse for a concept of truth, freighted with neither the transcendental nor constructivist prohibitions on ethical thought. It is a matter of ethical thought as a subjective context, of the inherent

212 In service of interest over truth, and what Bartlett (2011) calls the “keynote” of sophistic education, the “un-thought conceit,” is simply that it “knows what it is and what it is not” (p. 37).
alienation of its derogation as alien, of the failing self-identicality of the objects and operations by which we would secure our worlds, or the impossible condition of the emergence of the subject.

While the question of ethics as subjective formalization is clearly, and for good reason, a foreign one, one of a place where the ‘alien’ becomes ‘impossible,’ psychoanalytic thought helps thematize its 'impossibilities' in order to limn its terrain, as conditions of truth, of concern both in language (as the comic realism of the next chapter) and also in (post-Cantorian) mathematics. To put the ball of this particular contextualization fully in motion, it is atypically Badiou himself (for he mentions education so rarely) who appreciates the essential moment in Freudian thought for education, with regard for its ‘eventualization’ of childhood

not as an innocent parenthesis (a simple “before” adulthood) or a moment of training and development (of “dressage”), but rather as a sequence of events whose consequences are duly assumed by the unconscious subject. This allowed for an analysis of childhood as an unfolding process of creative thought, that is, of thought able to transform itself. Freud’s most essential insight was “Something has happened, it cannot be erased, and the constitution of the subject depends on it.” (Hallward, 2003, p. 113, emphasis in original)
Clearly, something important, and indeed also impossible, is being developed here, with profound implications for educational thought.\textsuperscript{213} Analysis of this passage depends entirely on how far one is willing to go. Let us consider this point. Childhood is neither parenthesis nor finishing. But that would not be enough, an admonishment, and no more. It involves unfolding creativity. Still not sufficient, it is the cant of a romance of childhood. This unfolding is self-transformation. This is more suggestively profound, but lacking a context, an element of its own. The ‘most essential insight’ remains indispensible, that without which the rest is ornamental educational rhetoric: Something has happened, something of central import to the absolute condition of our lives, but we do not know what it is. On this depends our subjectivity, or ethical being. How to think subjective agency and its opacities is a question without end for education. This is not merely ‘difficult’—for difficulty has nothing to do with it, is of the language of the possible and the promise of a guarantee (that all will be revealed . . .)—it is, rather, as Burgess advises, ‘so impossible that you’ll do it.’ As a formal matter, truth will have been so.

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\textsuperscript{213} Britzman’s (2009b) extended meditation on educational impossibility stands as a fine attempt to “bind education to its own unthought” (p. 2), although her Arendtian concept of natality is rather too obscure to this reader. Where impossibility is concerned, I have frequently found that where Arendt ceases, Badiou begins. Of course Arendt has her reasons, which my theorization of the anti-Platonic anathema contest. In my view, for Arendt the world we win in natality is secured at the expense of its thought, that she requisitions Aristotelian obscurantism where Badiou instructs we need not, or advises its temptation we ought to resist.
5.3 Subjective Enlightenment: Modern Forms of the Subject

you are already committed. (Pascal, Pensées)

Israel’s (2001) work on radical Enlightenment—figured as its wholesale (for him, ontologically Spinozist) confrontation with the status quo—describes the ‘crisis of mind’ of the advent of the modern as a sort of broadly philosophical revolution. This was one by which, as also elaborated by Toulmin, ‘everything,’ an entire cosmology, changed in “one of the most important shifts in the history of man” (Israel, 2001, p. vii). He describes its import as more significant than the either the Renaissance or Reformation, casting these as “really only adjustments . . . to what was essentially still a theologically conceived and ordered regional society” (p. vi). The moves toward universality and equality underwriting what was truly effective of the complete (and indeed ongoing) ‘upheaval’ of the Enlightenment were central to the so-called radical Enlightenment in far greater importance in his thesis than the ostensibly moderate one.214 In this distinction between radical and moderate Enlightenment, we may discern the accommodations215 of late-Enlightenment thought to liberal constructivist gradualism (of the phronetic stripe as well as the theistic inversions of alterity). These comprise an element of ‘Counter-Enlightenment’ to the extent that these disavow the radicality of the

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214 Israel’s finding that the ‘radical’ in the Enlightenment had a prominence “…in European intellectual debates of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century…generally far greater than anyone would suppose from reading the existing secondary literature” (Israel, 2001, p. 12-13) lends weight to the ‘radical’ historiography of modernity’s self-conception in the ‘writing of History’ so exhaustively chronicled by de Certeau.

215 This Israel refers to the impetus of the majority of moderate Enlightenment thought which, pace also de Certeau, sought to accommodate ‘new streams of [Enlightenment] thought’ with prior (theologically scriptural and academically Aristotelian) authorities.
ethos in which they are founded, and by which they respond to emerging conditions. This is to say that modernity retains a formal radicality, one subsumed however within its ideological settlements. In my view this implicates us, inheritors of an ethos, in that we too live within the challenge of the radicality of an overturned cosmos, within ‘astonishing’ irruption in the orders of the organization of the world, and a still-incomplete process of subjective unfolding. The contention here is that we too choose to align ourselves either within the evental condition of Enlightenment modernity or with the reconciliation of a gradualist incremental ‘perspective, wherein a correlative Aristotelianism still reigns ontologically.\(^{216}\) I have explored this latter dispensation as ethics in education as the correlation within the presumption of intrinsic, qualitative (intensive) relatedness of constructive and transcendental ontologies. As defenses of the ‘mysteries’ once Christian and latterly secular, this has been figured here as an oscillating ethical governance by a sublimated god of constructivist faith on one hand, and the substantialized other (or ‘difference’) of ethics of alterity, on the other. However, it is for here to move toward the radicality of our inheritance, to articulate an evental condition for ethics, and in so doing forswear becoming what Badiou (2005b) calls the “amateurs of compromise” in adaptation to “both the social authority . . . and to the ruptures in the edifice of rationalism” (p. 215). For nothing decisive is required, where the ethical issue of truth is concerned, following from such a “conservative pact with the world” (p. 219); its ethics prescribe that, rather than become nothing as the condition of the creation of becoming anything, we simply do nothing.

\(^{216}\) This is independent of its more explicit deployment & modernization such as that of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, and even of the less explicit of Hannah Arendt.
In Israel's thesis, it is far more the radical Enlightenment to which we owe the natality of modern thought, and it is through this view of a struggle, one in which, consciously or not, we participate in the ongoing Enlightenment project today, within which we must irredeemably situate the aspiration to educate. I raise this characterization as a ‘contextualization’ in order to move it into the service of the question of subjective formalism, and here will complete this relocation by outlining a schema of subjectivity from Badiou's work that can help move my argument about ethics as subjective formalization forward, and to situate it within the continuing struggles of the Enlightenment ethos of modernity.

What then are the subjective parameters of the question of the Enlightenment, ones we may secret into our teaching, unconsciously convey in our pedagogies, which direct by way of prefiguring, and un-figuring, its pathways, or those of our thinking education? Moreover, how do such parameters, those formalities of thought, help us think further about subjectivity and ethics as a non-ideological aspiration, within what I call the a-theological infinite?

This section elaborates the formal subjective topography of this study, drawn from the Badiou's *Logics of Worlds* (2009a). As subjective formalities of modernity, of its ‘Enlightenment,’ these he calls reactive, obscure and faithful subjective formalisms. For educators, we may consider them ways to be modern, ways Enlightenment modernity already is a formal matter of the production and emergence of subjects. I use these here to begin this study’s most determined stand for a new ethics in education, as its extant subjective modes, ones I tie to the educational ethics of the previous chapter, and also to their persistence as modern ethico-ontological instances. Adding subjective articulation
to the critical, historiographic and speculative is where the terrain of ethical inquiry becomes especially challenging. It is also perhaps where, in the productive confrontations of differing orientations of thought, of the ways we—our students, our institutions, our ‘state’—are and could be, precisely where ethical inquiry becomes most important.

In my schematization of modern subjective forms, I move this section’s discussion of subjective form of Enlightenment modernity into related ethical questions of the subject (as how it may become thinkable) and event (here of the modern advent itself). I elaborate their dynamism as a matter of the temporalities of subject form, because I find this an instructive supplement—in the question of the concept of time implicated in subjective forms—to an effort to advance subjective form as an ethical context of modernity. Moreover, this contextualization gestures toward the emplacement of these formal figures within the ontological affordances previously discussed in educational thought: Those of the ontological ‘oscillation’ (of constructivism and transcendence) linked by the sublimated Aristotelian implications of intensive co-extension (symbolic enclosure, relation, subjective destitution) within the modern ideological genesis, and expressed in educational ethics as phronetic realism and ‘ethical’ alterity. Note, therefore, how each of the subjective formalisms I discuss in the subsections below is indebted to, is indeed only expressive of, a subject in association with the event (of modernity), and in the differing ontological dispensations of modernity (constructivist, transcendental and finally generic), and further how these may be seen in comprehensively diverse ways. By developing more fully the theorization of the subject as of formal conditions (of modernity, of related and unrelated ontological investments),
it is this diversity that provides for an articulation of new conditions for ethical subjectivity in education. For it leads us into the otherwise within the what is of human subjectivity.

5.3.1 The Reactive Modern Subject

First, we have what Badiou (2009a) calls the reactive subject, the paradoxical subjective form which incites reaction to the ‘the call of the new’ of assenting resistance “appropriate to the novelty itself” (p. 54), that is, to its ostensible objective form, to its ‘settlement’ as knowledge. Here the response to the event—such as the unfinished cosmological rupture that is the modern advent—is of cautious measurement (of degrees of affinity). Ontologically, the subjective form of this response is of what Badiou calls the state—or that which first represents what is presented—and is thereby the insinuation of a limit, or finitism, within inconsistent, incomplete, and finally ultimately unfigurable or untotizable, presentation (which for Badiou is infinite or inconsistent multiplicity). The state is that which counts what ‘counts’ itself as a further one, as structure or operation—for this is its very guarantee, as seen in the discussion of phronetic ethics as the substantialized postulates (‘imaginative’ rationality, objects (subject and world), and virtue) of method. In the historiographical mode in which I began this study, this ontological form may be adduced to the expansive history of modern invention and innovation of Euro-Atlantic Enlightenment and industrial revolution, marshalled to the denigration of the radical novelty, contingency and uninsured risk on which it rests. In reactive subjectivity, devotion is denial: The devotion to the present in all its wondrous multifariousness is the denial of its creative virtue, of its uncharacterizable status as such.
Moralistically, this modern present is, according to Badiou, “a measured present, a negative present, a present ‘a little less worse’ than the past” (p. 55). That the constructivist faith of a reactive subjective form at once denies what it exalts is what makes its ethical conundrum so confusing, so oddly deracinating. Its conformity empowers itself from the constructivist self-evidence of a denied divinity (which becomes a judicious method, as discussed in chapter 2), and accumulates mountains of evidence thereby (note here the relevance of Benjamin’s “Angel of History,” gazing backward at the accumulating wreckage of ‘progress’). Reactive subjects thereby participate in the auto-disassociation of the paradoxical production (for production is the grounding métier) of the immediacy of the present, of its pure vacancy (as the material of something else, of the hidden hand of progress, Capital, meaningfulness and so on. . .). This Badiou (2009a) calls “an extinguished present” (p. 55).

It is important to note that the fervour of a reactive subject finds its genesis in the event it is at pains to deny, even as it ostensibly furthers its denatured (or 'naturalized') project. Its force remains however that of the event it denies, and thus its nearly insurmountable secular allure: In the denial of a sublimated god (of a powerful advent nonetheless), the reactive subject wins the guarantee of the dawning of its world without the incalculable risk which even its figuration involves. This pyrrhic victory comes at the price of the loss of a present of vital, or constitutive, subjective participation; a present for the lost subject, one constituted in the loss of ethical advent as a subjective impetus.

217 “His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.” (Benjamin, 1940)
In contemporary education we see such ethical derogation in the administration of codes of ‘conduct’ and the jurisprudence of professionalism, of grateful or acquiescent devotion to procedure, and such may be articulated as a constructivist ethical conceit in terms of the extinguishing (of the present) of reactive subjective formalism. The curiosity of this arrangement is that the satisfaction of the promulgation of ethical anemia depends in this instance upon the advent it both resources and suppresses—it draws its authority from what it is at pains to deny. A paradoxical subjective condition, of course, of a beginning founded in an internment, of a libratory ideological incarceration, such is a formal echo (an *echo of the subject*, to again recall Lacoue-Labarthe) of the modern advent itself.

In concert with its troubling the implicit moral good of social reproduction (of, for example, the current curricular fetish of ‘social responsibility’), the elaboration of reactive subjective formalism goes some distance to help locate and broaden the question of the ethical pacification prosecuted within institutional education—which, it may be heretical to admit, is predicated on what it domesticates. In terms of subjective form, we see here ethical nourishment by the death of a championed present, the deferral of its undecidable vitality by virtue of explicit developmentalisms and the implicit ontologics which make these so intractable, which make them both moral and ‘real.’ Reactive subjective form is here to be thought as prescriptive of 1) *progression-to* within 2) the ersatz *infinite medium* its deferral represses. In Cantorian terms, this infinite is that of the ‘limit ordinal,’ or the virtual ‘first’ infinite reached beyond—meaning both ‘after’ and ‘without’—the ordinal succession on which constructivist faith is modeled. By way of such ‘necessary’ instrumentalities—for necessity is the form of a commitment to the unthinkable alternatives—the subject here is liberated within the logics of
reactionary formalism into the grant of a present that does not exist. This is the fabled ‘real world’ so dear to pedagogical moralism—and, I would insist, the index of its impotence. Its realist compact is ceaselessly generative of the conditions of concomitant constructivist theism and its phronetic re-form (of what already is), to enact an expression of the conjoined holism from which there appears little option but to conform, to find a drum of responsible progress to sound, in the pious hammering of an imperial liberal freedom, in the cacophony of the apparently modern reason. In facilitative alignment with constructivist ontology and the conceptual realism of its phronetic ethics, reactive formalism is thus a subjective ethics in education.

For my purposes, as a matter of contextualization in subjective formalism—here to the event of modernity subtracted from objectivist compacts—ethics becomes new avenues of ethical thought for the educator. Thinking reactive subjective formalism briefly further here with Badiou can demonstrate how.

In Badiouian terms, reactive subjectivity is truthful—to the event of the modern advent, its deliverance, the condition of its fervour—but unfaithful. Its betrayal, in somewhat reductive terms, is the denial of creative militancy—which for Badiou is beholden only to the void that incites new logics, new worlds—by way of sophistical and reifying objectivities (the social, knowledge, the phronetic good, the ‘real’ world, and so on). These, in Badiouian parlance, are the work of the ‘priests’ of reactive subjective form, or those who enforce the subjectivization of the category of the object, and the illusions of the ontological bind it implies (of becoming as a matter of representation, whose current index, when not the inflected devotion of an administrative neoliberal ‘passion,’ is ‘learning’). In this figuration of ethical anemia as a (reactive) subjective
matter, life is thought within a subjective form of “a reasonable survival” (p. 56) in what is essentially a phenomenological reconciliation: Of an inert, passive, available ‘world’ of atomistic logics (that is, single or plural) and its correlative rational and ethical responsiveness, delimited by the reassuring ideologic of bivalent realism (discussed as phronetic sobriety in the previous chapter). Constructivist confidence and the world it installs follows the following subjective trajectory: The simplicity one yearns for is already won, for it can only be yearned for because it already is, because it is already available, spontaneous, and intuitive, as a subjective formalism of modernity, that is, as the immediate closure of its (impossible) horizon of transformation. The opening of reactive subjective form is thus an immediate closure. It closes (in mediation) as it ‘opens.’

It would be difficult today to deny that one is a reactive subject, such is the ubiquity of its formalism. As I will discuss with regard to ‘faithful’ subjective formalism, a step toward ethically assuming its reactionary complicities is to decide for what Badiou calls fidelity (to predicate, or suppose, the generic)²¹⁸ and, in so doing, by “interrupt the indetermination of state power and force the state to declare itself, to show its hand—normally in the form of repression” (Hallward, 2003, p. 96-97). Ontologically, the state again is what counts what ‘counts’ as measureless arcana, an infinite multiplicity of the plural proliferation of integral ones it, in the modern sublimation of an Aristotelian

²¹⁸Badiou (2005b) advises that ‘generic’ is “the adjective retained by mathematicians to designate the indiscernible, the absolutely indeterminate” (p. 356). It is also the (voided) extension by which new genres or idioms of being may emerge. Psychoanalysis offers a way to think the generic by way of the feminine symbolic as ‘not-all’ (contradistinction to the ontologies of the ‘One’ of discrete knowledge or its inverse). Typical of reactive subjective formalism, Kovacevic’s (2007) argues however that “the paternal position remains the axis around which the establishment of ethical values revolves” (p. 48), that its essentialist, objective grounding is the prosecution of the ‘masculine’ position in language: the “belief in the signifier’s unproblematic nature” and “the possibility of its unmediated relation to some kind of substantive reality” (p. 208).
operation, has rigged the game to produce by virtue of a discrete—or discretizing, to deploy a truly horrible term—formalism. This is the operation of reaction, it produces the integral of the evental. An inventive confrontation with ontological statism exposes its chimera as the apparent measurelessness of the constructivist deferral and guarantor: Of the spurious, or denumerable, infinity, which underwrites it. This is the exposure of the (subjective) method of a “rigged tribunal of results” (the proliferation of languages and their knowledges) procedural of the “omnipresent ‘realist’ voice” (Badiou, 2007a, p. 144).

Badiou (2007a) disinters the theological underpinning sublimated in constructivist ontology in the subjective figure of the (entirely rational, and secular) priest, a figure useful as a cautionary tale in education: “a priest is anyone for whom rebellion is no longer an unconditional value; a priest is anyone who measures everything in terms of “objective” results” (p. 145). In this work, I have considered the presumed availabilities of ethics of phronesis toward its broader ethical figuration as reactive subjective formalism, in order to put the question of ethics into a generatively ontological venue, whose name remains, for now, simply subjectivity.

5.3.2 The Obscure Modern Subject

A second subjective formalism I consider for purposes of contextualizing ethics as a subjective matter is one dependent upon the first, is a movement based on the reaction of reactive subjectivity (as Lacan's university discourse is at a ninety degree
remove from, and dependent on, the master discourse). Badiou (2009a) calls this next formalism, or form of thought, that of the obscure subject. Unlike the assumption/disavowal of the creative power of the event to the reactive subject, the obscure subject occults it, ensconces it within a past illuminated “by the night of the present” (p. 59). A species of transcendentalism, obscure subjective formalism draws inspiration and authority from “the invocation of a full and pure transcendent Body, an a-historical or anti-evental body (City, Nation, God, Race . . .)” (p. 59-60). Like the ethical of the ‘ethical turn,’ obscure subjectivity suppresses the ‘divided body’ (here of reason and its other) in favour of an ‘essential’ one—typically as a moral figure or exemplar, the embodied ‘good.’ The ‘fetish’ of the good here supplants or silences the problem of the ‘real,’ it buries its divisions (like that of radical from moderate Enlightenment) and their conditions of contingency. To reactive subjectivity, as a corrective, balm and therapeutic restoration (of the explicitly divine, or transcendental), obscure subjective formalism prescribes determined flight from its own internal contradictions, of the failure of the ‘whole’ and the exacerbated moralisms thereof. These then only attend it in comic fashion, like the man fleeing the burning of his pants, and subsequently give rise—exemplary of the modern onto-oscillation itself—again to the reactive subjective formalities of the skeptic of recent anti-religious fashion. The irony here is that obscure subjective form resources the totalizations of transcendental ontologics to occult evental or generic ontologics as themselves obscure—as ‘fanatical’ (see especially Toscano, 2010) in the language of the liberal imperium, or ‘hysterical’ in the psychoanalytic

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219 Lacan’s four discourse positions vis-à-vis the Real present themselves each at ‘ninety degrees’ from the previous, which roughly means dynamically emerging therefrom. Each position differently locates (as agent, other, product and truth) the subject, knowledge, the signifier and the object petit a (which is the kernel of contingency as absent foundation of signification) (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 129).
lexicon (following Lacan, see Chiesa, (2007) and Kovacevic (2007)), against which the moderate settlement prescribes the ‘spiritual’ alternative of a quiescent ‘post-modern’ fatigue. Perhaps the first form of obscurantism is to imply obscurity, and then ride to the rescue with an ostensibly less-obscure clarity, with relief, that is. Along with progressive fusion and iconoclasm, obscurantism is the characteristic production of obscure subjectivity according to Badiou. In response to the moralizing gravities of the obscure return to the event it ideates (or makes ‘One’ of), Badiou is unsparing about the corruption of obscure subjectivity of the very real (or Real) irruption constitutive of new destines:

under the incomprehensible but salvific sign of an absolute body, whose only demand is that one serves it by nurturing everywhere and at all times the hatred of every living thought, every transparent language and every uncertain becoming (p. 61).

Like the Lacanian aggressivity of norms, this is the hatred expressed within holism. As a present less denied than relegated ‘into the night of non-exposition,’ the occultation of obscure subjective formalism occurs via the imposition of the moral categories (as seen in ethics of alterity with respect to the implicate hydrazas of respect, tolerance and the self) of ethical idealism. These owe their genezes to illuminations now distant, echoes whose scant residues offers us in education only enfeebled alternate forms by which to contest the monolithic self-evidence of reactive subjectivity—this is ethical turn as the self-depletion of the modern ontological settlement, its complicity with conformist passivity, the ethical weakness of “apocalyptic liberalism” (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 201).
Against the subjective productions of visibilities which secret the ‘real’ (of eventual, voided, singularity and transformation) elsewhere (subjectively domesticated in reactive constructivism, or transcended in the generous raptures of obscure subjectivity), the move toward faithful subjectivity pays a dear inaugural price: That of knowing.\textsuperscript{220} In this speculative subjective domain of thought, of ethical inquiry, we confront obscure subjective form in the challenge to think how neo-liberal rhetorics of reform in education conflate with the neo-humanist. This is to consider how students no longer ‘succeed’ (as in reactive academicism), but rather are ‘produced’ (citizens, employees, individuals), vested with competencies and skills and redeemed by passionate attachments. As the obscure forms of subjective emancipation, subjectivity itself is no longer simply a matter of students, of who students ostensibly are and can be thought to be, but also so much less and more, as the student returns as that which redeems the order that produces them, is virtuous. This is subjectivity as nominalist, produced, and productive of what produces it. The circularity of such unimpeded subjective ‘production’ is no great revelation, however the ways in which horizons of transformation close with efficacy as reactive subjectivities and redeemed by obscure ones is, as the denials of the former are elided in the raptures of the latter, as students (reacting within the epistemic edifices of modernity, mastering subjects and latterly competencies etc.) become ‘products’ of the reformative processes of 21\textsuperscript{st} century learning. In the latter category, the event of modernity can no longer exist as a question, is no longer conveyed in knowledges, but is rather expressed formally, as a style of being, implication of an image (or icon). Obscure subjective

\textsuperscript{220} Consistent with the Socratic claim to ignorance, this follows from what for Plato was “the universal condition of education” as manifested then in Athenian society: Of a lack of non-sophistic education, of an education for which there is a lack of knowledge (Bartlett, 2011, p. 7). Apropos of which parenthetically we may consider the sense of British novelist Amis’ purposes of reading: To feel stupid and numb.
formalism no longer admits to knowledge of that to what it reacts, and this is its faithful occlusion. Like the infidelity of a reactive denial, such occlusion is a formal ethical condition that requires as ‘faithful’ subjective form a searching commitment. Denial and occlusion are thus also venues of a faithful ethical alignment, but within the condition of contingency by which must be thought to subsist the immanent address of truth—as the generic matter of constitutive incompleteness, or the voided infinite. The difficulties of this commitment also give us the subjective form of liberation, the elaboration of an educational ethics of subjectification that is not arrested at the critical figure of the subject, as if that were sufficient.

5.3.3 The Faithful Modern Subject

With all of confidence, but none of the certainty, faithful subjectivity is a sort of prophecy of late modern mathematical inspiration, one whose ‘conversion’ is to an infinite rather than finite condition. It acquires its immediacy (as ‘the production of a present’) in a sort of declarative insistence and a type of thinking; like psychoanalysis, it is a type of thinking (a matter of the subtraction and creation of forms) rather than any particular knowledge (an epistemological commitment). Aside, for the moment, from the subjective avowals of an educational vocation to, within, or of, an immanent condition of infinity, we here need emphasize an education whose ethicality subsists in, and as, a type

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221 This I explicate as an ethical matter in the next chapter, while here I pursue contrasting subjective formalisms. These could have been reversed, for arguably better explanatory power, but at the expense of rendering the question of the subject less central a concern.

222 See also Žižek’s (2003a) discussion of Dupuy’s “time of the project” (p. 160) as an elaborated counter-position to “the horizon of linear evolution”—which retroacts the predication of possibility (and thus instrumentality and the deferral/obscuration of impossibility) such that “the encounter with the Real as impossible is therefore always missed.” In curricular terms, what is compelling about the time of the project is that curriculum would be thought to be effective only insofar as it is not fully efficient. The “time of the project” is founded in the disturbance of “perfect self-closure.”
of thinking (of a subject constituted therein) and pursue the implications of this as an ethical adventure of the most serious sort. Here education may share in what, infinitely richly, distinguishes psychoanalysis from psychology (a mode of thinking from a domain of knowledge), or perhaps even humanities from social science, but to do so requires considerable conceptual resources, it is not ‘obvious’—except perhaps in the Orwellian sense of what is most easily overlooked. Indeed, this subjective commitment is not even knowledge about a type of thinking, but instead rather its subjective consequences. For, if thinking its formalisms in late modern radical Enlightenment has indicated anything, it is that being a subject is not a condition to secure in advance in the guarantee of a concept or process. It is not, like a garment, or a style of personality, or even, by way of learning, something one can acquire or ‘get;’ undimmed, it remains something (a form) one may be. And, by virtue of its rarity, its ontological inscription, its constitutive role in ethical becoming, a subject is the more important for this.

Badiou (2005d) advises that “truth is first of all, something new” (p. 45), and therefore it is inevitable that “for all its subjective power . . . true thought must accept a certain ignorance regarding exactly what and how it thinks” (Hallward, 2003, p. 156). Faithful subjective formalism—the forms of faithful subjectivity—predicates a wager on something unknown (of the order of the event), and therefore, to paraphrase Eco, something which cannot assume the form of belief. Aligning transformation and truth proceeds by the mathematical logics of extensive sets (which for Badiou is both

223 Chiesa puts a clear point on this at the end of Subjectivity and Otherness (2007): “any possible…elaboration of the ethics of the ex-nihilo must rely on the equation between what is new and what is good” (p. 192).
ontological thinking and its subjective form); these offer a conception of advent as borne of the inherent excess of the non-atomistic, rather than of either benumbed constructive seriality (considered above as the guarantor of phronetic ethics), or the finite One of the transcendental ‘pure’ difference (Chiesa, 2007, p. 187) of alterity. The present of a faithful subject is thus not ‘immediate,’ not a ‘pure diamond of truth’ explicit or implicit, but rather one ineluctably mediated by the specific and local infinite transit through form—not a substantialized infinite content, but rather its formal void. Thus a temporality of the future anterior, the present of faithful subjective formalism is the uncertain result of a wager, one whose consequences may not be known until persistence in its indiscernibilities precipitates new forms, new knowledge, new subjective genres, new logics and their contingent worlds. Without any way to recognize the extensive local infinite address, we can only declaim a formalism by which it ‘will-have-been’ so. And this I claim is the mediacy of an ethics of education—whose insistence is not obscure, but rather discrete, that is, is a specific matter of subjective formalism. This I will discuss further in the next chapter. For here it is to have sufficed to introduce the ethical remit of subjective formalism as the relevant domain, or modern contextualization, for a new thinking of ethics in education.

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Math here figured as “nothing other than ‘being thinking itself’” (Hallward, 2003, p. 220), the fecundity of its impossibility for Badiou is, in my terms, the very life of the modern ethic, its permission to thought to be organized by being. Extensive sets we may recall are those utterly changed by the addition of a single new element; are those constituted by the indiscernible.
5.4 Conclusion: Subjective Formalism and Modern Educational Ethics

*All things proceed from the Nothing, and are borne towards the Infinite.*

*Who will follow these marvellous processes?* (Pascal, *Pensées*)

This chapter provides some of the resources for thinking ethics as a subjective matter in that it contextualizes them as the matter of subjective form: That ultimately of *which Enlightenment an educator would avow*, which modernity to assume as an authoritative ethical condition, a domain of ethical truth, or of *being* (as given perhaps in the impasses of ontology). The reactive subject to constructivist ontology is spontaneist, intuitive; the obscure subject of transcendental ontology is dogmatic, idealist; the faithful subject of generic ontology is divided among determinations and their generic, or voided, extensions. The conservative formalisms of the modern subject to Enlightenment enact the closures of finite worlds, while the more radical faithful subjective formalism proceeds within the confines of representation toward its productive dissolution, in an affirmative confidence of non-self-identity, or that of its actual ‘real’—which is *its* formal dispersion by the Real. The faithful subject of generic ontology is clearly a thinker, indeed, for Badiou, the subject is “summoned *as thought*” (2006 p. 145, emphasis added).\(^{225}\) This is a thinking more complicated, or multiple, than either its transcendental sibling or constructivist cousin. It is rather *their unconscious*—which is to say, thinking

\[^{225}\text{Thought in this speculative and ontological sense may be understood by way of Badiou’s (2008a) Dedekind, as “That which does not allow itself to be thought as thought of a thought is the act of thinking itself, the ‘I think.’ The ‘I think’ is non-decomposable; it is impossible to grasp it as a thought of another thought, since every thought presupposes it” (p. 39, emphasis in original). Further, this conception of self-voiding thought is to be understood as inherent to certain ethical conditions: “The obsession with ‘finitude’ is a remnant of the tyranny of the sacred. The ‘Death of God’ does not deliver us to finitude, but to the omnipresent infinitude of situations, and, correlative, to the infinity of the thinkable” (p. 86). This, for Žižek (2003a), is indeed what Christianity (perversely) enacts, where it is God’s sacrifice (of himself) that is true human liberation (provided one can follow God’s lead, that is, to atheism).}
in faithful subjective form consists in their instances and productions, but made unknown to themselves, non-self-coincident.

If, in terms of subjective formalism, educational malaise may be attributed to a sort of pacification of one sort of another—of over-determination within the social project, of the fatalist resignation of language, by way of a-subjective moralisms, in the ‘ontological’ prescriptions of assumed conditions edified by the imprimatur ‘real,’ and the myriad educational investments in the many conditions it projects itself suited to remedy—and indeed if education may be thought therein as the derivative effect of the anxieties which underwrite and haunt it, as a symptom of a social founding and civil religion and also of their many correctives, we are given always to consider how these may propel the educational project into new domains at a fatal distance from the present it arguably also must constitute. If a present—transparently infinite in the condition of faithful subjective formalism—is indeed of educational significance, if it is to be signified as an educational matter, we are called to confront its occultation and defeat, most especially those prosecuted in the name of its ‘reality’!

Thereafter, participation in the ‘drama of the event’ becomes the subjective aspiration. It is one affirmed and positivized around the self-voiding (subtracted is Badiou’s term) locus of a ‘real’ approached with a rigor which refuses to intuit or dogmatize it, refuses to know how to know it, as a decision which is constitutively barred from these as such, and subsequent to a critique of ideology, which maintains as constitutive a figure of absence (as discussed as a modern ethical condition in chapter 2). This is a thinking which keeps in movement its conditions, thereby maintaining them as such, and not as facts or objects, concepts or examples, propositions or definitions, but as
the condition of truth in all of these. Despite the unmanageably infinite manifestations in which this aspiration may find its argument, and against the nearly overwhelming array of discursive determinations in which contemporary education finds itself projected, I argue that a thinking such as this—a thoroughly subjective commitment to thought—is productive of ethical conditions (new worlds and the continuance of their formal search). As such, this may come to constitute an ethics central to education in its most ambitious, indeed its most truthful, form. For this is its ancient form as education-by-truths, one finally now utterly a-theistic, and one properly impossible inasmuch as the priest (defender of the guarantee implicit in constructivist and transcendental ontological oscillation) reigns, and still haunts the subjective itinerary with the impoverishing spectres of interest. Indeed, here we discover as a subjective matter what radical Enlightenment is (a condition first in the subtraction of God, authority and orders of ‘confessional’ power, then from those of epistemic power, and latterly from those of the temptations of the transcendental ethical restoration). Its decisive explication is what a subjectification conception of education must claim if it is to not become socialization by another name, socialization within, for example, the neo-humanist determinates of the obscure subjective forms of ethics of alterity, or the rational humanist ones of reactive

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226 A condition of truth follows (as seen in the next chapter) from an ontology of the ‘void,’ which is disjunct—and not conjunct—because ‘nothing’ about it may be said to differ from what it is implicate within; immanent and not transcendental, the void is that by which difference itself finally differs, it is the point at which non-self-coincidence is co-articulation, and, in this sense, the most rigorous form of equality. As Hallward observes, Badiou’s ‘voiding’ ontological incitement is a form of “logical revolt” (p. 37), of logic against itself, in its own service by virtue of its constitutive incompletion, which is for Badiou a participation in the Platonic sense, of a subject implicated in logics (of ‘worlds’) as what changes them (the ‘event’).

227 Also an ancient aspiration, in that, for Plato, truth is a fundamental condition of the “very possibility of [education]” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 6). Anti-Platonic cant in modernity conversely permits, via both reactive and obscure formalisms, the persistence of neo-Aristotelian correlations (with world, with virtue, with self etc. etc.).
subjective forms of phronetic ethics. What is the wherewithal of such an explication? What is its ethics?

Remaining for this study is to elaborate an immanent subjective ethics, derived from the (faithful) formalities of an immanent ontological alternative to the constructivist and transcendental ontologies of the prevalent oscillation of ethical authorities in late modernity. Where this chapter paves the way with contextualizations and formalizations of the subjective in ethics, the next finishes the job in dispensing with the inherent ethical finitism of modern educational ethics explicitly, and as a question of modes of representation proper to differing ethical dispensations. To displace the tensile privilege of finitude from the ideological pre-eminence it assumes in the legislation of the ‘real,’ as an ethics in education on a different basis, but with the same materials, a subjective ethics is now to be elaborated upon the generic ontologics that re-inscribe the ‘real’ as a condition of truth, and an answer to Pascal’s question ‘Who will follow these marvellous processes?’ As educators, we will.
Chapter 6 Generic Ethics and Modes of Representation

6.1 Introduction: Articulating Subjectivity

*there exists no norm upon which we might found the idea of a 'human subject.'*

(Hallward, 2003, p. 12)

*on the shores of a Nothingness.* (Badiou, 2008a, p. 51)

As this study draws toward a conclusion, the issue for ethics in education has become that of subjective formalism (of and in what to think the subject). I have discussed this domain as constitutive of subjective ethics, as thought within a subjectification conception of education, as an ‘impossible’ matter within the instruction of psychoanalytic theory and especially as one *already implicated* as a formal matter in the modern ethical settlement. The remaining affirmative task is to articulate subjectivity as an ethical matter in education. The subject (and its formalism) I advance here is of course Badiou's *subject to truth*, or that thinkable by way of generic ontology’s immanence to the modern onto-ethical oscillation of transcendent and constructive expressions (which I discuss in the fourth chapter as realist and utopian ethics of phronesis and alterity in education, and in the fifth as a matter of implicated subjective formalisms of modernity). To draw this discussion together, I devote this chapter to two primary purposes: First to begin to constitute an ethics by way of the analytic figures of truth in Badiou's system and second, to supplement these with what Zupančič calls
‘modes of representation’ of ethical subjective immanence; to propose therefore, beyond its formalism with respect solely to modernity, finally the subject as ethical matter of both mathematical formalism and comic realism, and thereby, to an extent, read its ontological challenges ‘back’ into language.\textsuperscript{228} A persistent theme of this study has been how to think the subject given that such thinking is always already emplaced within various (‘realist’ and ‘idealist’) ideographic itineraries: Of education's social emplacement, of the broader objectivism of moderate Enlightenment, of the occluding mysticism of spiritualized selfhood and the culturalization of plurality, of a neo-liberal audit culture which combines both the obscure subjective formalism of the production of selves and the reactive one of the production of society, and so on. My purpose has been less to show how these fail as to consider a condition in which they could not be integral authorities, and by which they may be assumed as the condition in education—as an educational ethics—of something (infinitely) else, as what Badiou terms ‘the justice of the new.’\textsuperscript{229}

Education in the infinite condition, of ethical subjectivity to truth in Badiou's terms, devolves from the immanence of generic, or subtractive, ontology. It is inherent in ethical aspiration, as discussed at length in foregoing chapters, in and as the dis-integrating ways, we might then say, our ethics fail us. In this ethical problematic the

\textsuperscript{228} Here I refer to Badiou’s (2008a) translation of the formal ontological consequences of the ‘revolutionary’ Cantorian demonstration that “there are more parts than elements” (p. 63)—that indiscernible generic sets exist—of any set whatsoever. In this chapter I supplement the formal (ontological) with its consideration as of linguistic ‘success,’ or the ways in which language too may be said to exceed itself.

\textsuperscript{229} Badiou declares that “the new is the just” (as cited in Brassier & Toscano, 2006, p. 277) as a way to unseat the authority of sophistry, which would first deny subjective immanence to thought. In education here we are given to contest “the profoundly conservative image of thought” given in new, “amorphous,” figures of totality and universal variability with “the subtractive specificity of truth” (p. 278), to not be over-casual with the question of the emergent as a sort of surrender instead of the (rhetorical) call to arms a generic concept of truth incites.
explicative tasks that remain are 1) to discuss what is thinking in, and a subjectivity of, an immanent dissemination of formal excess or non-self-identity and 2) to articulate this as a matter of modes of representation (for there is no non-mathematical articulation of any sort in their absence), or the means by which to represent the un-representable without occulting/denying it in its own name. To these ends I continue to enlist the thought of Badiou, in the first instance, in supportive counterpoint with that of Zupančič, in the second. Here, we move into ethics of an infinite condition as an educational aspiration.

6.2 Immanent Ethical Conditions: Subtraction and the Lacunal Infinite

The fundamental paradox of ethics lies in the fact that in order to found an ethics, we already have to presuppose a certain ethics (a certain notion of the good).

(Zupančič, 2000, p. 92)

The torch, which lights the abyss, which seals it up, is itself an abyss.

(Dupin, 1992, p. 5)

This section introduces some conceptual resources of an immanent conception of ethics, by which to turn the finitism of the modern onto-ethical settlement (which I have ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

230 The issue here is to resource the “illusion of the bind” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 140) of representation without positing as authoritative its dissolution, that is, to not reduce the subject to a critical problem. Recall from the first chapter the appeal to Kant’s notion of the originary apperception of the “transcendental idea” as a way to put in motion a gap between the failure of representation (of symbolic incompletion) and the ‘counting-as-one’ by which it is made possible. For it is at the level of the former, of presentation itself, that Badiou claims set theoretical ontology ‘thinks being.’ As I hope the previous chapter made clear, we are not dealing with an epistemological problem where the question of the subject is concerned, but rather an interventional praxis of (subtractive) thought which responds to, and makes possible, ruptures in the smooth functioning of symbolic regimes, or ‘worlds.’

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termed the ‘oscillation’) upon itself in generative ways. Valuable in itself to efforts to create new ethical conditions (for new subjects and worlds), this ‘generative’ avocation is also, and more specifically, to provide for the movement toward an ethics of the subject in education adequate to the field’s subjective implication, to its ethical condition if thought on the basis of infinite immanency. The glossary provided at the beginning of this work (see p. vii) is intended to provide an abbreviated access to some of the key philosophical concepts of this work that come to the fore in this section. Touchstones to a provocative ethical complexity, even in this section these are but an incitement to delve further into immanent subjective ethics as a new region of thought for thinking ethics in education. Recall that formal conditions of ethics are at issue here, not their conceptual effects, not codes and concepts, but rather the immanency of their form and logic that prescribes them as meaningful and authoritative in discourse. We have to recover the idea of the ‘good’ from its deposition as exemption as “‘beyond’ the Idea” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 53). Then we may begin to decide ethics, which, in my Badiouian thesis, is to begin to be ethical.231

6.2.1 Education in Formal Conversion: Evental Modernity

Singularity, if we think the matter through, is properly always a matter of decision

(Badiou as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 285)

231 Hallward (2003) touches on the stakes of this figuration of the ethical project of philosophy: “once thought has been reduced to social engineering and governmental problem solving on the one hand and to a merely private irony or idiosyncrasy on the other, what passes for philosophy is left, in duly post-Wittgensteinian fashion, merely to supervise this division” (p. 249).
In contradistinction to the transcendental process of the modern ethical settlement as I have examined it (of the oscillate co-articulation of a reactive, processural constructivist ontology and its obscure transcendental counterpart), an *immanent* condition of ethical possibility (or ‘impossibility;’ see Section 5.2.2) entails, in the quest for ethical certainty or model, not merely a *displacement* of one knowledge by a superior one, or even *a known* by an ‘ineffable’ beyond. Authoritative of phronetic and alterity-based ethics in educational thought, these are symptomatic of the Aristotelian *hylomorphic ontological model*, in which

form—which is treated as the masculine, intelligible principle—is always thought of as coming from without from a model, whether in the mind of God or humans—imposed on passive and homogeneous matter. (Bryant, 2011)

Approached otherwise, as *immanent ethical conditions*, we may deploy the radicality of Enlightenment thought first by way of *the contingency of form* to donate to dogmatic ideologics the visibility (the ‘light’) of their circumscription, or that of their own founding, so that new regions of thought, new ways of being and modes of invention may be discovered and invented, to, in other words, “elaborate the trajectory of thought in terms of its invention (or constitution, or form)” (Bartlett, 2011, p 6). As Hallward (2003) advises, and co-extensive with the modern advent as seen in de Certeau, since the seventeenth century, physical, material reality no longer secures truth (p. 327), and the consequence of its autonomy is that ‘moderns’ consciously or unconsciously *decide* to

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232 Recall from the introduction that this work aligns the new with formal constitutive incompletion; its preoccupation with what is new (especially as ‘the’ subject) is a consequence therefore of constitutive incompletion, of non-self-identity, for form in excess of itself. The ‘new’ is thus the undecidable agentic consequence of thinking being.
forego truth—most commonly by way of constructivist or transcendental predicates, of
the ‘objectivity of knowledge,’ or its ineffable, now secular (social, personal, critical),
beyond. By the late twentieth century, Badiou claims to be able to derive the matter of
this decision (primarily from a philosophical translation of contemporary set theoretical
mathematics) from a domain of meta-ontological\textsuperscript{233} thought under the sign of the
affirmative lacuna of the infinite (the void). Developed thereby as an ethics of subjective
immanency, of faithful formalism in the radical Enlightenment inheritance, this capacity
of a new access to thinking the new, in turn, proposes an alternate concept of conversion
to the educational project—for even in the conventional ethics of socialization
conceptions of education (of learning), and of both reactive and obscure subjective form
more broadly, a (disavowed) concept of conversion is at work.\textsuperscript{234}

To contest what Badiou calls “the moralizing presumption that every human
being is a subject” (Hallward, 2003, p. 142) conversion in an infinite condition of formal
contingency is figured extensively, wherein the addition of an element is thought to
utterly change the whole (please note that we are not here thinking without holism, but
rather holism otherwise, i.e. within a theory of multiplicities which does not presuppose

\textsuperscript{233} Here we are to think the philosophy of the matheme (of what mathematics thinks). This is both
philosophy rescinding its role as arbiter of truth (as rather its response) and its perpetual incitement to
thinking it. Hallward (2003) advises that the grounding of Badiou’s project is to contest the “single error
[of] an attachment to the mediate as such” (p. 15), be this the figure of the object (divine or constructed) or
the implicate authority of language itself.

\textsuperscript{234} I use conversion here to underscore the educational inscription of ethics, as that in which an ethic is
inscribed as a subjective matter. This contra the Neo-Aristotelian in education which install as retroaction
subjective forms that permit only the presupposition of emergence without the concept of conversion, as
the prevalent structuralism of learning, for example. This is learning—childhood and ‘subjectivity’ as well—
without unconscious, without event, without the possibility of a fundamental change, without
transformation. We are here to become within prescribed precincts: “learning is not necessarily about
understanding things but about getting used to them” (Desai, 2013).
its own finite integrity). Conversion as an educational figure is here abrupt, unfigurable from the first, and yet unequivocally singular—as the void (null-set, infinite, zero-point) effects singular, situated errancies of generic artifice emergent in discrete historical situations (the historical, in his thesis, being that which is not integral, like the natural). As a matter of subjective immanency, conversion is thus to be thought of as a heteronomous universality. The barely imaginable immanency of contingency (what there is of a ‘ground’ of subjective fidelity and indeed of radical Enlightenment) is most simply expressed as “things could be otherwise” (Mackay, 2011, p. 1), but here this is because, as I am coming to better articulate, constitutively they already are. As such, the ‘voided’ generic (unconstructible) inherent excess manifests first as “a lack in thought” (Badiou, 2005b, p. 387), whose desacralizing violation of every ontological dogma is a sort of fidelity to a founding exclusion within knowledge, of belief’s impurity in desire, of the fatal abstraction of the will. The splitting operation of the Enlightenment de Certeau describes, among reason and its other, is symptomatic, but it is not definitive. As we have seen, it speaks within an oscillation of onto-ethical models, not of their constitution, of which we have, until only very recently, lacked the conceptual resources to specify. That this specification is not identification is merely the pang of embattled

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235 There is no predicate of reflexivity here, no conservative presumption of the didactic legislations of judgment. Thinking with set theory, a ‘whole’ counts itself in its own composition whereas the generic ontological norm admits no such bigotry (to ontological truth), finding this exception to now demonstrable ontological incompleteness an odious ethical pretense, one indeed which Badiou calls ‘evil.’ It is as evil “to eliminate outsiders that elude the count...[and] to consider the void, which is the very being of the situation, as something formless” as it is “to attribute it qualities” (pp. 262-263), like semitic ones in the canonical example.

236 From what Badiou (2005b) calls the “revolution introduced by [mathematician Paul] Cohen in 1963” of the “indiscernible multiple” (p. 356)—the artifice of whose “forcing” into situated presentation is the sole province of the subject in Badiou’s thesis—we are given to decide “generic” ontology: “…the generic and indiscernible multiple is in situation; it is presented, despite being subtracted from knowledge. The compatibility of ontology with truth implies that the being of truth, as generic multiplicity, is ontologically thinkable, even if truth is not” (p. 356, emphases in original).
modern romanticism (of the objecthood of knowledge), the differentiation of a trajectory of truth being an entirely different matter.\footnote{237}

The evental interpretation of a radical modernity allows a new figure onto the stage of human thought, one which newly provides (for it was present in Plato) for thinking an ethic of truth as first that which is incomplete, or, more affirmatively, as contingent (as absence, or lack) on the decisive immanency of the figure of the generic multiple, the void, whose \textit{substance} is naught.\footnote{238} Only latterly given to precise figuration in thought, such immanent incompletion is—by way of the set theoretical breakthroughs of Post-Cantorian thinking—of ‘actual’ as opposed to ‘virtual’ \textit{infinity}.\footnote{239}

\footnote{237} As an experience of thought, this sense of conversion entails access to “an ontological affirmation that does not set itself out as the apprehension of an object” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 242).
\footnote{238} Contingency here is simply the condition of “living in still incomplete comprehensions” (MacKay, 2011, p. 8), expressive of an ontological condition, rather than either a transcendental lack or constructivist deficit.
\footnote{239} Before Cantor, ‘infinity’ in the broadly European intellectual tradition was a metaphysical consensus inaugurated by Aristotle. Apropos of Badiou's critique, Aristotle ‘set the trend,’ Hallward (2003) advises, whereby “nothing exists is actually made up of infinitely small parts” (p. 324). For the next two thousand years, so-called “western” thought presupposed “classical Aristotelian finitism” (p. 325) indexed to presupposed objects, to inert ‘matter’ and to the \textit{successive} consistency of their co-extensive integrity. This ontological continuity is presupposed on the model of the denumerable, or ordinal, numbers. The ordinal numbers continue to a ‘potential infinity’ that we never know, but rather may infer, or thereby defer from thought altogether in its wholesale assumption as the ‘fixity’ of a putatively infinite ontological horizon. One could argue that this is precisely how an anthropomorphic god could be conceived, only via the fixation of, and interpellation from, the \textit{virtually infinite referent}. For Badiou (2008a), in virtual infinity is the installation of an ontological regime of numericality that instead organizes what he calls “the forgetting of number” (p. 51) in that the image of \textit{number as iteration or passage} precludes any discussion of what Badiou calls “the essence of number” (p. 30), that is, its existence as an “unfathomable form of being,” so as to permit legislation “over an infinite totality \textit{without making mention of its infinity}” (p. 47, emphasis added). This ontological sublimation Badiou (2009a) calls “devotion to the master of the unknowable” (p. 535) in “silent veneration of what exceeds rational articulation” (Hallward, 2003, p. 317) of an “abusive, negative conception of the ‘inaccessible’” (Bartlett & Clemens, 2010, p. 160). Infinite virtuality of “endless further numbers” (Hallward, 2003, p. 331)—of both common sense empiricism and rudimentary transcendentalism—is tantamount in the ontological realm to \textit{a paralysis of commensurable magnitudes}, of McCarthy’s (1985) ‘frozen god:’ “he is broken before a frozen god and he will never find his way” (p. 152).
6.2.2 The New Infinities of a New Concept of the Infinite

from the blind spot of the point of a thinking decision. (Badiou, 2006a, p. 313)

If not in any objective determination, any consensual consistency of form, representational process or substantial identity, in what is conversion of the sort I advance to be thought? To approach this question, we need consider (as with subjective formalisms already implicate in the modern settlement discussed in the previous chapter) the infinite as ethically implicate, and consider it as already effective in the production of intelligibilities. As such, virtual infinity is the ethical predicate of the ‘endless’ succession of the denumerable numbers on whose formal presupposition rests the modern ethical oscillation with which I have been concerned, or that of an ontological co-articulation (conjunction) within which are bound ethics and education in modernity. Virtual infinity predicates the ontological models of, on one hand, the processural succession toward the reunion of a ‘complete’ knowledge (the methodological conceptual realism of constructivism) and, on the other, in that it too prescribes ontological integrity, the model of the immediate (transcendent) totality inferred from the formal obverse.240 Here, I may clearly state that such a common formal ethical predication is a deferral of ethical media and its subject because it is too hastily abstract, too ensconced in the unthought ideality of the authority of the virtual infinite. In an ironic turn of the Platonic screw, the nihilism of such integral ontologies is that of a model assumed by way of a

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240 Both species of the sublimated Aristotelian naturalism I use de Certeau to identify as the implicate ethicality of modernity, these prescribe the late modern ethical passivity Badiou (2006a) describes as the logic of the “maybe, maybe no:” “something exists, but perhaps not...knowledge enjoins us to not decide, to retain the status of being endlessly debated.” (p. 150, emphasis added).
logic of disavowal (“I know this infinite is a reductive virtual fantasy, but still . . . it’s the most we can imagine”). A further irony obtains in that the ontological nihilism of virtual infinity is installed by way of burgeoning ethical and epistemological imperatives (of new species of freedom and responsibility, of the new as its own fetish). Such—in the finitism of virtual infinity, or the infinite realized—is the neurotic auto-repression of the founding paradox of modern subjectivity, as discussed in the second chapter, and the formal duplicity of reactive and obscure subjective formalisms considered in the fifth, which defer and occlude the condition to which they owe their ontological substance. Ethics (sublimated or ‘restored’) of virtual infinity—of an ontologically self-coincident order, of reliably repetitive succession—come to constitute an ethical ersatz (the utopian and realist fictions of chapters 2, 3 and 4), a placeholder knowledge and poetics that substantialize, or give meaning to, what they mask.\(^\text{241}\) This is where the concept of actual infinity may help, not conclusively however, but undecidably.\(^\text{242}\)

Actual infinity, since its appearance as a Cantorian discovery, is given to thought an always immanent voiding, one transitive to form and thus without a model, without indeed a figural content. Strictly speaking, it is void; nothing—its figuration is even auto-desubstantializing (which is also why ontology is a discourse on, but not of,

\(^{241}\text{Badiou: “I call religion the desire to give meaning to everything that happens” (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 18) against which we can figure the subject as evental, actually infinite, subtracted from all interpretation and yet historically situated, in the decision to subtract truth from the “equivocal plurality of meaning” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 152). The universality of this evental implication gives the lie to categories (like immigrant, the new, student, child, revolution etc.), to be sure, but it also releases them both from the bind of their categorisation but, more important, from the operation which makes it authoritative (of the predicated wholeness of the operation of virtual infinity).}\)

\(^{242}\text{To help wrest the undecidable from its tragic deposition as a sort of logical exhaustion, Badiou (2006a) cites the work of mathematicians Harrington and Paris, who “proved that the undecidability of a statement [is to be thought] not as a paradox but as ‘a reasonably natural theorem of a finite combinatorial,’ as intrinsic operation” (p. 107).}\)
truth).\textsuperscript{243} No objective or other conceptual stability, the void proper\textsuperscript{244} could not be a regulative ideal, because it can assume no form, explicit or implicit. It remains rather that by which form is created, is the generic (that is, consisting in precisely nothing) extension of situations of worlds (and not their ‘worldly’ representation).\textsuperscript{245} In Badiou’s oeuvre this insistent lacuna is infinitely effective, and, as important, it is the formal domain of the subject inasmuch as the generic multiple insists as the contingent, and universal, absolute from which being emerges—as an ‘incalculable supplement’—within the existent. The phantomic haunting of formal excess—below discussed as the actual infinity of the non-denumerable set for Cantor—is that in which being consists for Badiou, but which never can finally account for it. Discourse both elides this condition (by consisting of integral ‘Ones’) and makes it an ethical condition of possibility (by providing for their refusal). This is the work of the Badiouian subject to truth.

It is by way of the impossibility of the idea of its own consistency we first encounter the affirmative lacuna of the infinite, whose constitutive exclusion from ‘that

\textsuperscript{243} Agamben opposes the void and its figure—which he calls an “exclusive inclusion”—from the sovereign signification of the master—which he calls “exception”—as an “inclusive exclusion” (as cited in Livingston, 2012, p. 40). Like the Badiouian subtraction effected of the void, exclusive inclusion operates to “exclude the exemplary from the normal” while inclusive exclusion, or “exception,” would “include and integrate what is ostensibly excluded.” Badiou (2005b)—and this work in his inspiration—is drawn to ontology for its foreclosure of self belonging (p. 356), its provision of a thinking which allows for truth, that is, which both does not tie it up within conceptual coordinates, and still remains thinkable. Certainly apparent, in Agambenian terms, is the appeal of the exception’s shadow, the mystical occlusion that is the representation of the unrepresentable.

\textsuperscript{244} This in contradistinction to its figuration, representation or other substantiation: “The void is not a production of thought, because it is from its existence that thought proceeds, in as much as ‘it is the same to think and to be.’ In this sense, it is the concept that comes from number, and not the other way around” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 23). Number as an ontological gesture, neglected in this work, is for Badiou (2006a) the formal domain of thinking multiplicity, of thinking “the multiple without oneness” (p. 61).

\textsuperscript{245} Badiou (2005b): “there is not a-truth, but construction of the concept of the being-multiple of any truth” (p. 357). The risk of the sovereign tyranny of ‘a’ truth must be assumed as a condition for truth against the nihilism of a sophistical surrender to ontological reaction and obscurantism. One could say a fidelity to ‘singularity’ demands it, demands explicit confrontation with the ‘sovereign avatar’ that so readily in anti-Platonic cant attends the operation of a figure (the twin dangers of its reactive substantialization and obscurantist monumentalization) of ‘the void’ and forecloses its consequences as a generic condition of truth.
which distinguishes’ is the subjective condition to articulate as an ethical matter, its paradox, enigma, indeed, its very being. As I have indicated in a number of instances, this cannot be deduced like any other fact, and can only be decided—this is clearly the great ethical challenge of lacking proof turned to condition of possibility. In Badiou’s (2008a) thesis, this is however the only possible conformity to that which ‘being qua being’ prescribes: “From the fact the One is not, it follows . . . that nothing can be said other than: they [subjects] are” (p. 44). The sole ontological norm of the void is also the only basis of ethical subjectivity (one may purport to ‘be’ ethical otherwise of course, to support or advance this or that cause etc., but ethical subjectivity itself for Badiou is a creative matter of a decision to live in attestation to the incalculable consequences of an event). Education in this figuration of an infinite condition, assumes the daunting challenges of implication in “an infinite procedure of the verification of truth” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 115), a generic love of the unnameable, whose rigor is as innumerable inexhaustible as the stars. It is the avocation of the emergence of subjects, the profession’s own infinite subjectification.

In the next subsection, I support this difficult claim by way of what Badiou calls the ‘analytic figures of truth’ in the agency of the void—for Badiou’s is foremost a thesis of agency, or agencies, rather than identity or identities (see Feltham & Clemens, 2005). On the basis of such figures as itemized below may be a founding of a new language of ethicality in education, insensible as they may at first seem to the exceptional regime of

\[\text{246 For Badiou (2006a) the “event” arises ”when the logic of appearance is no longer capable of localizing the multiple-being it harbours within itself….wherein all reality comes to be dissolved. But we also find ourselves where there’s a chance that—as far as possible from the fusion of a place with the beyond, that is, from the advent of another logical place—a constellation, cold and brilliant, will arise” (p. 181).}\]
the sensible. As a generic avowal which does not displace so much as supplement and estrange critical determinations toward the new ‘worlds’ or logics they may inadvertently promise, the subjective in this venue may be thought ‘unbound’ from circumscription and determination within ideological confines (which is the form of the necessity of fictions or models of the ‘real’) and also their apologetic, provisional, linguistic imperium.

In the mathematical terms which Badiou argues are ontological (are how to think being, that is), actual infinity is to be thought as not displacing of situations, of their logics, identifications, recognitions, libidinal economies and other more empirical constituents into another, ostensibly ‘truer’ medium: For ‘actual’ infinity is infinitely more subversive than reform; it ‘is’ their objectivity subjectivized.

Since Cantor’s earlier “revolutionary innovation” (Hallward, 2003, p. 323) in number, a rational articulation of number (the being of that which may be gathered, collected, or constructed, under the epistemic cut, or the delimited identification, of a predicate) must be acknowledged as both continuity and “punctured by infinitely many irrational holes” (p. 331, emphasis added). This gives rise to the eminently thinkable, but anarchic, concept of the non-denumerable set, as well as its staggering corollary, the generation of “infinite succession of further infinite numbers or sets” (p. 332). What is especially penetrating about this revolution in number is that such a “proliferation that

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247 To conflate somewhat, these are here the conservative settlement of the co-implication of the realist/constructivist/phronetic/reactive and the utopian/transcendental/alteritas/obscure ethico-ontologics of modernity.

248 Badiou calls idealinguistry the capture of reality in language that allows concepts such as practice, the subject, and meaning to be unproblematically derived from thought and enstated as governmental. This governmentality, which Badiou (2008a) calls the last Century’s “general movement of thought…whose characteristic gesture is the destitution of Platonism,” is the reduction of mathematical thought (as ontology) to the status of a formal language, one whereby “every science must have an ‘object’” (p. 48). This “great modern sophistry” deposes ontology (thought of being) into “syntactical apparatuses, grammars of signs, then a fortiori all thought falls under the constitutive rule of language” (p. 48).

249 Apropos of which Badiou (2005c) advises: “disorientation is now conceptualisable” (Badiou, p. 74).
exceeds any intuition of continuity” (p. 217, emphasis added) and is not representative (of something else, as in classical logic). It is however, as the mediation of form by that which could not conform, both entirely auto-constitutive (of ethical conditions and subjects) and persistently lacunal. Its perhaps more familiar affective registers in late-modern thought are jouissance (the Lacanian figure of the freedom/pleasure of the Real as obstacle to realization) and anxiety (dread or fear sans object) which devolve similarly with analytic figures of truth as an ethical matter—of truth figured here as the effectivity of the ontologically infinite. They are symptoms of what mathematics thinks, for Badiou, inasmuch as it marks the places where the ‘vanishing’ of the actual infinite may be thought to exist as generic supplement. As the ‘not-being’ of the ‘One’—the implicite axiom of the integral whole—these are to figure the infinite address as among the “least natural” artifices, ones most “distanced from the stability of being” (Badiou, 2005b, p. 384), where meaning and its knowledge warrants begin to shimmer in contingency, like mirages. Found within the margins of transcendental regimes, or ‘worlds’ of systems of determination or ‘order structures’—considered above as ontologically authoritative to ethics in education—such stabilities circumscribe, evaluate, and ‘include’ the aberrant or ostensibly new. The genericity of the lacunal, or actual, infinite could never be

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250 Dedekind’s definition of the infinite, according to Badiou (2008a) (who mobilizes it in support of his evental ontology), “determines infinity positively . . . and subordinates the finite negatively” (p. 36). An “intrepid total secularization of the infinite” (whose virtues, in dispatching religious dependence and constructivist reaction, Badiou advises, we have not yet exhausted), the positive determination of the infinite posits the finite as “simply that which is not infinite” (p. 36). The infinite has existential properties the finite cannot pretend to, but which nonetheless must be deployed, as the “horizontal correlate” (Badiou, 2009, p. 26) of a formal transit (that is expressive in and of form, or its disturbances, and not in substantial content) in order to assume the consequence of an infinite address in the figuration of the singular, and of transformation thereby—of subjective conversion.

251 Badiou (2009a): “For a world is nothing but a logic of being-there, and it is identified with the singularity of this logic. A world articulates the cohesion of multiples around a structured operator (the transcendental)...at the core of transcendental questions lies the evaluation of the degrees of identity or difference between the multiple and itself, or between being-there and other beings. The transcendental must therefore make possible the ‘more’ and the ‘less’” (p. 102).
transcendental, its conditions are already present (inasmuch as it is formally presentative, and not representative) in systems of determination (in what are schools, teachers, students, curricula, families, societies, ethics etc.) as the circumscription of their contingency, whose ‘revelation’ nonetheless fails as well to become impartial, or complete. It fails, that is, to the infinite measure of truth, instigator of new subjective forms (clearly a more defensible address to being—an extensive ‘One’—of the order of total transformation which forever attends constitutive incompletion). As such, as that which displaces contingency with a concept (of ‘the’ void), the strict condition of ontological immanency as ethical practice begins in ‘subtractions’ from norms, with the ‘waning’ of particularity (and not its recovery, justification, reconstruction, re-essentialization, dignification, and so on) whereby is given ‘absences’ and their logics, or the immanent impossibility of ethics, as their natal condition, one of a pursuit which is already itself manifest if decided, is no longer latent, becoming, ‘potential.’

These lacunae are not however the ‘inverse of normativity’ of de Certeau, they are not ‘absences arranged’ by powers (particular configurations of rationality, ethico-ideological ontologies of the ‘real,’ their co-articulations and moralism) themselves absent, but rather instead, following Badiou, haphazard ‘truth-conditions,’ formal and axiomatic matters of chance. This is because they induce form, are axiomatically (decided as) presentative inconsistency, and subsist as formal, discursive and symbolic rupture and not causal ideological effect (whose first gesture is the disavowal of form). The lack, or not-all, of the whole, comprehensive and integral, actual infinity is of the vacant (dis-)order of how determination is universally founded: It is the radically common condition of ‘exclusive inclusion’ as the energetic of ethics, their being as “a
painfully insistent unoccupiable place” (Fraser, 2013, p. 25). This is the unbearable liberation promised by radical Enlightenment: That, in the absence (or void) of a withdrawing ‘man’ and his symbolic exemplar, ‘god,’ there may finally be a subject—and, as important, an (immanent) ethics and (aleatory) rationality thereof.252 These are the vital stakes in educational thought of the decisiveness requisite to the actual infinite.

6.2.3 A Language of the Lacuna and Subjective Heterogeneity

To refuse the continuing ethical obscurities generated by the neurotic self-sundering of conservative, or moderate, Enlightenment, the infantilizing deferral of its ‘arrangement of absences’ can be confronted with the truth of those absences themselves by way of the actual infinite. As suggested above, this obtains subtractively as a threefold matter of ontological (infinite) immanency:

- First, as ethical practice in the articulation of how such absences conceal both a great deal (such as in the elisions, deferrals and proscriptions of constructivist and transcendental ethics alike) and also how they too conceal precisely nothing;
- Second, how this latter concealment—the ‘empty secret’ that what is concealed in ethics is void—releases an intimacy in literally everything, of the

252 For another time, aleatory rationalism with respect to immanent ethics may be explored more fully. Suffice here to observe that, subtracted from the “pseudo-normative” (Brassier & Toscano, 2006, p. 273) settlement of rationality—as ‘Reason’—“mired in logicism at best, psychologism at worst” (p. 273), aleatory rationality for Badiou consists always in “decision on an undecidable” (p. 263) so as to affirm “the potency of thought as that which is defined precisely by the discontinuous invention of means for wagering on novelty and forcing the dysfunction of the categories that partition worlds into distinct domains that can be overseen, counted and controlled” (p. 274). Like this study, aleatory rationalism tries to situate “through the resources of set theoretical ontology” (p. 272) in Badiou, a basis for generic ethics, an ethics of truth of the a-theological infinite.
equal condition of a non-self-coincident totality, a deposed ‘One’ of the presupposed universal predicate, and further still;

- Third, how the efficacy of such a double concealment subsists within the uncertain edifices of reason itself, as *how thinking un-thinks itself*, as a formal matter.

Thinking subtractively in a condition of strict (mathematical) ontological immanency, Badiou (2009a) develops the analytic figures of an immanent concept of truth (of actual infinity) and their subjective forms, as follows:

- *The undecidable.* Norms for evaluations of statements—operations of transcendentalswould necessarily not be determinate, the ‘real’ of the evental intercession “subtracts itself from a supposedly exhaustive classification of statements” (p. 106), as the intrinsic operation of a Gödelian symptom (Gödel posited the inherent incompleteness of systems—like sets for Cantor, especially the inexhaustibility implied by the power set—that constitutively cannot found themselves, as sets cannot belong to themselves). Being neither constructible nor transcendental, generic

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253 Greater (having more elements than) than any collection of elements, the power set is the set of all the combinations thereof, and includes the void, or null-set, as the indispensable nothing on the basis of which the first mark, or count-as-one is aprioritized.

254 The quantitative rigour of mathematics allows this separation, where the qualitative ‘uncertainty’ of the concept permits the powerful illusion of self-belonging.
ontological subtraction consists within an axiomatic undecidability, is marked first by the same, as so would its subjects be;

- *The indiscernible.* The effectuations of the generic extension of any situation (its formal transit by the infinity which inheres in it) would be subtracted from the marking of difference, and barred from all the remarking that would re-deploy difference as idealism (as in ethics of alterity). Language is not the medium of truth, and the fact that its subjects are not those of language does not foreclose their subjectification (as the tragic fatality of modern sophistry would have it), but rather expose its possibility. The subject of an indiscernible truth is simply participation of sorts in this exposure, is the productive vector of *indiscerning*, such is both the infinitum of truth and the productive activity of the subject;

- *The generic.* Following from the unbinding from the ‘One’ of the concept, the generic is that which is “subtracted from predication by excess;” it is “that subtraction from the predicative constructions of language that the universe allows through its own infinity” (Badiou, 2009a, p. 110). Genericity as a subjective characteristic ensures that subjection remain assertive of, fragmentary of, the a-formal domain of the infinite, in which the finitude which characterizes and parasites it dissolves in a sort of revelatory failure; in

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The undecidable, as a new species of ‘reasonableness’—of the absence of prescribed formulae when it comes to legislating on genuine sets *pace* mathematician Paul Cohen (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 342)—testifies to the fact, Badiou (2006a) advises, that a Platonist has no confidence whatsoever in the clarity of language when it comes to deciding about existence (p. 53), and should be thought “not so much as to constitute a ‘limit’—as is sometimes maintained—as a perpetual incitement to the exercise of inventive intuition” (p. 55).
the evental conditions it falls to the subject alone to axiomatically decide;\footnote{The choice here for Badiou (2001) is among 1) the possible basis for the uncertainty of truths and 2) being for death/happiness (which he identifies together as subjective prescription). Here Badiou contrasts ‘ethics’ with philosophy, the former the proscription in late modernity of nihilism (“because its underlying conviction is that the only thing that can really happen to someone is death” (p. 35)) and the latter a possible basis for a “wager” on an uncertain affirmation. Thus the axiom is the “sole condition and exclusive medium of the subject” (Hallward, 2003, p. 105), or that by which subjective emergence is possible. It is more trans- than a-historical, for there is no subject without a situation...provided situation is ontologically infinite.} this is the ‘found’ auto-generation of subjectivity—the generic cannot be a ‘proof,’ it is a decision, or the contingent assumption of the conversions (to this or that transcendental regime) one is otherwise determined by;

- **The unnameable.** This is the operation that subtracts from uniqueness. The subject here is “so singular in its singularity as to be the only one not to have a proper name” (p. 111). It is an article of the subtractive reduplication of singularity that it would defy the “unity of an expression” in a paradoxical “subtraction of singularity from singularization” (p. 112). Because truth is unnameable in no way forecloses—but rather makes more important—the search for a language of the unnameable, for the ‘lie that tells the truth.’ If the mathematics of this condition are too arcane for more familiar thought, the comic realism I outline before the conclusion of this chapter I hope helps...
articulate this somewhat intuitive problematic of the surprising natality of the
unnameable.\textsuperscript{257}

The analytic figures of truth Badiou offers provide to this study a way to thematize,
without substantializing, subjectivity proper. The Badiouian contention would be that
they do so in a stubborn refusal to betray their own ethical, or voided, condition (which is
what makes them at once so maddeningly insistent, both so precise and indeterminate,
simple and disseminate).

If educational ethics is to avow diversity in its most rigorous formulation,
heterogeneity in its most uncompromising form, surely, as an ethical imperative, no
accommodation with its homogenization is sustainable (that is, there is no ‘need’ to
parasite the infinite with the finite, for such is only ever contingent, while its truth is
indeed, terrifyingly, absolute).\textsuperscript{258} This is what we may find here as the uncomfortable
destination of subjective ethics: To ‘dream truth’ in its most emancipatory and
egalitarian instance (surprisingly perhaps one now even mathematically formalizable,
articulation of an \textit{a-theological infinite}). This is simply the legacy of the radical
Enlightenment from which so much of the modern we have come to value is derived:
Without model, or, un-constructible, without concept. The \textit{genericity} of truth is simply

\textsuperscript{257} For Badiou (2006a), truth is “forced” at the “point of the unnameable” (p. 119) whose name is forced,
however, “only at the cost of disaster” (p. 123)—here we can think of the naming of the unnameable
excesses which became the semetic, or the homosexual, or indeed the ‘true’ all of which, at various points
in time, became the deployment of the destructive capacity of truth (the vulnerability of the incompletion of
a social order). Badiou writes that while an ethics of truth must “safeguard the proper and the nameless”
(p. 120), there is latent in every truth a capacity for destruction, whose “desire in fiction” is to suppress the
final subtractive operation (to subtract the truth from its name): Accordingly, a perhaps surprisingly
modest aspiration, “the ethics of a truth consists entirely in exercising a sort of restraint with regard to its
powers” (p. 119). While truth may induce new languages and subjects, it is part of the vanishing of the
event (a way to formalize change).

\textsuperscript{258} Finitude here is the ordering of succession of being, which indexes situations, rather than the infinite,
situated immanency constitutive of them. We are concerned here with succession rather than “the
succeeding” in Badiou’s (2008a) terms: “we don’t want to count, we want to think the count” (p. 58).
that it is implicit in the creation of new genres, which is to say, it obeys the entirely contingent imperative manifest subjective immanency (in the Badiouian scheme), to find new pathways for desire (in the Lacanian formulation), in order here to, paraphrasing Britzman (2009a), ‘subtract education to create education.’

Therefore, it is my thesis that in education, as educators, we are called to refound time within the infinite from which it emanates, by way here of the inventive and consequential confrontations—for Badiou these may be seen to exist (as truth procedures) in the domains of art, science, politics and love—of discrediting and occulting subjective formalisms.\(^{259}\) Withdrawing the ‘real’ from its indices, this is no ‘re-invention of the wheel’ (of the engines of exhaustive reform and their corporate rhetorics in education), but its declaration as merely such, as merely of an infinite condition, one ‘illuminated’ in the dark opacity that most faithfully is ‘Enlightenment’ in this epoch. This, I maintain, is the true modern ethical compass, its generative mode in “a world in which being is ultimately held prisoner” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 176) by logics reactive and obscure, and their conservative idealisms. Along with its analytic figures (undecidable, indiscernible, generic, unnameable) and subjective topologies (reactive, obscure and faithful), its mode of representation is also ‘already here;’ it does not however—as also do not mathematics and ontology as of generic truth—announce itself as such, as if it were a style of being or object of thought. What I have been calling the oscillation, the binding joint articulation of implicit (constructivist, realist, epistemic) and explicit (transcendent, idealist, ethico-utopian) models of the good, exists also within a final

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\(^{259}\) For Badiou (2006a) to ‘revitalize’ the concept of truth is also to restore the present as “a time of consequence" (p. 147). What Badiou (2005d) claims a godless ‘world’ is saying to philosophy may be in this spirit to educators as subjects to truth: “get up and walk!” (p. 42).
subjective presentation, one here figured as *mode* of representation. This is a theorization supplemental to Badiou’s onto-mathematics, alongside to which I devote the next sections of this chapter in order to better contextualize the most speculative—or decisively ontological—elements of this study.

I resource as onto-ethical counterpoint to Badiou’s mathematical formalism the work of Alenka Zupančič, which to my view advances my concern with subjective formalisms into compelling currents of thought less mathematically derived than Badiou’s (for her neo-Lacanian thesis is one of, and in, language). By way of the location of the stakes of ethics within what she calls modes of representation, as the question of *representing ethical subjectivities*, Zupančič again refers us to the immanency of form more than content, to symbolic structure before imaginary projection, of the presentation of ideas as the truthful element of ethical subjectivity in education. In what follows I align what Zupančič elaborates as the *tragic mode of representation* with the modern ethical oscillation’s reactive and obscure subjective forms, as their representative articulation, product and vehicle. First however, and to provide a more realized theoretical edifice from which to depart in rethinking the ethical in education, or the thinking education in new ethical conditions, the mode of representation I develop as resonant with the lacunal, generic ontology discussed in this section—and to its *subjects-to-truth*—is the comic.
6.3 Subjectivity and the Comic Mode of Representation

we are not infinite, we are not even finite.

(Zupančič, 2008, p. 53)

One could say that in comedy we come as close as we may to ‘proof’ of generic ontology, of the ontology of immanent multiplicity by which I would subtract ontological truth from the ‘finitizing’ orbit (of the virtual infinite) of the constructivist and transcendental ethical oscillation. It is also by way of its mode of representation that, through a close study of the work of Alenka Zupančič (2000, 2003, 2008), we may articulate a subjective ethics more coherent and productive than by the pathetic/heroic/fated figures of the alternate, tragic, mode. Indeed, against the particularizing movement of the tragic mode’s self-securing pathos, in comedy we are called to what Zupančič (2008) calls the “risk and trial of the universal” as such:

comedy is not simply a turn from the universal (from universal values of the beautiful, the just, the good, the moral…) toward the individual or the particular (as always and necessarily imperfect, limited and always slightly idiotic), but corresponds instead to the very speculative passage from the abstract universal to the concrete universal. (p. 38)

So we have precisely not a move ‘from the universal to something else,’ from something ‘abstract’ to something concretely ‘real,’ but rather a twist within abstraction itself, a wholly discursive move: The fabled ‘exit on the way to our place of (ethical) business’ of this work’s introduction, the immanent feint of ethical thought, and (empty) guarantee.
of ethical subjectivity. It is this move within representation and its ethical consequences that I examine here, beginning with the deposition of the universal in the opposing modes.

6.3.1 Universalities

Consider that the finitude of virtually infinite is pathetic. Its ‘infinity’ is but a concept, an “abstract universal”\(^{260}\) which covers its status as such with *that which escapes thinking* (a constructive process, a transcendental foundation). The object (person, student, method, knowledge, truth) becomes part of the cognophobic apparatus that underwrites its existence as such. In the comic mode of representation however, the shift toward the individual, the particular or the specific is the turn “of the universal itself” in coming to its own (generic) truth by way of “the gap of self-consciousness” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 38). Here the ideological imperative of finding the right calibration of an idea to its proper instance is like a dog chasing its tail, the self-parody of correlationist hubris. The comic mode of representation allows us to expose the short circuit that gives the lie to the tragic conceit of this wholly ‘impossible’ calibration or correlation;\(^{261}\) its operation is to defuse the ideological pathos of the tragic conceit (of a self-identical object) in the remit of something more heterogeneously signifying—of the ‘order’ of immanent, ‘actual’ infinity (which Lacan calls ‘the indestructible’). Simply put, the comic mode induces its exposure as riven, incomplete, as ideologically hilarious

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\(^{260}\) Žižek (2003b) argues that this absent ‘place’—recall again de Certeau’s ‘inverse of normativity’ from the second chapter—is what Kant calls that of the “transcendental idea” which “virtualizes” reality as an artifact (of itself) (p. 85).

\(^{261}\) We may think here of Borges’ (1998) story “On Exactitude in Science” about a perfect map that is the size of the kingdom it depicts.
as the proverbial emperor’s nudity—thereby suspending both the deferred reunion prescribed by constructivist ontologies, and the apotheosis of mutual contradiction of the transcendental. Its expression, surprised laughter, is the subjective affirmation of a generic ontology, the subject’s de-virtualization of reality. Comedy here allows for the surprise of what we already know, of what we expected, but discover we did not know after all. We may think this by way of the liberal subject for example, the subject of ‘human rights’ and a multiplicity on the model of democratic conviviality. Born of internal contradiction (the ‘concrete’ universal as a contingent matter of the actually infinite) rather than transcendence (the abstract universal of the virtual), the subject is its own incarnation or realization (or that of the concrete universal). It is decisively not rather its tragic ‘embodiment’ (for the comedic as here considered does not represent, stand for, signify, typify or otherwise correspond with its condition, it, rather, ir- or un-relates it). The human of human rights is the abstraction of suffering remediated (a certainly desirable end) but also a human whose status is conferred by the statist order that would deliver it. To subjectivize human rights is to turn its universal (the human) upon itself, to make it its own condition of justice, in addition to the rather modest destination it remains of administrative proliferation in a spiral toward the impotence of virtual infinity. Consider further the wry critical barb apropos of this work as a whole: “But doesn’t the new get old?” The answer is given in the question itself: Of course it does but, and here the generative comic twist, as neither finally ‘new’ nor ‘old’ ‘it’ is neither, neither new nor old, as ‘we’ (another tenuous referent) are neither ‘finite nor

262 The recent “bureaucratic tangle of administrative regulation” (Mchangama & Verdirame, 2013) testifies to what has become of human rights, as authoritarian states adopt their rhetoric in support of their legitimacy.
infinite.’ The form of the question admits of its truth, one I suggest Bartlett (2011) indicates thus, “truth and error (which is not knowledge) exist and can be distinguished not at the level of linguistic judgment but in terms of their form” (p. 44). As a formal matter, the comedy of the observation leads us, rather than to the critical high ground its irony suggests, to the impossibility of truth. Funny because of the apparent contradiction of the turn of phrase, the true comedic value of the observation is that it does not resolve, it is a short circuit in language, one which calls both ‘new’ and ‘old’—both of which, as abstract universals, we may be in danger of reifying—into question. The true answer is a dialectical zigzag: Yes! Of course it gets old. No! The truly new could not, by definition, be old; and finally neither! The language itself fails us . . . but its missingness remains, possibility pauses, and looks over its shoulder. In the knowing laughter of disbelief, something is released. The question is: What is?

In the comic mode of representation, the subject emerges as the very impasse of the contradiction, as Badiou’s analytic figures of truth in the indiscernible, the undecidable, the generic, the unnameable. Never the concept, the subject is rather the scandal of the concept. In the impossibility of a joint articulation (of ethics and education, or of a subject and an individual, of a knowledge and its objects, for example) lies a missingness (of linkage)\textsuperscript{263} such that the disjunction is accelerative, exacerbated, even wounded (as seen in the second chapter’s discussion of the modern rational deliverance’s disassociation from itself). The Real in the comic mode of representation is a sudden exposure of the suppression that constitutes coherence (of the ‘reality’ of a

\textsuperscript{263} On this further, from Zupančič (2008): “The missing link that structures our reality is not a missing link between two neighbour elements, the connection between which would thus be interrupted—instead its very missing is the linkage between two neighbour elements; it is what makes it possible for them to “fit” into each other” (p. 215).
world—or situation or self). By virtue of this inherence within articulation, the comic mode of representation allows for the derivation of a ‘logic of illusion’ from the fleeting exposure of ‘illusion of logic,’ supplementary (immanent) to, but not displacing of, it.\footnote{In Lacanian terms, to ‘traverse the fantasy’ rather than demystify it, one requires the fantasy, one is the fantasy in fact. Likewise, generic ontology relies upon a fiction of the ‘real,’ one which is less unmasked (by the comic mode here considered) than brought to appearance, to be thought, reinscribed, avowed, and only then transformed.}

This is a species of logic, indeed one of a new rationality and entailed image(s) of thought, of the sort to which the anti-Platonic conservative Enlightenment commitment remains comprehensively inhospitable,\footnote{Toscano (2010) considers the “lazy and pernicious reliance on a one-dimensional Enlightenment” with a particular vein of “demonizing” (of the ‘fanatical’—a modern sort of heresy) as symptomatic of the incapacity of “intellectual culture to incorporate the lessons of the different waves of critique, the mutations and supersessions of Enlightenment that constitute the legacy of nineteenth- and twentieth-century critical and political thought” (p. xix). His argument is that a very specific “politics of abstraction” is at play that derogates and cauterizes thought, immunizes against what Badiou (2007a) calls the “cruelty” of the Idea.} despite the fact that it has been announcing itself (here especially in mathematics, with Cantor in extensive set theory) for over a century now.

A finer point may be put on the matter: The formalization of a subject in the comic mode of representation transpires in the universalizability of what Zupančič (2008) calls “the place of enunciation” (p. 60) in the surprising exposure of the non-relation of the linked facets of reality (or the fiction of the ‘real’). The alternative is an ironic, ideological procedure, and a logic of disavowal—\textit{i.e. we know knowledge is contingent but...}, barring any other way to consider our own understanding, we treat it \textit{as if} it were whole, consistent, permanent and we demand still greater satisfactions from its measurement. The comic mode of representation defuses the ideological conceit, by way \textit{not} of demystifying (for its register is not that of mystification, or ‘mystery’) but in a different mode of exposure altogether: By \textit{adding something else} (and we can see the
paradox here of a subtractive ontology which permits, invokes or conjures the supplement of something else, of something new). Comic realism allows, by way of subtractive ontologics, supplementation by that which is not prefigured, by that which is not a knowledge, but is, like Badiouian truth, of knowledge, or emergent within or through it, or its infinitely many ‘holes.’ In my submission, and following Zupančič, this something else (of the order of the infinite in generic ontology) is the domain of the subject: It is what the subject finally is. A universalizing, immanent procedure, this figuration of subjectivity bears closer scrutiny.

6.3.2 Subjective Emergence in the Comic Mode of Representation

This subject is then what or who, precisely? Ultimately, since no transcendence is the strict condition of an immanent ontology, the subject becomes nothing other than a new object! Why is this comic, a laughing matter? Because this new thing, thought or object, emerges, as Zupančič (2008) puts it “out of nothing” (p. 119), it is banal, even trivial, but new, surprising, uninvited: The comic subject, or that afforded in the comic mode of representation, has the structure of an error, as the generic truth has that of a fiction (a lacunal and ambivalent one of thinking in multiple registers, and not the tragic

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266 What the generic set and comic realism allow us to think however is not an effect of structure. They locate in thought the non-intuitionistic un-constructability of the subject. The confrontation that most clearly illustrates this obtains between Badiou and Lacan. Whereas Lacan finally locates the subject in an abjection of language, “as much a function of clarity and hope as it is endurance of radical abjection” (Hallward, 2003, p. 21), Badiou eschews such “idealinguist” agency of unconscious forces for a material ontology of the event. No “phantom puppet” of an object a, the Badiouian subject is, unlike Lacan, entirely post-Cantorian, that is, it is a figure of the rupture of the quantitative excess of the event, and not of the qualitative mystery of structure. None of this is to disregard, to ‘transcend,’ structure (to this Badiou is arguably more faithful than Lacan), but rather to displace it as fidelity to the force of truth, or to afford it a truthful ontological constituency and allow for the “path of the subject” to emerge in “the impasse of ontology” (Hallward, 2003, p. 287), where, as in the numericity of mathematical formalism, “being organises thought” (Badiou, 2008a, p. 92).
ambivalence of ontologically neurotic integrities). An ‘empty gesture’ or even ‘lost cause,’ the subject is what announces the new by assuming its place—and it takes considerable clearing of ontological organicism (the ‘natural’ formal temporalities of serial causality and its remedial holisms) to even begin to feature this.\(^{267}\) In Lacanian discourse theory, the discourse that performs this clearing function is that of the hysteric, whose position it is to demand, in the name of the object a (the constitutive absence) new knowledges of the master discourse. The comic surprise of subjectivity takes the form of repetition with a difference (a non-constructible supplement, not a developmental succession), and not of difference that repeats (the idealism which installs knowledge as agent and visits on it the mysterious operator of difference). Tragic repetition is metamorphosis, difference visited on a presupposed substance. Comedic repetition is the enacting of indifference, its presupposed object (proper to its symbolic vocation) is nothing and, as such, its model of emergence is completely different. Unlike tragedy, where failure (and its arrogance and hubris) is germane, in comedy success is the paradigm of emergence; it consists in the uncanny success of comic exposure of that which “disturbs the pure failure of repetition” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 172). At issue in the comic mode of representation is the paradoxical place of succession, and not the succession itself.

This then is what here is at stake: An empty place of emergence. This is also precisely what should, in my view, be elemental in an educational ethics, for what is

\footnote{Badiou (2006a) cites Pessoa to avow what he calls the “Grand style” of mathematical thinking—or that which would rigorously admit the consequences of the void into thought—apropos of the particular species of the ‘obvious’ I reference in the referenced passage: “Newton’s binomial is as beautiful as the Venus de Milo. The truth is few people notice it.” ‘Style’ he argues of the grand style, like here the subject of comic realism, “simply consists in noticing it” (p. 21).}
education if not a place of emergence? What is the significance of the absence of a desire to think the unprecedented? Zupančič (2008) brings the point into focus as a matter of the comic mode of representation thus:

things that really concern us, things that concern the very kernel of our being, can be watched and performed only as comedy, as an impersonal play with the object. The impersonal in comedy is the subject itself…if the dead serious can be approached only in comedy, this is not because any other approach would be too terrifying and would crush us completely, destroy us, but because it would miss the crucial point. For what is at stake…is not a reduction of ourselves (and of all that we are) to a nonbeing, not the destruction of our being, but its emergence—its emergence outside meaning, yet inextricably from it. (p. 182, emphasis in original)

Recall here Safouan’s (2003) declaration that “there is only one pertinent trauma: That of birth” (p. 75). I think we are contending here with immediacies of symbolic birth more than the recoveries of an imaginary one, with the creation of new forms of life, of new ‘reality.’ The danger of its elision is ethical eclipse in a kind of death, whose residual consists merely in measuring the paltry gap between demand and satisfaction: Did I get what I/we expected of life? This in opposition to the radicalization of this commercial ontological norm, as the precedence of the satisfaction: Not that “satisfaction can never really meet demand but that demand can never meet satisfaction” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 268).

268 Badiou’s (2006a) supplement here is the theory of the event which insists upon a ‘nothing’ specific to a given situation, the ‘vanishing’ of the emergence of the uncounted in situ: “If we want to avoid lapsing into an obscurantist theory of creation ex nihilo, we must accept that an event is nothing but a part of a given situation” (p. 101).
Of course what is ‘satisfied’ is formal, is the form of life in excess of itself, the defense of which we may recall Hölderlin declares to be living (as cited in Žižek, 2003a, p. 95). The subject as such, as the emerging form of the “localization of a universal singularity…bound up with the infinite” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 153) is hysterical. Where playing it safe may be seen to be a given—such are the ubiquity of grammars of identification and their ethical models—the subject in terms of comic realism is only ever an unjustifiable risk, but one which may be thought, even if the truths it would enstate cannot.

6.4 Subjectivity and the Tragic Mode of Representation

nobody’s perfect, therefore it doesn’t matter what you say or do or what you are; you’d better shut up and let us do exactly what we want to do with you.

(Zupančič, 2008, p. 48)

sophistry abandons the immanence of thought.

(Brassier & Toscano, 2006)

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269 Recall here with Zaretsky (2004) one of the main contributions of Freudianism to mass culture, in that it “portrayed individuals as infinitely desiring, rather than capable of satisfaction” (p. 144).

270 The shift in the thinking of hysteria was announced as early as the 1920s when, apropos of Aragon and Breton who considered it the greatest poetic discovery of the nineteenth century, Zaretsky (2004) observes that their point was “to celebrate, not to analyze, hysteria” (p. 161). In the Lacanian discourse theory so latent in Badiou’s thought, the discourse of the hysteric puts the object a (Lacan’s structural void) in the position of the truth by which the subject demands new forms of the master’s discourse, a new disposition with respect to knowledge toward its transformation.

271 Badiou (2006a): “everything is not thinkable here and now. Were it so, the capacity of being would be exhausted by the modality of the possible, and all novelty would have the status of an insignificant supplement, a simulacrum” (p. 272).
I align what Zupančič (2008) calls the tragic mode of representation with ethics of tragic subjectivity, as the expressive facility, or regime of *re-presentation*, of the prototypical romantic liberal ‘subject.’ Its parameters are predicated by the authoritative constructivist and transcendental ontological tension (or, more properly, by its symbolic identifications[^272]). I have considered this predication in this work as authoritative to ethical dispositions available to educational thought. Reflexive, moral and ideological, the subject form—by turns reactive and obscure—of the tragic mode of representation retains a firm grip on what I call the educational imaginary, by way of its beholdenness to the guarantees of onto-ethical models within the ‘cult of finitude’ of the moderate, or conservative and ideological, Enlightenment.

It is important to note that this ‘hold’ is maintained ontologically, that is, by virtue of what seems possible via the discursive alignment of the ‘real’ and the true (or especially the latter’s phenomenal and empirical instantiation, as association or coherence of one sort or another). It is not ‘sensible’ or a sensibility, but rather ‘a logic of sense’[^273] which is at issue here, and thereafter a politics of logic which proscribes the field(s) of representation, of figuration, of what I have been calling the ontological inasmuch as in modernity this broadly promulgates the conjunction of the ethical and the educational (see Sections 3.2 & 3.3). A domain to which philosophy of education is uniquely called, this is one whose diminution by implicit discursive means (currently for Badiou by way of the ‘negative prop’ of anti-Platonism) commonly imperils the philosophical project in

[^272]: Symbolic identification as a formal concern is “a vicarious sharing in . . . received mystery and power” (Kovacevic, 2007, p. 74), in contrast to imaginary identification, which consists of recognition (see also Brown, 2005).

[^273]: Here Badiou charts a course akin to that outlined in contemporary French thought in Deleuze and Guattari (2004) in the concept of ‘territorialization/deterritorialization’ (p. 212) and Rancière (2000) with respect to the “distribution of the sensible” (p. 7), both of whom share with Badiou a significant concern for the formalities that proscribe and predetermine the Real.
education itself (and its ability to articulate its ethical struggles, or to sustain its ethicality inasmuch especially as this consists as a search as initially here figured). The risk in this closure of the ethical horizon is that the question of logic, indeed of rationality itself, is neglected, disused and considered either finally irrelevant (settled) or, conversely instead too great a risk as a matter of ethical guarantees, which are naturally founded elsewhere (as the necessities of knowledge, or belief, or faith etc.). Ethical anemia thus sustains itself on the remediation of what it has itself starved, it reforms the institution (the modern legacy of Enlightenment) created for the purpose of reformation. As such, those who align themselves most seamlessly with the predominant orders of the world continue to carry the day, to ‘make sense’ ethically, albeit in the enforcement and governance of ethics of ontological models (as here emanating from the modern ethical oscillation of articulated constructivist and transcendental ontologies, their realist and utopian figures and reactive and obscure subjective formalisms). Ethics as a search, as by now I hope is clear, is decisively not a question of the application of any particular ethics, but rather an agentic figuration of their operative conditions and formal impasses, consistencies, lacunae and irruptions, toward their deployment in symbolic re-invention (a production of new ‘worlds’), and the persistence of the conditions of their (now infinitely distinctive, or singularly finite) subject. Here I consider what prevents the increasingly cogent resistance inherent in the radicality of the Enlightenment project in

274 Badiou (2006a) further describes as “evental revisionism” the targeting of the implication of universality and singularity (discussed in the previous section): “nothing took place but the place, predicative descriptions are sufficient, and whatever is universally valuable is strictly objective. In fine, this amounts to the claim that whatever is universally valuable resides in the mechanisms of power of capital, along with its statist guarantees” (p. 148).
late modern education as a matter of the tragic mode of representation. For the sophistry it produces is the very anathema which is ethical anemia in education.  

6.4.1 Ethicalities

It is with Freud that Badiou sets up the ontological problem of generic “situated excess” (Brassier & Toscano, 2006, p. 278) as an educational one. This is to figure childhood pursuant to the Freudian conception of ‘excessive’ subjectivity, or a matter of assuming consequences of what one cannot know (which Freud figures as the unconscious and for Badiou, less structurally even than the Lacanian intervention of the agencies of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, as generic ontology). The question of representing ethical subjectivity I claim requires a return to a ‘new’ Freud, one cast upon the scene of post-Lacanian ethics (of what Lacan calls the Real), steeped in post-Cantorian onto-mathematical thought, in order to help deploy the question of modes of representation. Through this ‘new’ Freud we find an approach to the question of the subject ‘objectified’ within modes of representation, and the stakes of this reduction.

Brassier and Toscano (2006) clarify well the complexity of the sophistical elision of ‘situated excess’ I consider in this section as of the tragic mode of representation: “The sophist, while seeming to sing the praises of universal difference and exception and the inapplicability of any rational categorical schema, is still committed to the notion that the multiple can itself be characterized, that it can be given the quasi-transcendental lineaments of discourses, language games, embodiment, strategies and so on…sophistry abandons the immanence of thought to philosophical intuitions of the kind still endorsed by critique and dialectics, it simply shifts the locus of unified transcendental legislation, to language in particular, thereby generating, beneath the gaudy apparel of discursive multiplicity, a new figure of the whole and the one. Short of the resort to the unintuitible and the absolute alterity of some sublime instance, such post-modern thinking remains incapable, from Badiou’s perspective, of thinking the determinate emergence of an exception and its systematic yet aleatory disfigurement of an established situation. Situated excess is here pitted against the universal variability which, in its amorphous constitution, remains a profoundly conservative image of thought since it precludes the subtractive specificity of a truth—that which renders truth at once ‘illegitimate’ (it is irreducible to the language governing a situation, bereft of any proof or guarantee in the domain of knowledge) and rational (it proceeds through a strict, albeit decisionistic, logic of consequences)” (p. 278).
This approach—as I maintain of the question of representation more broadly—brings us more comprehensively toward an ethics of a new subject in education, one to the comic paradox of the immanent excess of representation, generic ontology’s manifestation in symbolic economies. Neither within nor without its paradox, subjectivity subsists as a decisive praxis at its point of articulation, which is also to say, it declaims the incommensurability of which it is a symptom. How does this prescribe ethicality?

Recall, here with Zupančič (2008), Freud’s elaboration of melancholia as a syndrome of symptoms associated with

- a failure to accept the loss [of an object of love or desire]. Instead of giving up the object, the person internalizes it in such a way that the ego becomes a substitute for that object. (pp. 98-99)

The loss here is of course unspecified, it may be of God, of self, of security, or (in the Lacanian sense of castration) in the eternal disassociation of signifying orders of language from what they would signify. In the melancholic instance of loss one would seem to be faced with a fairly stark choice.

On one hand, the choice is to opt for the ‘mortifying’ internalization of the object (which may be read as reactive and obscure subjective form) in a sort of infinite nostalgia, an implicite ‘objective’ glorification. The ethicality of this choice would manifest as inclusion, predicated on the elevation of the ‘really miserable’ to a sort of tragic dignity (Zupančič, 2008, p. 175), to a provisional and supposed condition of

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276 In examining what she calls “Freudian civic bonds,” Brown (2005) examines Freud’s displacement of Hobbesian fear as the binding social agent with love, via operations of idealization and identification in the interpellation of the subject. She reminds us that identification (as with the ‘objects’ I am here considering) “does not rely on resemblance” but dissimulates . . . in the image of purity or woundedness through which it is achieved” (p. 33). As much as anything, it would here be seen the inherent anti-intellectualism which attends the idealized, or symbolic, identification with state power (that of a ‘grounded’ world) which threatens the educational project.
wholeness or integrity. This elevation would have to be figured as a limited and conditional participation—for inclusion is a bestowal one ‘owes’ to an order—in the privileges afforded by the gods (or transcendental signifiers) of its affordance: The oscillate (humanitarian) ‘good’ and the progressive machinics of more occluded modern deities (technological, democratic, economic etc.). Philanthropic, pedagogical, altruistic, progressive, empathic, this affordance is the operation of the tragic mode of representation, following Zupančič (2008). Its virtually infinite benevolence—*inclusion*—is fatally presumptuous in that it can create (objects, selves, societies, students, families etc.) only in the image of the presumed integrity of the whole it implicates. In ontological terms, the tragic mode of representation reflexively ‘counts’ itself, and thus can only exacerbate its mechanism in response to its failure (to finally include in what we would assume to be constitutively incomplete, or voided). As with the hylomorphic ontological model, of non-generic ontology’s paternalistic formal presumption, the hermetic closure of the tragic mode of representation ultimately makes its fiction dangerous, manipulative, enforcing: Consider the duplicitous simplicities of modern master significations of progress, knowledge, respect, tolerance and so on.\(^{277}\)

The tragic mode of representation produces relative and institutional objects (schools, selves, curricula)—imaginary ‘Ones,’ intensively and inferentially qualitatively ‘unique’ within a condition of ontological exile—which is to say that it recapitulates the

\(^{277}\) Dealing otherwise in educational thought with the place ‘where our constructs fail,’ Britzman (2009b) solicits Kristeva to posit as “adolescent” the stale mimesis of what I elaborate under the rubric of the tragic mode of representation, one of a “dream future, where reason merges desire with certainty” (p. 58). A “believer,” Kristeva’s ‘adolescent,’ is “enthralled by the absolute” rather than, as in my thesis, already undone by it.
(subjective) loss that propels it, or further, that its neurosis is the subjective mysticism of passive melancholia.

On the other hand, that of ‘externalizing the object,’ the choice is to not assume an objective condition and that of the subject (but rather the logics of its objectivity). This is to assume as a region of thought for educational ethics the impropriety of the comic mode of representation as a truthful response to constitutive loss, to uncanny displacement in the unconscious, to the exclusive inclusion of the void, to evental irruption in a condition of actual infinity. A subtractive contestation of the negation, occultation, sublimation and over-determination of conditions—of what Badiou (2006a) calls the “objective dogmatism of substance” (p. 228)—constitutes the truthful indeterminacy that, contra as the tragic temptation of transcendentalism, does not determine in the inverse.278 This is because its mode does not guarantee, does not depose itself in the figure of its operation, and thus its definitive effectivity is naught. To put it metaphorically, the ethicality of the subjective in the comic mode of representation casts no figurative shadow; it is the shadow cast. The comic mode of representation as such empowers, unbinds, and allows for an ethic of the rigor and persistence appropriate to that from which new determinations may emerge. In Lacanian terms, its ‘traversing of [here ontological] fantasy’ affords participation in the creation of new reality, rather than recapitulates the inertia of that which forecloses it, or the retention of the security of the founding ontological prescriptions it declaims, discovers or intuits. Against this venue

278 Indeed, to this point, Badiou (2006a) regards as “the guiding question of all contemporary philosophy [in] How to avoid reintroducing the power of the One at that point wherein the law of the multiple begins to falter” (p. 104). Thematizing the tragic mode of representation calls to account the indetermination of its power, turning it toward evental indiscernment as an instance of subjective fidelity.
for ethics, this choice of ethicality, the tragic mode of representation simply provides for a too-smooth vector for subjective emergence.

6.4.2 Subjective Emergence in the Tragic Mode of Representation

To consider the tragic mode of representation with regard for its subject, I contend that the subjectivation of the tragic paradigm of ‘objective’ production trades its materiality for its fiction. In it, the good and the true become characters in its story, its form the narrative of the subject, one who is thereby its product. The tragic subject produces its story, its existential epic: It narrates the universal, the essential, the absolute it enacts or stages. Tragic subjectivity is a dramaturgy, always unfolding, and discovering the story of its ‘real,’ an intuition (of the ineffable ‘One’ of difference as in ethics of alterity, or the holism of process as in constructivist ethics like phronesis) that fulfills itself—as is the métier of in-tuition, or to know without thinking, which is to say, to believe.

In the conscription of a narrative form, the tragic mode of representation is always in search for an exemplar, a strong and ultimately heroic figure or individual with which to begin, an implicate paternal god, idol, or avatar by which to orient desire. What is important about this figuration in thinking of educational ethics is that the subject (as an ‘objective’ product) of the tragic mode of representation is always in a movement from universal value toward a particular instance, where it meets its test and redeems both its universal value and itself as singular instance (as seen in chapter 4 with regard to God, society and knowledge by the implications of ethics of alterity). The self-reduplicating folly of this ethical structure is the tragedy: Its auto-exilic movement away from the
contingency of the universal, the ‘concrete’ abstraction of actual infinity, toward its guarantee as ‘unique’ instance. Wholly inscribed by the ‘abstract’ universal it flees (its objective status), this particularity (of ‘becoming more who you are’) becomes a heroic instance of a blurry universality (model, concept), of its integrity; as the universal on which it relies is left behind until the hero returns to redeem it as the fulfillment of their action, or in educational rhetoric, their achievement. This is the anxious gap of education, its sadness, and the sacrificial tears of its vindication, as its legion of tragic subjects issue forth into stories of their own on the slender reeds of what was given as education. Implicitly, of course, the universal is entirely installed by such departures, it is rendered whole in departure therefrom (as educational institution re-duplicates itself). The tragic subject, in transit from a universal form to a particular instantiation, never entirely finds anything other than its own confirmation, which, as for moderate Enlightenment itself, is its surest if penurious product: the ‘change’ of an ‘infinite’ dynamism. Thus, the pathos of the heroism of tragic subjects is ambivalent. It consists in the gaining of a happiness that is so by virtue of ‘being like everyone else’ (a ‘real’ instance of pathos of the commonality of finitude, of ordeal and death) and an attendant nagging loss, or incompleteness, inasmuch as the universal does not fail by virtue of its confrontation by a ‘particularity’ which defies it, but rather becomes more powerful, more deceptive, more ubiquitous. This compelling coincidence of loss (of the medium in which to constitute the ethical) and triumph (of an ‘ethical’ security won as the result of struggle) at the zenith of the subjective arc of a tragic mode of representation, as pre-figured from the start (in the odyssey of departure from the universal), comes to be cast as a sacrificial burden: Of having done what one could, ‘against all odds and despite
everything.’ It ‘makes sacred’ a narrative consolation that makes a virtue of the elision of the incompletion on which its project is founded. The consequences of the finitude of the tragic subject manifest as what Zupančič (2008) calls the ‘heart stirring humanism’ of the simplistic perspective of “accepting the burden” and finding joy in it (p. 40), if not then administering it as a sort of ethical program for living. The simplicity of this perspective may be attributed to the indebtedness of the tragic mode of representation owes to a classical one of “a constellation of two where one represents the other” (p. 35).

It is this *representational integrity* that dignifies tragedy, its classical trope secured within the reconciliations of modern settlement of ideological Enlightenment (which grounds in ‘Reason’ its guarantee, and then can only transcend it by deifying its product, the ‘other’ of pure difference). As such, the tragic mode of representation allows—despite everything, the privation, the exile, the splitting from its categorical identifications (its ‘loss of self’)—for a unified subject, for this is its inaugural pretence (its prior ‘One’ in ontological terms). The tragic mode of representation, for all its inherent triumphalism, its individuating bravery and lonely fortitude in the face of the insurmountable which so often is its match and more (the ‘march’ of time, the fading of memory, the betrayal of ideals or their dissolution etc.), essentially figures a merely surviving subject, cast in the lonely light of death. Ontologically, what ‘survives’ is the fiction of the ‘One,’ a symbolic endurance, rather than its Real trauma, which I have counterposed as the (comic) pertinence of birth. The tragic choice is to not choose, but rather to accept one’s beholdenness to ontological integrity. Tragedy is ‘perfect’ because it finally creates only that integrity. Its subjects are disposable, always being forgotten.
This mode of representation is thus predicated on a sort of impotence: That it could be little but its symbolically proscribed self, its point of departure both humiliated (in a subject ‘lost,’ as object) and hallucinated (as a ‘resurrected’ self). This is the impotence of the subject’s carceral presupposition, of its ‘self’ to ‘transcend’ as a modern form of glory, of succession to a ‘higher’ state, of the administrative transparency of ‘learning.’ As for all sequential narrativity—atomistic holism, evocation of implicate limits of termini—279—the impotence of the subject in a tragic mode of representation is confirmed finally by that greatest of all guarantors: Death, the story’s end—also in Arendtian ethics, sometimes enlisted to phronetic ends (see Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 57). As indicated, its ‘tragedy’ is that it plays out this destiny ideologically, that is, as if it were ‘real’ even though it is illusory—we may consider here the perversion of Freudian eventualization, in the demand for the lost one that never was.280 The tragic mode of representation is faithful, in a reactive sense, to its constitutive loss in representation, the reaction or occultation of which is the analogical displacement of its fictive condition by its ostensibly ‘real’ drama.

As the subjective consequence of the tragic mode of representation, the emergence of the liberal ‘subject’ is properly as ‘responsible’ object. Of the political, following Rancière, or, with de Certeau, of a ‘social’ ontology, this is subjectivity to the bewildering auto-assumption of the conjunction of a dubious moral condition (that one

279 de Certeau (1988) describes well what I here evoke as the postulation—or hiding of the absence of—of the other of narrativity: A masking of the “initial and unassignable reference . . . of a necessary relation to a beginning which is nothing” as an expulsion from knowledge in the instantiation of modern reason’s “law of the Other” (p. 88-102) or organization of what is not known. In my Badiouian discourse, nothing of constitutive incompleteness is explicated and assumed.

280 Characteristic of the modern ethical settlement (of what I have been calling the ontological guarantee), Lacan paraphrases its perversive demand, one that ‘grows crueller’ the more it is satisfied: “what is not given to me belongs to me and therefore has been stolen from me—I want it back!” (as cited in Chiesa, 2007, p. 67).
can ‘be good’ without regard for the multivalent contingency which voids this notion) and the weighty and burdensome self-importance that attends this installation (its virtuality, and that of the infinity on which it is predicated, requisitions a heavy burden of disavowal). This is the emergent placid object-subject of late modernity, one productive of—and perfectly facilitated by the implicate guarantee of the modern onto-ethical oscillation281—what Hallward (2010) calls “the comfortable perspective of the indignant moral spectator” (p. 135), the ‘user’ of ethics, its entitled consumer. The apparent truth of the tragic subject may only be that which accords with, or correlates with, its image or model, its ‘transcendental index’ to use a Badiouian figure. Tragic truth is thus merely, in requisite pathos, its own always-incomplete verification, an irritated scab that brooks no neglect, which as such in turn generates more tragedy, more confirmation of its mode.282 This is why the tragic mode of representation implicates truth so confusingly, as a knowledge, or a knowledge implicated by the feeling of tragic representation (of the beautiful certainty of melancholic loss). This nostalgic confusion,283 of a (sophistic) knowledge of that which cannot be knowledge—rather than a subject which assumes tragic pathos via a dislocating thinking in identification—is itself the tragedy, and thus is the fated and perpetual subjective displacement in the ethical anemia of the objective

281 Zupančič (2000) regards as “the function of the transcendental”—with which we may here conflate the constructivist movement as far as this operation is concerned—as “to give a frame” to this configuration of the “illusion that the lines defining a perceived object have their source in a real object.” In the case of the idea of personality, it embodies the virtual point from which the subject would see himself as he is seen by the other” (p. 73).

282 A consequence of what Brassier (2011) regards as the “slide” of correlationism from “epistemological sobriety into ontological incontinence” (p. 49), de Certeau (1988) describes as follows: “truth appears less as what the group defends and more as what it uses to defend itself” (p. 127).

283 Nostalgia, from Boym's (2001) fine study The Future of Nostalgia, may be thought as “a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed” (p. xiii).
This particular requisition of the concept of truth is important to a consideration of subjectivity in the question of its ‘mode of representation,’ for it is here also—as with what I have discussed as subjective formalisms of the event of modernity—that relevant ‘content’ is given, that logics may be pursued critically, their inherent speculative opportunities assumed as ethics. A mode of representation generally may be said to prescribe and legitimates what comes to be visible, it “brings forth intelligibilities” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 80) along with the literary qualities its fiction, or the ways understanding sees itself. What foremost qualifies the subject in the tragic mode of representation is that it remains a spectator in its drama, inasmuch as it remains ‘related’ to itself, commensurable and correlative, and produced by its formalities. As such, its corrupted ‘realism’—of a phronetic ‘world,’ or ontological ‘difference’—cannot but be foremost metonymic of its impotence, or that of the constitutive finitude of its predication in integrity. To the degree to which its individuals are ‘strong,’ its subjects are weak, barred from the inherency of the impossible by the “imperative of the possible” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 51) of which ‘subjects’ of the tragic mode of representation are objective avatars. Brecht’s (2008) Galileo encapsulates the consequences of the tragic mode of representation in this simple retort to the lament of the absence of heroes: “No Andrea: Unhappy is the land where heroes are needed” (p. 95).

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284 Recall that the Greek root of the word *kategoria* is ‘accusation’ (Iannone, 2001, p. 93).
6.4.3 Tragic Consequences

Ultimately, the diminution that ironically characterizes (as irony becomes its mode) subjects of the tragic mode of representation takes place as edification. The tragic subject as responsible object is elevated to the status of the phenomenal ‘thing,’ to that of something ‘real.’ Both phronesis (in democratic sobriety) and alterity (in dutiful concern) edify their subjects as befitting their conscription within a tragic mode of representation. As ethically subject to the ambivalent oscillation among the two, this is one way to regard how ‘21st Century Learning’ (2010) in British Columbia can remain both ‘personalized’ and ‘innovative’ without contradiction. Edified in the instrumental applicability of the objective homogeneity of ‘skills’ (those measurably required for an anticipated future), subjectivity, as the ‘personal,’ is a settlement not for transformation. Presupposed within this technical apparatus, it is at once supremely relevant (within the doxa), and remarkably, stubbornly, opaque and implacable. Redemption is prefigured in tragic subjectivity, easily thus secularized, and monetized. As tragic wisdom—practical and ‘ethical’—continues to produce benumbed objects (ethical knowledge ‘embodied’ in moral exemplars and pious exhortations to the inertias of better-imagined ‘worlds’), its subject is departed, deracinated and reduced to

285 This reference I owe to a citation of the Dean of the Schulich School of Business at York University that “90% of the jobs we currently prepare people for will not exist in ten years time” (A. Pitt, personal communication, February 5, 2011). Further we may wish to note that fully 40% of Fortune 500 companies from 1983 no longer exist (Cowan & Grier, 2012).
286 In fact, the BC Government policy document, a report of the “Premier’s Technology Council” (2010), which outlines “a vision of education for the 21st century,” is the product of a body created “to provide advice . . . on technology-related issues.” The subsumption of education within the technical is well already accomplished.
287 Gabbard and Ross (2004) regard such “secular salvation” as an article of the “utopian character of market fundamentalism” by which the state affords individuals “rights” and “opportunities” (p. 12) (centrally through education) which come to prescribe the unimpeachable Žižekian (2001) duty to “enjoy!”—or to measure oneself by way of the perverse irony of the qualitative objectivity: Happiness. Witness also the invitation of the neo-liberal neglect of higher education to its salvation in the corporatist ‘reform’ of commercial ‘innovation.’

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dimensions suitable to its continuing emaciation, to—dare one say it—its continuing 
education. The tragic consequence here with which to be reckoned is the reduction of the 
subject to a programme (a person, an individual, a character, a human, and other models 
or universal abstractions) entailed by an ethical model. This is a condition Lacan (1997) 
reads into a sardonic form of the famous Kantian imperative: “never act in such a way 
except that your actions may be programmed” (p. 77). Its ethics are of integrity (of the 
integrated), which is to say, of neurotic finitude: In the presupposed completion of your 
‘potential,’ “be limited, divided, exposed” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 50). Like an employee, be 
what the idea of you prescribes, so that you may return to it (tragically, commercially, 
‘anew’), even though, and perhaps because, you know it will not be there. Be ‘One,’ be 
counted so that you will count.

6.5 Inexhaustible Subjectivity: “This Cannot be Right . . .”

*Intervention invents itself.* (Pritchett, 1990)

Drawing together this chapter’s discussion of modes of representation and 
immanent ethics, I want to follow the argument of the previous section into the territory 
of the one before. I want to read together the modes of representation I examine as a 
springboard into a conclusion that is able to become explicit about a subject to an infinite 
condition and an ethics thereof.
To do so, I consider specifically what the tragic mode convenes the death of, beyond the deracinated subject at its most ‘obvious.’ I contend that the loss the tragic mode of representation dignifies is that of the love of truth, of its ‘impossible’ desire, whose ‘real,’ or realizing, function lies in its own structural impossibility. However, this ersatz ‘infinite’ condition Zupančič (2008) also calls the subject’s own “shooting star in the real” since its dislocations—of the predicated completeness of the symbolic totalities of the modern ontological oscillation—indeed do produce “the object via which, for a moment, the subject sees herself on the outside” (p. 188). She sees her own ‘miraculous’ infinitum, her own subjectivity itself momentarily objectivized, as a clearly non-self-coincident figure of the Real (it “cannot be me” but somehow is more so than the naturalized, ‘responsible,’ included one). Rather than answering the anxious demand of her own constitutive dysfunction (to atone), the subject of comedy occupies it, repeats and deploys it, subjectivizes it, in order to break out of the mortifying spell of “a dead letter-driven life” (p. 125) as a failing object of correspondence. In the materiality of re-signification—whose possibility Ragland contends is “the only true measure of social and political change” (as cited in Kovacevic, 2007, p. 208)—clearly an “experimental chemistry” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 177) of what Lacan calls ‘master-signifiers’ is at work. As such, subjective destiny (and ethics) is a matter of constitutive symbolic incompleteness, rather than imaginary substantialization. In the comic mode of representation (and the ‘faithful’ subjectivity of Badiou) the subjective thereby expresses, and re-articulates, the very fictions of reality. The subjectivization of what Badiou calls “the infinity of what

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In completing the estranging movement of obviousness (a minor theme in this study), we find in comic realism the aspiration to what Zupančič (2008) calls “life at its most obvious” (p. 118), of something irreducible to itself, as something foremost and finally expressive of the inner ambiguity of the ‘One.’
we think” (Hallward, 2003, p. 76) is delight in the receipt of what was not requested, the possession of that with which we do not know what to do (consider that for Badiou truth is always attended by the conviction that ‘this cannot be right’).289

If we are to take the challenge of a subjective ethics seriously, we need find a generative and coherent way to avow a subjective condition which befits its element: Infinite yet failing every availability, except as a subjective decision—now, to an initial extent at least, here evoked as both mathematical and comic. This ethical avocation is not delimited by assumed confines of representation, and yet exists within them, exists as them, in conditions of comic short circuit or mathematical displacement, those radically de-totalized by the subject, its inherent generation of what Zupančič (2008) calls “an intersection retroactively affecting its own point of intersection” (p. 215). It turns out this is to be thought as no tragic obscurity (the recursion of an ‘endless’—finite—inaccessibility), but rather as a comic immediacy (the constitutive short circuit of immanent infinity, or the inherent failure of the endless series to cohere as such). If the masterful tragic subject is ultimately extension without modification (of the substantial existential kernel), the hysterical comic one consists in modification without extension (without reform, transcendence), or within generic extension (à la Badiou’s generic, or extension only as nothing related, commensurable or correlative). To the unasked

289 Unlike for the Romantics, knowledge is here not the spur but is rather a medium of the emergence of truth, as the finite is the contingent realm of the transit of the infinite. Neither may contain what constitutively troubles them, as, we are finding in physical science, may not a vacuum that which unexpectedly occupies it. The subject then is a mode of this avocation: “In the absence of any objective knowledge of infinity, the truth of infinity is available only to its subject” (Hallward, 2003, p. 76), to a subject for whom, following Hegel here via Badiou, “the real is rational:” “My own thesis in not that the Inaccessible is accessible. It is that there is nothing inaccessible” (as cited in Hallward, 2003, p. 320, emphasis in original). As far as subjectivity is concerned, the narrative trope of reconstruction may be taken with a grain of salt, that is, with the conviction of an immanent void, or of the metaphorical salt already in some constitutive measure already spilled.
question attending the question of the subject (unasked in the inability to pose without predetermining presupposition), the answer in the comic mode of representation is the subject itself, here, now, in what *already is, as its new form*. This *anticipated retroaction* is, in my argument, also what it is to innovate and create, to be able to call forth something from a situated nothing: To declare it already there and set out to effectuate it as exclusively subjective (existential, ontological, ethical, pedagogical, amorous, scientific, political, artistic etc.) affirmation (which is of course the energy behind Badiou’s re-deployment of the concept of truth). It is *to be* the affirmative lacuna of the infinite, to live as its finite consequences.

I contend it encouraging to the aspiration to educate that subjectivity conventionally assumed in the pathos of identitarian boosterism (and its deflating legalism) provides its own (comic) relief, and that this may be of the order of truth. That it may present as a void, and represent as a ‘lie’ (fiction), is relevant, as is its objective status: as a comedic disconnect within what had been thought known. For here we find a contingent ethical path, the way of existing *as that* (known quality), *and* something (quantitatively) else. Thus the subjective ethical supplement is, in odd reversal, the infinite quantitative excess of the qualitative (oddly reversed because anti-Platonic cant would prescribe a redemptive qualitative excess over ostensibly quantitative ‘finitism’). That this is also constitutive of a beginning for a durable subjective ethics in education—a way of thinking in subjective formalism, disassociating historiographical provocation, a mode of representation as a means of exposure, and an ontologically rigorous alternative—is properly surprising, and surely scandalous. Recall here de Certeau’s (1988) advice that “scandal is on the inside, it is born of internal ‘incoherence’” (p.
For what would one possibly otherwise rationally expect of the ‘missingness’ of discrepant excess (of the incompletion of orders of knowledge, and the structural impossibility of the idea of being itself)? That it would provide a structural place of emergence, would instigate generative sites of subjectivity, and that these would be expressed via the comic failure of objective conceptual ‘realism’ and conjoined thetic idealisms presents a condition of durably infinite ethical opportunity, a thinking in justice to the ontologically heterogeneous: A subjective ethics. This is a condition that, according to Badiou, consists in a way of thinking (the axiomatically decisive subtraction of generic ontology) and a fidelity (to continue to create the conditions for subjective emergence, as this is what the subject does) to the experimental and productive play of the masques thereof—of the fictions among which the Real plays its subversive part. The ir-relation of generic ontology here generates new relations, new knowledges and new conditions in which to think education and, of course, their new comic conundrums of “what thought declares to be a thought” (Badiou, 2006a, p. 163). The subject here belongs, can (only) belong, to what Lacan calls “the most radical diversity” (as cited in Zupančič, 2008, p. 173), an auto-aberrant one which belongs to “a different order than 

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290 de Certeau derives from Freudian writing the displacement of the tragic movement “toward the arrest of a death” (p. 323) in what he calls the “comedy of the quid pro quo” which, like Badiou’s Cantorian invocation (though still within a literary mode), “postulates before it begins, beyond the text, an irreparable division which endlessly recurs in scenic reversals. It never exhausts comic inversions engendered by the unnameable misfortune of which successive historical representations are the successive metaphors” (p. 323). If ontological truth is betrayed in a fictive “law of enigma,” for de Certeau too this is repeated in “the style of a joke” (p. 328).

291 Lacking a ‘built-in mechanism’ by which to distinguish the ‘real’ we can either install one, and coopt ethics to the project of its realization thereby confirming the elusive conceit, or develop an ethics of this absence, which Badiou insists upon as an infinite condition.
variety and novelty” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 173),\textsuperscript{292} one which inheres as the internal contradiction of that which is ‘already’ inherent, is natural, is correlatively ‘true:’ As the ‘unbelievable persistence’ of a fundamental, and constitutive discrepancy, one neither abyssal, painful nor tragic (how could it be when the means by which to apprehend it as such are already divided?), but surprisingly and funny productive. Comic realism brings forward a condition wherein the subject is not what occupies, or possesses, its own life, but instead is both unbound \textit{and} contingent; it is the agency that asserts that “\textit{something of our life lives on its own as we speak}, that is to say, at any moment of our life” (p. 217, emphasis in original). The subject here articulates (in the creation of new genres, here in the ethical question of what it is to live) the actual infinity of \textit{the missingness of the conjunction}, the lack of a link by which elements are conjoined: Of a \textit{limitless} qualitative proliferation as \textit{immanent} quantitative infinitum. In my view, this something that ‘lives on its own’ is that to which educational ethics in an infinite condition is beholden, its occluded wellspring and material support. It is further the only cogent ethical response to the ‘Otherness’ of which we are otherwise constituted (Žižek’s (1989) everyday “alien substance” (p. 230) of essentiality and the massive formal machine of its own production in modernity), it is thus the subjective compass, its magnetic north in the ‘real’ made of an inherent infinite void. It is neither \textit{of} that ‘substance’ nor of its epistemic ‘far side’ because it is the effectuation of their inherent disjunction, of the unavoidably anarchic ‘missingness’ of their linkages. This, in the first instance with Badiou, is because the subject is who/what \textit{thinks} the void, ‘thinks in the

\textsuperscript{292} The notion of novelty is a fraught, or at least multivalent, one in my reading of Badiou. I understand him to want to preserve its “conceptual space” as a formal matter but resist its voided manifestation as ‘innovation.’ Novelty as a formal matter is one of advent as wager and disorientation, not implementation, more a science than engineering.
dual register of both reactive knowledges and obscure gods and their inherent elements of limitless inconsistency; of what belongs within them, but could never be included.

The subject is not one who ‘knows’ this propulsively bizarre situation, but rather one who convokes it via ‘their own’ dissolution in the element of the ‘Other’ (be it the authority of knowledge or of something more ineffable). In Badiouian terms, and ultimately by the happenstance of chance alone, only thus does the subject ‘singularize’ his or herself, and become amenable to the transformations that we all are forced to undergo (but, as with Freud’s ‘eventualization’ of childhood, never fully ‘know’).

Against the ‘natural fatality’ of myriad ambient ideological pressures, the subject in the comic mode of representation lives at the incongruent intersection of mortality and immortality, which, of course, is surely both…and is also constitutively neither, in the infinite medium of its dispersion in contingency, the finite one of its transit as determination, and, most important, the subjectifiable absence of a link between the two.

6.6 Conclusion: To Be a Repetition that Differs

*the infinite is not impossible to attain, rather it is impossible . . . for us to escape.*

(Zupančič, 2000, p. 249)

If we are left with the question of subjective formalization as central to a contemporary ethics of the infinite condition, we find ourselves standing amid the ruins of voided subjective determinations, those of, paraphrasing Althusser, a subject which
‘tells itself stories.’

The subject thus appears among a ruin, a startling devastation of so much to which ethical animus is variously attached in modernity, of what I have been calling ethics as *codes and concepts*. In the assumption of an infinite condition this ruin is logical, it is ‘obvious’ ontologically, a creature of the thought of immanent quantitative excess, and of the authorial missingness of comic disjuncture. This is a consequence of an axiomatics of the sole ontological norm of the non-being of the ‘One’ (mathematically derived) and of the structural lacuna (comico-linguistically derived). To ontologics of a finite condition (of a model, a concept, a process), this ruinous ethics of affirmation remains something cast as fanatical madness, of the anti-liberal pathology, an unseemly mania for a dated concept of equality and a possibly dangerous ‘passion for the Real.’

However, I think I have sufficiently elaborated an ontological remit that obliges educators nonetheless to make a choice. This among the inertia of the idealism a kind of symbolic stasis (a kind of superstition, or anxiety, of continuities), and its disjunctive undoing in the double register of an infinite condition (double because immanent to determination, as its ‘excessive dysfunction’). Called as such to the problematics of ethical subjectivity, the subject as educator bears the burden of what I would characterize as either an *impossible fidelity* or a *possible betrayal*. In this scheme it should be no

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293 Apropos of Althusser, Badiou (2007a) elaborates: “we are in the presence of a symptomnal set-up; representation is a symptom (to be read or deciphered) of a real that it subjectively localizes in the guise of misrecognition” (p. 49). The result of this subjective localization is the discovery in the twentieth century of the “extraordinary power of ignorance, of what Lacan rightly calls ‘the passion of ignorance’” (p. 49). The efficacy of misrecognition reinforces itself as the subjective localization of ‘reality.’

294 Impossible fidelity and possible betrayal may also be thought in as varieties of Kierkegaardian betrayal—as here clarified from Žižek (2003a): The latter as “aesthetic” (“betrayal of the universal for the sake of ‘pathological’ interests—profit, pleasure, pride, desire to hurt and humiliate: pure vileness”) and “ethical” betrayal (“the betrayal of the person for the sake of universality”) whereas the former is a kind of “religious” betrayal, betrayal out of love: “I respect you for your universal features, but I love you for an X beyond these features, and the only way to discern X is betrayal” (p. 18). “Religious” betrayal, like “impossible fidelity,” devolves from a notion of true love as such: “even if you are everything to me, I can survive without you” (p. 19).
surprise that the commonplace ethical orthodoxy is the latter, and perhaps more surprising that the former is not more astonishing, so muted its epiphanies, so denigrated the difficulties of its languages, and the medium of its emergence (thought). To release the ‘beautiful prisoner’ of the human from the entirely modern zoo it has created for itself, from the domestication its freedom assumes, is simply to have the dark courage to void it, and assume the consequences of this decision, confident that its radicality is what Badiou (2009b) calls an “answer without a question” (p. 292); in Lacanian language, such is to move from “‘impotence’ (i.e. castration) to impossibility (i.e. what an actual situation forecloses)” (Bartlett & Clemens, 2010, p. 160). Likewise also for the ethical subject implied, a figure only positively formalized mathematically (although comic realism does explicate its place of emergence), we find ourselves in language with the lexica of lacunae, of what the subject is not. For its enumeration we may be grateful to Hallward’s compendium, reproduced below. In it he details numerous instances of what subjectivity—as the Badiouian “local configuration of a generic procedure by which a truth is sustained” (Badiou 2005b, p. 429)—necessarily precludes by way offiguration. Accordingly, the subject is not:

- A substance (since the [generic] procedure evades the counting for one that determines existence);
- An empty point (since the procedure clearly “proceeds” as a multiplicity rather than a point, and since the void itself is “inhuman and asubjective”);

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295 “At the origin of anxiety there lies the production, by way of the excess, of a question without an answer (courage, for its part, is an answer without a question): What does one want from me?” (Badiou, 2009a, p. 246, emphasis added).
• The transcendental organizing mechanism of an experience (since the word
“experience” can refer only to what is presentable or countable in a situation,
whereas the evental sequence eludes the count; it is supernumerary, or “ultra-
One”);
• The seat of meaning (since a truth remains indiscernible and thus devoid of any
meaning that the situation might recognize, or provide resources or indices for);
• A structural principle (since evental procedures are invariably rare and
exceptional);
• Simply autonomous, or indifferent to that to which it is subject (since every
faithful subject emerges as the subject of a truth, for example, of a political or
artistic sequence);
• An origin or a result (since the procedure is always underway, in excess of the
situation’s resources);
• The consciousness of truth (since every subject is local, or finite, and is not in a
position to know or count out the unending subset collected by a truth).

(Hallward, 2003, p. 140, emphasis in original)

In concert with this far-reaching negative topos, we may appreciate Zupančič’s attempt to
provide a non-mathematical thinking of this sort of subjective formalization, one
emergent among contesting modes of representation, or their ‘short-circuits’ (or in
repetition’s non-self-coincidence). With these in mind, I may now propose two final
attempts at a conclusive formalization of the subject of subjective ethics in education.
First, and pursuant to my reading of Badiouian thought, I can, in general, and in a
reticence borne of the suspension of the double-register of subjective thought, limn
something of a qualitative subjective topos in his inspiration—in that of the void (of
being) he argues the subject ‘decides’ into existence—as follows: A response, chance,
referential space, confidence, truth, exception and clarity. I will briefly support this
collection of subjective indications before hazarding a summative description of the
subject-to-truth in subjective ethics:

- The subject is a response to and an attempt to articulate a “trajectory without
  precedent,” of the choice to persevere in this distance from herself inspired by the
  void, as “the very being of place” (Hallward, 2003, p. 141);
- Its only substance is a combination of persistence and chance: “chance is the
  matter of the subject” (Hallward, 2003, p. 141)—such is the final destination of
  fidelity in a contingent condition, its infinite condition (for naught could naught
  be otherwise, one might say);
- The active principle behind the forcing of new knowledges . . . in the clearing of
  referential space within determination as the precipitate of its void (or as an
  ‘impossible’ fidelity);
- Confidence: “unable to know a truth, what drives the subject of truth (as opposed
to subsequent users of knowledge) is instead a form of rigorous faith or
“confidence”—a confidence that the endless haphazard pursuit of investigations is
not in vain” (Badiou, 2005b, pp. 437-439), here confidence and belief are in
productive relief, where confidence compels finite inquiries in an infinite
condition, and belief an infinite imposition visited upon finite media;
- Truth grasped in its pure point, or that of its exclusive inclusion;
• *Exception* (which refuses, or subtracts, its status as such): The subject must be firmly distinguished from an individual, but is rather its “abrupt conversion” and thereafter ‘re-decision’ in fidelity—contra “the moralizing presumption that every human animal is a subject” (Hallward, 2003, p. 142) the subjective profession derives from a conversion assumed in generic, or voided ontology;

• *Clarity*, as an ontological matter of (mathematical and comic) formalism, the subject is “the imposition of clarity and certainty in circumstances of initial uncertainty and confusion” (Hallward, 2003, p. 145)—this specifically as consequential of late-modern developments in mathematical and psychoanalytic thought, as discussed.

Second, and in the medium of the thought of both Badiou and Zupančič, I will propose that *the subject is the universally singular contingency* of a foreign element in the *objective* (symbolic order). Thus, we may articulate subjective ethics as follows:

• As the pursuit (familiar, I hope, by now with ethics as such) of the unfounded guarantee implied by the radical heterogeneity of there existing “no norm on which we might found the idea of a ‘human subject’” (Hallward, 2003, p. 12);

• As a place of subjective emergence (that is, of *new subjectivities* as a matter of ethical fidelity);

• As an exploration of as-yet unproven consequences (such must be an ethics of generic ontology, or to a constitutively voided condition);

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296 In that the subject as singular immanency depends upon the multiples of which it is composed (i.e. is not transcendent of them or ‘them’ re-constructed or otherwise constructible) and is their illegitimate ‘infinitization’—an unbound condition that simply could be otherwise (i.e. is not of lawful necessity).
• An educational ethics that is not a mechanism of social control, but obtains rather in the creative indiscernment generated in their inherent weakness.

With these as my considered move toward subjective ethics in education, I have sustained here what I consider to be an aspiration to subjective ethics ‘unbound’ and yet affirmed in education. My hope has been that this variegated minuet of thought has evoked a compelling image of thinking, the initial remit of the subjective summons, effective both within and without the modern settlement—as its ethically antic supplement—and so to become for educators educational in the quintessentially modern sense, or which returns to the absence of roots by which the modernity we express came, in profoundly self-subversive complexity, to be.

The reclamation of the de-totalizing radicality of Enlightenment for new conditions of ethical thought in education must confront and surmount the defenses of the conservative (or moderate) one, and its twin flights 1) into the sublimated rationalist procedure of the ‘real’ and 2) into the return to unalloyed religion proper. As Toscano (2010) shows, this is sustained by way of identification of the ways in which liberal modernity discursively maintains its imperium, its settlement in the illusions of autonomy and natural and cultural superiorities. If the production of illusions is at issue in the question of the grounds of ethicality, the faithful subjective formalism of generic ontology is an attempt to think within an element which is itself productive (comically, as it turns out), but not of further fantasies and illusions, not of new fictions of the ‘real,’ but rather in the new consequences of existing ones (that is, as new subjects to it). Toscano's

297 Kovacevic (2007) argues that these in modernity consist in education, religion and ideology (p. 67), but with the supplement of the Deleuzian (1995) notion of ‘control’ power we are given these in a more ominous formal instance.
contention is that the like is the 'methodological atheism' of the psychoanalytics of Freud's confrontations with modernity (and de Certeau is foremost a Freudian), a method that refuses both the explicit consolations of religion and those of religion smuggled "under the guise of unbelief" (p. 171). This is also then to be education in a subjective avowal or commitment, because of the condition of the a-theological infinite, which emerges for us—as a place of emergence itself—to be thought in such apparently distant venues as mathematics and comedy.

The affordance of this path to the educator is no less than that of a sort of participation in, and production of, the ethical adventure of our time, in the re-founding of education, as Plato advised, in “decision at the expense of habit, in reason at the expense of rule” (Bartlett, 2011, p. 6). For to educate in an infinite condition, to educate so as to effect a subjective ethics of truth, is, one must conclude, to actually create reality from the paradigmatic clash of realism and the Real.298 This is the ‘new object’ of the subject of truth, the new knowledge called forth by its generic demand, the assertive fidelity of an infinite condition. To return to the moment of determination is to set it in motion again differently, to induce an obstacle, a new determination that “resists the boundless expansion of our striving” as Žižek (1999, p. 44) puts it, and stimulates activity as the generative power of subjective force. This is also the agitated impulse (the ‘beautiful pain’) of Lacanian jouissance, which is vitalized by its being barred from, at its most rudimentary, simply being self-identical, and also from its constitutive absence, in the lacunae of the infinite that ‘transits’ form. In Kantian terms we are given to think an

298 Pedagogically, such acts, following Zupančič (2000) “install the other (the symbolic order) while demonstrating that it does not exist” (p. 211). This ‘order’ as “the symbolic presupposition of sense” (Zupančič, 2008, p. 93) becomes available “in the ambiguity of its constitution and not in chains of causality” (p. 144).
education in and of the sublime, which unsettles beauty as the familiar guarantor of the
good and, as ‘less than a dream,’ allows founding to reassert in the hazards of
contingency, it “marks the moment at which something emerges out of Nothing” (p. 43).
This is the avocation of education in an infinite condition, its specifically unsettled and
oddly dislocated beauty as a ‘shooting star in the real,’ the subject to which is rarely, and
yet forever, any and everyone.

If this conclusion and its incitements to think the ethical in the educational
domain otherwise seem overly intellectualized, then the question I would pose is why it
might need be so—or: How do ethical concerns as such come to be so self-present? The
very vector of the question is that of a subject’s participation in the ethos and age as its
avatar, its point of vanishing coalescence and inert screen of its projective theatre, and
finally thereby its riven vehicle of self-study and becoming: Not of what or who is
having this or that apparently ethical adventure, but who is being had by an already
massively ramified one, and how precisely to activate this ethically, to be a repetition
that differs. Within this are the precincts of the new places of emergence in education,
new pathways of desire, new subjects, and, finally, new reality itself. My claim is that
such an expeditionary disposal in educational ethics is its educational aspiration, is
education’s implication within the ethical search, its vocation as ethics, its ethical
promise and challenge.
there is no reason to presume that the [subject] will be awaiting us along the ordered route that we propose to it. (Badiou, 2008a, p. 44)

Initially, I established for my purpose the investigation of the avowal of an ethical void in education. This I generalized to subsist within the Enlightenment project itself, expressed in educational thought in ‘ethicalities’ prefigured as realist and utopian (from de Certeau), which are themselves expressive of constructivist and transcendental ontologies (with Badiou). These, as the ethically authoritative modern ‘fictions of the real,’ I then posited as consisting foremost in the self-productive tension I call the ethical oscillation, one particular to modernity between a methodological rationalism and a theology of difference and the other. This, I argued, sustains the delimited ethical remit of education—one ultimately considered as a matter of reactive and obscure subjective formalisms and also of modes of representation—in an ideological modernity ‘bound’ within the cosmological reduction which predicates its social project. This scope of investigation has allowed me to characterize ontologically alternate modern ethical contexts and formalisms available to thought of the subject in modernity (as conditions of ethical thought), and to join those who put this question at the centre of the educational project itself. It has also enabled me to shift thereby some of the discursive conditions of ethics in the educational project (of phronetic ethics and those of alterity) into the oblique glare of an infinite condition, one toward which the true generativity of radical Enlightenment directs us, toward new rationalities, new logics of ‘worlds’ and their new subjective pathways, their truths. Thinking in new conditions here is both a search for
them within the contingencies of complex (and sublimated) existing ones and the response to an ethical call formalizable as infinite. A subjectivity thus forced to decide itself into being, to inaugurate its medium of existence with no guarantee that it in fact exists, to think itself in the dispersion of the actual infinite (of inconsistent multiplicity), this is only the wager that it will have been so thereby. The wager that the subject may become the guarantee it seeks—despite this being, proper to subjective ethics—finally undecidable (for such may be the trial and disposition of all properly ethical questions in an infinite medium). For it has become apparent that we can be of a truth which we neither understand nor in which we in fact believe.

In this ethical condition, we in education find ourselves ethically deposed within a paradoxical temporality of a present not given over entirely to ‘oedipal’ surrender and ethical auto-infantilism (which de Certeau calls ‘the privilege of being a son,’ or one who can naught but ‘service the ‘goods” of extant symbolic orders). And this paradoxical condition of non-self-coincident ethical authority is what gives ethics in education a scope proper to the audacity of its quest, one we may recall here as the search for the right way to live. Here of the order of the a-theological infinite of the formalism of mathematical set theory and the constitutive short-circuits of comic realism, this condition is affirmative simply of an ‘otherwise’ which we already are. This figuration of the subjective is of an ontological intimate exclusion, or an included non-belonging, by which—since Descartes and then Freud, and radicalized in late modern mathematical (Cantor/Badiou) and psychoanalytic (Lacan/Zupančič) conditions—we may conclude that the ethical subject is a riven symbolic production (of the void and its excess) consequent to a radical Enlightenment. Ethical dicta in this condition prescribe classical
virtues of continuance and courage, fidelity (to fidelity itself, as a subjective disposition) and decisiveness—of the only kind that really need concern we who would consider ethics: Of decisions without a ground, without the commensurabilities by which to legislate, or judge. This is the affordance of what Badiou (2006a) calls the hallmark of modern philosophy, its radical inaugural gesture “to subtract the examination of truths form the mere form of judgment…[which] always means the following: to decide upon an ontology of multiplicities” (p. 104). Not especially new capacities, these are rather ones whose invitation sharpens as Enlightenment thought more effectively subverts itself, its own ideological compulsions inadvertently inducing the radicality of the generic ontological norm in ceaselessly novel ways so as to refuse both the integrity of the norms that would deny it from the start, and that of the status of exception, harbour of the critical (analytic) subject. By virtue of their voiding of holist predication, and of tragic representation, ethics as such affords singular and local ways to respond (as ‘answers without questions’) to conditions that are at once, and in undecidable proportion, unprecedented and over-determined to the extent that they partake of continuities (become minimally recognizable, that is). This is not a moderate challenge; even its romance—as the destructive ‘passion’ for the ‘real’—belie the quotidian materiality of an infinite transit. As ethics, this is finally, paradoxically—mathematically and comically—the matter of a place of emergence, one none has ever seen. To my view, in all its inherent difficulty, this is first what is to be vouchsafed as the ethical search of education, and the springs in which its thought must be steeped.

This figuration—and indeed the steeping springs of this work—is heavily reliant on the work of Alain Badiou. His unprecedented intervention into our “supremely
reactionary times” (Hallward, 2003, p. xxxvi), is what one authoritative commentator calls “the most powerful alternative yet conceived to the various postmodernisms that still dominate the humanities, without yielding an inch to the neoliberal, neo-Kantian ‘pre-postmodernisms’ that have recently emerged in response (p. xxix). I conclude with a final contextualization from Badiou (2005a), in the form of his claim that the world ‘demands’ of contemporary thought pronouncements on singularity, contemporary rationality, and the event. As elements of an educational ethics, these are all concerns of this work. However, foremost he designates as the “essential objective” of contemporary thought the proposal of a “new doctrine of the subject” (p. 41). To the extent to which educational thought remains within the assumed technics of received parameters of the ‘real’ (onto-ideological, of subject and self, of world and truth etc.) it is barred from Badiou's (inherently subtractive) charge as ethical and educational. But this foreclosure at once also is its immanent condition of possibility. As the question here has been where to begin without the finitum of such a ‘binding’ enclosure, the answer has been within those received parameters themselves (here in educational thought as phronesis and alterity) in concert with a historiography within which to re-think them. The initial, preemptory, heuristic of course was a declaration, and this is also where I now conclude.

There is an ethical void in education. I contend that this work is an evidence of the productivity of this avowal. I leave for future work its deployment in further

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299 Hallward (2003) elaborates in a way that I think useful to offer here in full: “No philosopher is more urgently needed, in this particular moment, than Badiou….Ours is a moment in which inventive politics has been replaced with economic management, in which the global market has emerged as the exclusive mechanism of social coordination. Ours is a moment in which effective alternatives to this mechanism find expression almost exclusively in the bigotries of culturally specified groups or identities, from ultranationalism in Germany and France to competing fundamentalisms in Israel and Algeria. Among contemporary thinkers, Badiou stands alone in the uncompromising rigor of his confrontation with these twin phenomena, the most characteristic of our age” (p. xxxvi).
articulating and supporting the formalism of a subjective topology of education in an infinite condition, as curricular form and pedagogical practice. But it has been for here to invoke this lacuna, to develop it as ontological and historiographical, and show how such constitutive incompleteness may be thought inextricable within a modern thinking of the ethical in education. Its mathematical specificities I have knowingly betrayed and dispatched to allusions, but the question remains as to whether the profession of a subtractive, generic ontological ethics can galvanize a fugitive educational subject in conditions in which it is already a grossly over-determined legerdemain. I would turn the question around, and ask: How it could not, by virtue of those very determinations? Our fictions about ourselves are the means by which we become anew. They are the immanent conditions of possibility to become otherwise, but only—I hazard, leaping a final time from the security of a positive subject—in the infinite condition in which we are beset. Manifest in the missingness of the linkages by which our worlds (‘concrete’ and ‘abstract’) are integrated, or made whole, the subject arrives when the hydra of God is finally permitted to fail. Otherwise we dispatch our most precious aspirations to the languages of illusion, we foreshadow the impossibilities of truth, and grimly cannot laugh even at its own remarkable and vexing insistence.

In the “singular joy” of “never seeing the moment of conclusion arrive” (Badiou, 2005b, p. 23), we begin simply with a thinking decision.
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