Chapter 1
The Radical Political Identity

But the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather, they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation. To be the same is really boring. We must not exclude identity if people find their pleasure through this identity, but we must not think of this as an ethical universal rule.

Michel Foucault

"True" political action and its subject are the concerns of all political actors, from right wingers to left wingers. On the one hand, the right-wing movements – from religious fundamentalism to conservatism – formulate true political action by securing the existing territories of law or struggling to optimize them whether by force or by appealing to rationality, dialogue or development or civil society. On the other hand, the leftists – from orthodox Marxists to intellectuals of the Frankfurt school, Marxist-Lacanists and Marxist feminists – identify it with breaking the rationality of the bourgeoisie, the rationality of capital, instrumental rationality, repressive Law and patriarchal rationality; namely the rationality which limits, codifies and finally
tames and domesticates human beings in order to exploit them intensely. In the left discourse in particular, political action is either grounded on the critique of the existing order, or on a struggle to raise the consciousness of alienated and suffering subjects, on emancipatory action to break the `chains` and to dismantle – subjectively – whatever imposes limits on consciousness and on freedom.

Accordingly, both groups grapple either with the establishment of the reign of law or with overthrowing its oppressive machinery. The two procedures are inevitably based on the dualistic framework of rational/irrational, natural/artificial, theory/praxis, proletariat/bourgeoisie, infrastructure/superstructure, man/woman, public realm/private realm, marginal/central, and finally void-located/symbolic-located. On the other hand, it would be interesting to note that the contemporary representatives of the two camps –Right and Left- attack systematically not so much each other, but the so called third camp, namely, `post structuralism`. For example, every scholar of philosophy is more or less aware of Habermas' criticism of Foucault, and also of Slavoj Zizek's, Alain Badiou's, and Susan Bordo's opposition to post structuralism or postmodernism, in terms of latter's inability to formulate a unified identity and a universal truth, which, to the critics are crucial to an emancipatory struggle.

But in so far as the new left movements are concerned, (particularly Marxists-Lacanists and neo-Marxist feminists) they either criticize 'poststructuralism' by using some familiar clichés or analyze power in terms of a monolithic conceptualization of power, namely, repressive Law or patriarchy, and consider their liberating subject in the light of an essentialist understanding of identity which will be subjected to an analytical critique in this chapter. On the other hand, and in contrast to the one-dimensional and
inefficacious methodology represented by the above-mentioned movements, our research focuses on listening to the "roar of battle" and the possibility of resistance in a multiplicity of power relations, in which one could engage by affirming the fluid identities, the lack of rigid structural boundaries among them, and the possibility of creating new weapons and new subjectivities to struggle; rather than cherishing or resorting to the uniform and stable weapon-identity as the only way of struggle. The creation requires a variety of tactics, instead of uniformity of strategy.

**Marxist-Lacanism**
We may analyze Marxist-Lacanists in terms of the following simple or complex strategies which are interrelated.

**Simple Strategy:**
In the simple strategy, these theorists and the political actors identify poststructuralism with pluralism, and organize a relatively novel form of struggle, by using the familiar orthodox-Marxist literature which addresses so called poststructuralist as "pluralist", "relativist", "liberal", "passive", "skeptic", following the idea of "respect for the other", "hypocrite", "and rhetorician" and finally "cynic" or "sophist". And finally, by translating the multiple into the plural, the theorists identify post-structuralism with pluralism — the philosophy of all, philosophy of dialogue to achieve the common truth, the non-war action, the relativity of truth, respect for the other, tolerance, and perhaps the last one, would be the "dialogue of civilizations". This strategy is definitely not the result of laziness of thought or negligence in interpretation. It is a product of their simple and economical strategy. In fact, it is hard to see any trace of philosophy of tolerance, respect for the other, a dialogue directed
approach, and relativism in the genealogy of good and evil, in the unsettled world of discipline and punish, in multiplicities of A Thousand Plateaus, and finally in demystifying the familiar and accustomed metanarratives.

On the one hand, these critics find it safe and easy to attack post structuralism, as its lack of any political or economic clout makes it a soft target. And on the other hand, by generating a spectacular propaganda, they could also lay a claim to radical political action. Moreover, they are always proud of not only criticizing – as in the case of post structuralists – but thinking of praxis. Accordingly, in the final analysis, they prescribe a praxis of true engagement, even if it leads us down the road to hell. As Zizek in "Happiness after September 11" says: `the struggle and pain of fundamentalist` who acts out of `engagement` is much more acceptable than the `rhetoric` of the `postmodern deconstructionist` who `with the serene peace of the liberal democrat` and `from his safe subjective position` escapes from acting. A significant displacement occurs: the clash of civilizations substituted for the dialogue of civilizations, hence he happily adds, `[Christ] has come to bring the sword and division, not unity and peace`.\(^8\)

Here, in this so called radical analysis, the value would be the transparency and engagement of the fundamentalist versus the hesitations of the poststructuralist who, in so far as he refuses to believe in a universal truth and a unified identity, does not seem to act or is unable to act. But the questions which are immediately raised are whether the faithful fundamentalist on a suicide mission who without hesitation, out of belief, without hypocrisy and rhetoric, kills thousands of people in a public square in Iraq or wherever, is really more honest and more acceptable; whether he shows his bomb honestly or hides it, and whether it is really our radical measurement to discern the true from the false.
And finally, in opposition to the poststructuralist’s problematization of a unified identity and its essential truth, which challenges every a priori definition of struggle, resistance and finally emancipation, these theoreticians have no other way but appealing to the necessity of the universal identity on which they could mobilize people, organize the struggle – although a fascist one – and identify an identity, although a `reactionary` one: "Why should we not see emancipatory potential even in such an apparently `reactionary` notion as `Russian identity`."^9

Lacan’s Theory of Formation of Identity

Lacan maps the human psyche into three registers: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Before 1953 these three registers were separate and even in opposition to each other. But since then and particularly since his famous seminar on the Borromean knot10 till the end of his life, Lacan insists on the relations of these registers and necessity of their inseparability. Through the interaction of these registers one’s self identity is formed. He contends that in terms of this pattern every psychic phenomenon could be explained.

The Imaginary or the mirror stage which happens during the first six months of infant’s life is the realm of images in which we make identifications. "This image is identical for the entirety of the subject’s mechanism... It makes up the unity of the subject"11. Then he defines the unitary image "as it is perceived either in the mirror or in the entire reality of the fellow being"12. The mirror stage is the formation of the ego through the process of identification, in which the child is caught by its image and recognizes itself in the mirror. At six months there is an uncoordination of the body and the infant looks at oneself as fragmentation, in other words the child sees itself as separate parts of the body –feet, hands, stomach,... – but via seeing its image in the mirror as a whole, it feels a sense of contrast and also rivalry with its image, hence "a
fragmented body is an image essentially dismemberable from its body". To resolve the tension, the infant identifies with the image, with its wholeness, which gives him a sense of mastery. The stage is also accompanied by the infant’s awareness of its mother as itself or identification with another infant, namely the small other. To Lacan, the moment of identification is the moment of jubilation, and narcissism, since it leads to an imaginary and false mastery. At this stage the subject is alienated from itself. Therefore, the Ego is the result of a misunderstanding, Lacan says, "It is this image that becomes fixed, the ideal ego..., the ego is a function of mastery... the ego masks its duplicity".

On the same ground, Lacan draws a distinction between the small other and the big Other. The small other is the other who is not really other, but a reflection or projection of the Ego. It is the other people in whom the subject finds a visual likeness, or is the reflection of its body in the mirror (ideal ego). Therefore, the small other is inscribed in the Imaginary realm. But the big Other cannot be assimilated through identification, and it is inscribed in the Symbolic realm. Accordingly, the Other or big other which identifies with the symbolic realm is the locus of speech, law, language and culture: "ideal ego is imaginary, what Lacan calls the `small other`, the idealized mirror-image of my ego; Ego-Ideal is symbolic, the point of my symbolic identification, the point in the big Other from which I observe (and judge) myself". The movement from the Imaginary to the Symbolic occurs with the onset of the oedipal conflict. The child’s illusory, stable and unified self, constructed in reaction to its desire for its mother, is interrupted by the father. The repressed desire is called `lack`, `void` or the Real. The child tries to overcome the lack and fill the void in the symbolic realm. Accordingly, in its successful oedipal resolution, the child chooses as love object a member of the opposite sex. The second effort in the Symbolic realm to fill the void is the 'Fort-Da' game that Sigmund Freud describes. It is a significant effort in creating a normal
personality. The child throws a toy with a thread attached and pulls the toy back when the toy is far, the child cries 'Fort' (far or 'gone'), and when the toy is pulled back, the child cries 'Da' (here). The game symbolizes the acquisition of language and its power to make absent objects present, in which the child manipulates the absence and presence and enjoys controlling them. Freud articulates it as follows:

This gosod little boy... had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out 'o-o-o-o', accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. [...] I eventually realized that it was a game, and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play 'gone' with them.17

Accordingly, influenced by Lévi-Strauss, the Symbolic is the realm of language and law in which the subject should be integrated by acquiring language, namely the signifying system; and on the other hand, is the reformulation of Freud's researches, Fort/Da, in which the child by recognizing the absence of a lost object (mother) and with the help of signifying systems (signifier and signified) transforms the absence (the Real) into the presence (the Symbolic). By using language and mastering the signifier-signified game, the child overcomes the pain of absence. In this sense, Language is the symbolic substitute for the real lost object which is characteristic of desire. The real object of desire is lost forever, and our effort in the symbolic realm finds an alternative. Therefore, the symbol comes into being or as Lacan says, it is "the birth of the symbol" in the child.18

The absence which is the necessity of the subject's identity is called void, gap, fissure and the Real. It is the impossible, the unavailable, non-
denominatable and indescribable which cannot be symbolized: Lacan says: "The Real is outside the language resisting symbolization", and therefore it is outside the chain of signifier-signified. It is unlike the symbolic which is constituted in the opposition of absence/presence. Finally he adds that the Real is 'impossible', impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the symbolic realm. Hence, it would be the object of 'anxiety'. The Real is an essential state which cannot be vocalized, and it has a 'traumatic' quality. The Real is the nothing, the not-existent which provokes desire. The desire to satisfy itself is repeatedly directed to the objects in the Symbolic realm, and each time disappointed by its being absent or unreal. And this process continues in the chain of signifiers:

This absence is more than compatible with the presence of the signifier, but the inadequacy of the signifier itself [...] the presence of the signifier in the Other is, in effect, a presence usually closed to the subject, because it usually persists in a state of repression, and because from there it insists on representing itself in the signified by means of its repetition compulsion.  

Accordingly, the ideal, platonic world of the Real on which the symbolic mysteriously depends, is the unavailable, the impossible, and the non-vocalizable which can be perceived just by negative theology.

But to Lacan, as a psychoanalyst, the sanity of a normal person is due to the linkage of the three circles – the Symbolic, the Real, the Imaginary – and any cut in the linkage makes the Borromean structure disintegrate and accordingly leads to a mental breakdown. Going absolutely beyond the Symbolic order or the big Other, and stepping into the traumatic, anxious and impossible realm of the Real correspond to symbolic death, to a "life deprived of support in the symbolic order", or becoming nothing, the "scum of humanity", "no longer human", namely, in psychoanalytic terms, becoming
schizophrenic. Hence, in classifying mental diseases – from neurosis to schizophrenia – psychoanalysis focuses on the degree of the inability of a person to integrate into the symbolic realm. Freud diagnoses a neurotic as curable because of his connection to language, and a schizophrenic as incurable, because of his disconnection from the world. To Freud, the latter stays outside the system of language and is not committed to cooperation with the psychoanalyst and resists him. Hence, Deleuze argues:

Freud doesn't like schizophrenics. He doesn't like their resistance to being oedipalized, and tends to treat them more or less as animals. They mistake words for things, he says. They are apathetic, narcissistic, cut off from reality, incapable of achieving transference; they resemble philosophers — "an undesirable resemblance".

Thus, Antonin Artaud (French writer and artist) spent "eight years and eight months in five insane asylums", because of his non-symbolic language, his unusual "verbal behavior", "his habits of crafting magic spells", his "obscene poetry", and finally for his "vagrancy". He "underwent fifty-one electro shock sessions" and was diagnosed by Jacques Lacan as "chronically and incurably insane". Hence, the task of psychoanalysts is nothing but maintaining the balance of the three realms, assessing the individual’s success in this work and helping him in reaching the balance and normality in the world of symbols.

Lacan said to the Vincennes university students (Paris VIII) who were organizing a radical, violent political action: "You want to combine Marx and Freud. Psychoanalysis can teach you that you are looking for a master; and you will have this master". Additionally, Lacan recognizes that his task as a psychoanalyst is not to find a way out of the pre-given structures of language,
law culture etc, and not to revolt against them; but to find ways to help an
individual to integrate himself successfully in the symbolic structures to reach
a normal and sane personality by remaining at a safe distance from the Void.
Hence, Alain Badiou contends that for Lacan going beyond the Law
corresponds to symbolic death and hence, psychoanalysis is "unable to
conceive a militant 'revolutionary' collective".26

Complex Strategy:
himself with Marx! They reconstruct Lacan through a positive, politicized
approach with the help of the Marxist understanding of
infrastructure/superstructure, and in the new formulation of the emancipatory
Real/the repressive Symbolic.

Badiou and Formation of Political Subject: Mystic
'Truth-event' and 'the subject of truth' are concepts which remain central to
Badiou's thought. In Being and Event, Badiou has discussed how truth is
beyond the 'encyclopedic disposition', beyond established knowledge and
beyond language. And in so far as it belongs to the realm of infinitude; it
remains unnamable, undecidable and indiscernible. Badiou maintains that the
subject is dominated by the established knowledge, and that is the infinitude of
the subject. In contrast, truth is infinite and global. Hence, there is no
coextensive or immanent relation between subject and truth, and the only
linkage between the two is the faithful belief of the subject, 'the operator of
fidelity' in the promised truth-event. Badiou says:
Every truth is transcendent to the subject [...]. The singular relation of a subject to the truth whose procedure it supports is the following: the subject believes that there is a truth, and this belief occurs in the form of knowledge. I term this knowing belief confidence.27

But the following questions would be immediately raised:

How could one discern the infinitude of the truth in the finite realm of language? How could one nominate the transcendental truth-event in the worldly established order of knowledge? And what are the features of the subject who makes judgments on whether the event has occurred and whether the truth is the same as the promised Truth?

Badiou argues that the subject is surrounded by the finite configuration of the situation. On the basis of the law of the situation, the subject discerns that "a post-eventual truth is being deployed"28, and that is the law which gives the subject possibility of nomination. But the names are suspended and empty: "Signifiers without any signified".29 And the emptiness could only be filled by the revelation of truth: "this void will have been filled if truth comes to pass as a new situation".30

In effect, Badiou is implicitly aware of the deficiency of his argument and limitation of the finite subject in nominating and recognizing the infinite. Hence, he introduces the new, the so called 'confidence' or subject's fidelity to the realms of the conscious and the unconscious. In this way, "the subject is neither conscious nor unconsciousness of the true. [...] the subject believes that there is a truth".31

But what is the ontological status of 'fidelity' in human law, language, knowledge or the human psyche?

In order to politicize Lacan's Real in the world of symbols, Badiou introduces the Event. He has elaborated the four possible subjective stances
towards the Truth-Event, namely Master/Hysteric/University/Mystic. In Lacan’s model, the ‘analyst’ or psychoanalyst would be a peaceful psychoanalytical solution in Symbolic arena. But Badiou who is upset with the corrupted state of things, with the repressive realm of the Law, namely, of the Symbolic order, attempts to escape from Lacan’s solution by the mysterious concept of the political ‘Mystic’, and to find out an alternative to Lacan’s depoliticized impasse. Hence, in his advocacy of Badiou’s formulation of the Mystic, Zizek says: "For the Mystic, what matters is the bliss of one's immersion in the event, which obliterates the entire symbolic reality."

In Badiou’s approach, the Event is correlative to the traumatic encounter with the Real, the miracle which turns negativity to positivity. It belongs to a wholly different dimension that is non-Being. Hence, the Event as the Real would be indescribable and non-denominatable, and would be separated from its symbolic effects. To Badiou, the Master is one who denominates the Event and formulates it in the symbolic order, and transforms the act into the Master-signifier: "The Master pretends to name, and thus directly translate into symbolic fidelity [...] the Master gesture is to change the act into the new Master-Signifier". The Hysteric, in opposition, insists on the gap between the Event and the denomination of the Event, problematizes the act of denomination, and hesitates as to whether the denominated Event is the Event itself: "there was an Event, but each symbolization of the Event already betrays its true traumatic impact". And in the case of the University discourse, one attempts to reduce the Event to the disposition of the established knowledge and to the normal and every day course of events without referring to the miracle of the Event. Hence, after confronting with the Event of love, the University discourse would say: "'Love? It's nothing but the result of a series of occurrences in your neuronal network!'".
Hence, to Badiou, the Event as the Truth should not be doubtfully hysterical, should not be denominated and symbolized in the Master position, and should not be neglected and reduced in the University discourse. Rather, it would be the province of the `Mystic` as the political actor, as the true subject, who discerns "its traces within the situation"\(^{37}\), loves it, and engages in its advocacy in order to discern it after its occurrence, and eventually to immerse oneself in its bliss. Hence, the Event would be the infrastructure and `fidelity` to it could be a guarantee of the subject’s survival in the political arena.

In opposition to the postmodernist skeptic who doubts *if there was an event at all*, Badiou attempts to formulate the Truth-event accurately, systematically, and universally. He also charts the ways to reach it, and the features and characteristics of the subject who engages with it. Hence, the miracle of truth is the miracle of universal thought and any refutation of the generality as "women in general" in terms of an "antiessentialist postmodern identity politics" should be rejected as "banalities unworthy of being considered objects of thought."\(^{38}\)

In his formulation of the Event and the subject’s fidelity to the Event`, Badiou combines Lacan, Lukacs, Althusser and Husserl, with the hope that the new synthesis could overcome the deficiencies of each, and be a systematic solution for a novel theory of revolution and the subject’s engagement with it. Badiou’s revolutionary subject is the subject which is prior to action and therefore prior to the Event. By serving the truth, the subject exercises fidelity to a Truth -Event. The subject submits itself to the *interpellation* of the Event in an Althusserian way\(^{39}\), thinks of class struggle and the *consciousness* prior to action in a Lukacsian way, and in a Husserlian way *intends to* the Event till that miraculous `Resurrection` of the Truth-Event is *revealed*. Therefore the
Event can be discerned "only by those who are already involved in support of the Event".  

Like Lacan, Badiou emphasizes on the idea of non-denomination of the Event and stands the Event-Real on its head in the Symbolic. The Event can be identified `only` by the subjects of the Event-Truth, in other words only by those subjects who engage with the Event-Truth; and, any observer or any 'external' gaze such as the University discourse which without love and fidelity, analyzes the Event and its effects, does not have any appropriate position to `discern the Event`. Hence, the true subjects who could recognize the Event and confirm its Being are those who already 'trace' the Event, expecting it and engaging with it. But Badiou who is well aware of the danger of the Fascist Masses falls in his own theoretical pitfall, as he is inevitably led to discern the "authentic Event" from "a pseudo-Event" in terms of its effects. In the other words, he has to evaluate whether the event could subvert the situation or state of things. Therefore two different subjects emerged in Badiou's theory: On the one hand, the seemingly passive-observer subject such as Heidegger who takes fascism as "an authentic political act", and "was seduced by a political act that was undoubtedly a fake, not an actual Truth-Event (Nazism)", and on the other hand, the true subject, intelligentsia (like Badiou himself), who could `discern` the authentic event from the fake one. On this basis, Badiou calls the French Revolution as an 'Event'. But when the believer subject of the French Revolution, Robespierre, suddenly gets transformed into the subject of the Regime of Terror, Zizek is led to justify Badiou's philosophy by appeals to the momentary rather than `universal` political action: "The Truth-Event[...] momentarily suspends the Order of Being". Undoubtedly, this makes it difficult to distinguish pseudo action from the true one, because in most fascist events, the truths can be recognized momentarily in the form of shattering `the Order of Being` or subverting the
situation, particularly by the subjects who themselves maintain engagement with and fidelity to the event. Accordingly, the Truth-Event which is supposed to be "eternal" and "universal", is also momentary and contingent, namely, the "Event is the truth of the situation [...] but it is also always localized, that is to say, the Truth is always the Truth of a specific situation". Another version of 'postmodern' politics which says 'there is no woman in general' rather, "there are only white middle-class woman, black single mothers, lesbians, and so on" is absolutely opposed by Badiou.

On the other hand, escaping from the Lacanian negativity and the 'impossibility' of the Real, Badiou attempts to elaborate the possibility of 'revolutionary' action through the subject who intervenes in the historical situation on behalf of the Truth-Event and could discern the true Event by exercising 'love' and 'fidelity' to the Event in the 'universal symbolic' structure. Hence, in order to be expected and traced, the Event should be formulated in the symbolic realm, in the so called repressive realm of language and Law. One could ascribe an event as an Event that has already come into language, to a Symbolic formulation; otherwise it would escape from being denominated as Event. Then, just those events could be inscribed into history that we expect in advance, describe them as Events, define them in power relations and already denominate them as Revolution, Love, and Event otherwise they would slip out of our symbolic formulation. Accordingly, in his strenuous attempt to define the 'Mystic', Badiou still remains in the realm of the 'Master', since he has no other option but to analyze the consequences/effects of the Event as an observer, denominating and translating the Event in the language in order "to guarantee the continuity and consequences of the Event", and — against his will — transforming it into a new Master Signifier: 'Truth-Event'.

22
Ranciere and the Theory of the Subject: Demos

A neo-Marxist, Jacques Ranciere disapproves of the principles of Claude Lefort, disagrees with Althusser's elitism and his "philosophy of order" whose very principles anaesthetized the revolt against the bourgeoisie. is dissatisfied with the failings of Marxism and is also disappointed with the unfair Arendtian distinction between the public and the private. Hence, he is led to fill the gap between the Real and the Symbolic, to find a remedy for the Marxist and Althusserian deficiency and to go beyond the Arendtian distinction through novel oppositions of the demos/ethnos, the visible/invisible, the counted/uncounted, the political/nonpolitical, to be heard/not to be heard, the included/excluded, politicized/depoliticized and finally politics/police.

By making a distinction between ethnos and demos, Ranciere contends that the ethnos are the people who are led to reproduce their life and struggle only for their personal or social interests. In contrast, the demos, the uncounted are the true political actors concerned with the interests of the Whole and they struggle to identify themselves with the Whole, the Universal. "The ethnos is the people identified with the living body of those who have the same origin"; but "the demo is the name of the subject of politics". Here, it would be interesting to note in parenthesis the way the terms 'ethnos' and 'demos' resonate with the Marxist terms 'class-in-itself' and 'class-for-itself'. Moreover and despite Ranciere — one can already see the resemblance of demos with the Arendtian concepts of action and its related subject and of ethnos with labor and its subject.

In Ranciere's philosophy, the voiceless or the 'non-part' of society, are conceived as the only political subjects who could engage in true and democratic political action through the process of politicization. As the
embodiment of genuine political identity and the only true representatives of society they deserve to rule the political stage, as "power belongs to those who have no qualification to rule". Therefore, in elaborating Ranciere's concepts of politics and its subject Zizek says:

This identification of the non-part with the Whole, of the part of the society with no properly defined place within it [...] is the elementary gesture of politicization, discernable in all great democratic events from the French revolution [...] to the demise of ex-European Socialism.

In conceptualizing the democratic politics, Ranciere uses of the concept of *dissensus* which indicates the practice of equality in the unequal hierarchy of the police order. Politics begins with dissensus by the political subject — the demos, the rightless, the Wrong — who disrupts the existing order of *police*, creating a fissure in the sensible order of things and introduces its order into the *police*. Ranciere says:

Political dissensus is not a discussion between speaking people who would confront their interests and values. It is a conflict about who speaks and who does not speak.

Accordingly, dissensus as a democratic political process relates to the distribution of the sensible. It produces sets of modalities pertaining to making, acting, seeing, hearing and thinking. In this sense, dissensus does not refer to the regimes of exclusion, rather it relates to *aesthetics* which creates the modes of the audible and the visible. Aesthetics as such corresponds to a true political action: "There is thus an 'aesthetics' at the core of politics".

Conversely, by erecting a border between the visible and invisible, the audible and inaudible anti-democratic policies establish a pseudo distribution
of the sensible which assigns everyone a given role and occupation. In other words, these policies eliminate politics and depoliticize the political subjects by returning them to their 'normal' position in which everyone is doing his or her particular job:

The basic aim of antidemocratic politics always — and by definition — is and was depoliticization, i.e. the unconditional demand that 'things should return to normal'.

Besides, Ranciere disagrees with Claude Lefort's definition of democracy which is in some respects borrowed from Lacan's theory. To Lacan, as earlier mentioned, the Symbolic is a system of signifiers based on language as a system of differences. And signifiers refer to something which is absent, the Real. Accordingly, Lefort argues that totalitarian movements rest on the belief that the law can be incarnated in the body, people, leader or party. For Lefort, democracy is the empty place which no one can fill or occupy. This empty place, the Real, cannot be covered by any ideology, law or the Symbolic. Zizek says:

In an explicit reference to Lacanian theory, Lefort conceptualized the democratic space as sustained by the gap between the Real and the Symbolic: in a democracy, the place of power is structurally empty, nobody has the 'natural' right to occupy it, and those who exert power can do so only temporarily and should not ever coalesce with its place.

But Ranciere is led to fill the gap by allocating the natural rights to those who could occupy the space of democracy and manage the stage of politics:
Democracy is the power of those who have no specific qualification for ruling, except the fact of having no qualification. As I interpret it, the *demos* — the political subject as such — has to be identified with the totality made by those who have no 'qualification'. I called it the count of the uncounted — or the part of those who have no part.  

Looking through Lacanian glasses, Lefort conceives that the non-denominatable Real, fissure, void, gap, in other words, democracy, cannot be symbolized, for as Lacan argues, the Real is outside language and resists any symbolization. Determined to overcome Lefort's transcendental notion of political democracy, Ranciere revisits the Real by a kind of short-circuit between the Real and Symbolic, the possibility which is also offered by Lacan's concept of Borromean knot. Hence, by allocating a real place to the 'non-part', Ranciere finds an alternative to Lefort's concept of democracy. On this ground, Zizek concludes that 'post-Althusserians' including Ranciere 'insist that, within the multitude of real political agents, there is a privileged One, the 'supernumerary' which occupies the place of the 'symtomal torsion' of the whole and that allows us to access to its truth'.

In Ranciere's thought, the Lacanian Void, the Real, becomes 'the part with no-part' of the society, 'the excluded', 'surplus' workers, the 'non-part' that are the 'the stand-in for the whole ', 'the immediate embodiment of society as such', but 'with no properly defined place within it'. A reversed approach: the political subject in Badiou’s philosophy stays in the Symbolic realm, but it traces the footsteps of the Event, follows the mechanisms of engagement in the Resurrection of the Truth-Event, with the belief that the Event falls down from the Real into the Symbolic realm, and the political subject immerses itself into its bliss. But Ranciere reverses the direction: The true political action should be done in the void, in the nothingness of the Real
by the `the excluded`, `the not to be heard`, `the uncounted`, and finally by the **Void-located**. The true and politicized action is conducted through a movement from the Real to the Symbolic, to the public realm (police), over which a handful of exploiters dominate and the `demos`— the real representative of the entire society who are deprived of its benefits. In Ranciere’s thought, the Real is the private realm, the home of the `non-part`; and the Symbolic is the public or political realm into which the *demos*, the 'nothing' by destabilizing the existing order should overthrow the new bourgeois, the ruling elite, "the ruling oligarchy or aristocracy”[^64], 'be included', 'counted' and finally establish their own order. By schematizing three models — `archi-politics`, `para-politics`, `Marxist' or 'meta-politics”[^65] — Ranciere shows how each of the models supports the existing order through the process of 'depoliticization'. Hence, he contends that true political action is the struggle in which the subordinated, the deprived, the 'nothing' could stand against the privileged interests of the ruling class, and endeavor to be included in the public sphere in order to make their voices heard . So, true politics — or according to Zizek, 'politics proper”[^66] — would emerge by overcoming particular interests and identifying the singular with the Universal. Accordingly, the shift from the singular to the Universal would be a shift from the definite to the indefinite article; from "We are the people" to "We are a/one people".[^67] But this gives me to a series of questions:

How one who has no qualification to rule could rule? How one who has no power could *struggle* at all to gain power and the right of being heard? How does it happen that a piece of art becomes visible and an other remains invisible? Only because of the talent of the artist? If so why were some 'aesthetic' works buried in silence for years or centuries although they were so precious? Hence, there must be other mechanisms involved which make a piece of art visible: mechanisms like market forces, the artist's connections,
censorship, and chance. Thus, Foucault argues that a short story could find a place in 'literature' only by traversing through power networks; otherwise it would remain invisible and be condemned to centuries of 'silence'. He says: "But it should not be forgotten that this singular position of literature is only the effect of a certain system [dispositive] of power". Aesthetics, in this sense, cannot be the only core of politics; rather it necessitates looking for other mechanisms in power relations. In the political arena, we have also seen how an anonymous protester becomes visible and well-known and could change the existing order and power relations not only by his emancipatory efforts, but also by the possible intervention of the tyrannical regime which arrests, tortures or even kills him, thereby transforming him into a visible activist, who would otherwise have stayed invisible and non-part.

Ranciere is very well aware of the risks of formulating a fixed and transcendental identity for struggle, because such a definition could sweep aside the unknown actors in the political arena. He also recognizes the theoretical traps of offering an absolute notion for politics, as it leads to purity of politics: "There is no 'pure' politics". However, he could not get rid of Lacan's influence and of his Marxist background. Accordingly, the true actors in politics would be the demos, the 'Wrong', namely, those who are excluded from the social and political stage. And only a shift from the uncounted to the counted could be a characteristic of 'politics proper'. He reduces political actors to a particular identities, and politics or 'politics as an aesthetic affair' to the particular sort of action. To Ranciere, true politics is a one-way action, in other words, a one-way movement from the uncounted to the counted, from the peripheral to the central, from the invisible to the visible, and from not being heard to being heard. But in such an interpretation of politics as an aesthetic affair, is there any space for 'minoritarian' literature which does not desire to be included, but rather, insists on staying on the verge of literature, or
to become a foreigner in its language. One may produce a masterpiece by not writing in the usual and audible style of his own language. Hence, Proust says: "masterpieces are written in a kind of foreign language." But in Ranciere's thought, the voices could not be heard in a 'foreign language'; hence, they are supposed to leave their singularities behind to join to the Universal. Ranciere failed to comprehend the possibilities of action which could be counted as minoritarian, nomadic, immigrant, or even schizophrenic. He also could not recognize that politics as an ethical affair is the relation of self with self. Any political decision is first and foremost an ethical decision. Hence, his philosophy could simply stigmatize and dismiss those who decide not to be heard, as 'depoliticized'.

The `non-part` of the society which is supposed to be a single unity, a Universal, in fact consists of a variety of unities, with the contradictory and different demands, interests and values, besides the particularities in each so called unity. Hence, in some political-historical eras during which the organic whole has strategically or symbolically allied over a single truth such an alliance has invariably broken up, leaving no trace of that truth or that whole has been left. And then, those unities have not only been indifferent to their interests and their differences but also whole struggles have been mobilized over interests and values which have been claimed. Therefore, the main political challenge has always been on the issue as to who should be the representative of the whole, and who has the qualification of discerning and recognizing the whole and its leadership. In this jeopardizing process of recognition, the only classical alternative has been always the return to the myth of the elite- intellectual (Althusserian alternative) who is supposed to discern true from false, the original from the duplicate, and ultimately to show the way to the masses.
And finally, let us deal with the political fantasy which claims that the non-part as a representative of the whole has been totally deprived of any economic favor, any political privilege or any power in the public realm, and hence their words and their actions are free from any symbolic and ideological hierarchy or any discursive status, and accordingly are true. In this approach, the non-part is the Master signifier of struggle, and the only measurement to discern the authentic political action. But Ranciere cannot deny that in struggle, the actors use "the weapons of the police description". If the so called "uncounted" use the weapons of the police, they could not be called uncounted any more. As everyone has power and uses it, the real question would be how is power exercised through the net of power, rather than who has power and who does not have it. By the same token Foucault argues:

We now know with reasonable certainty who exploits others, who receives the profits, which people are involved, and we know how these funds are reinvested. But as for power... We know that it is not in the hands of those who govern. But, of course, the idea of the "ruling class" has never received an adequate formulation, and neither have other terms, such as "to dominate... to rule... to govern," etc. These notions are far too fluid and require analysis.

Moreover, without compromising with the big Other, without affirming and recognizing its laws and rules, and benefiting from its social, political relationships, could anyone — except that schizophrenic vagrant whose words are like 'magic spells' — be included in the Symbolic, in the public sphere. And sometimes the honor of being non-part, 'excluded', 'deprived', 'marginalized'... per se can organize the great, ideological and powerful lobby into the heart of the big Other, against which one can hardly stand. Hence, it
would not be pleasant to be labeled as hostile to non-part and branded as the infamous challenger of the void located.

In the final analysis, the `non-part` of the society which seems to be deprived of the public or the repressive Symbolic realm has to attempt hard to integrate itself into the oppressive realm of the Law, into the big Other to gain what it has been deprived of. The paradoxical action, if it occurs, the dear `excluded`, the proletariat, and the non-part of society may be immediately transformed into the new bourgeois, the `ruling oligarchy`, the Fascist Masses, the perverted included, the one whose desire is the `desire of the Other`.

Neu – Marxist Feminism

The patriarchal mode of production, exploitation of women, the dualism of proletariat-women/bourgeois-men, alienation, ideological construction of gender, unequal and sexual division of work, class/gender inequality, raising consciousness and private/public split are all familiar categories for orthodox Marxist feminism. But since the 19th century, these categories have been subjected to a fundamental transformation, in a way that the new feminist movements, the third generation in particular, hardly—at least apparently—advocate many of them. Their lived and philosophical experiences have taught them that they are dealing with variety, difference, multiplicity and fluidity of identities which cannot be easily formulated in terms of the classic construction of male/female.

The issue of differences and fluid identities provide a sophisticated framework to feminist politics. It is argued that post-structuralism, with its attacks on traditional forms of thought, in particular, on orthodox notions of rationality and the unified subject, delays the possibility of construction of women in the form of a unified class, with universal interests and concerns.
which could provide the conditions for *sisterhood*, mobilization and alliance. Poststructuralist thought considers the unified identity as an essentialist illusion. Therefore, the feminist movement found it hard to establish any relationship between the implications of poststructuralist thought and their emancipatory policies. To them, on the one hand, the deconstruction of a unified subject into fragmented subjectivities could not lead to an understanding of individuals as active agents capable of intervening and transforming their social and political environment. On the other hand, it seems that the poststructuralist deconstruction of universal values such as freedom and truth would push the struggle itself into the abyss of relativism and nihilism.

In opposition to the approach, Tina Chanter argues that we are dealing with the fluidity of gender roles, the proliferation of gender identities and finally 'the end of gender'. She argues:

> [...] transgendered identities, including intersexuality, transsexuality, and other crossover terms are challenging tried and trusted feminist formula which equate gender with society (or culture, or history) and sex with biology (or physiology, or nature).^{75}

But in spite of the fact, it is still impossible for feminism to go beyond male/female construction of gender. Susan Bordo, as a Marxist feminist, belongs to the feminist generation which argues that feminism should go beyond the traditional formula of oppressor/oppressed:

> Under an oppressor/oppressed model which theorizes men as possessing and wielding power over women – who are viewed correspondingly as themselves utterly powerless – proved inadequate to the social and historical complexities of the situations of men and women.^{76}
Hence, she criticizes "old feminism" which portrays men as the enemy and "essentializing" them as sexual brutes and cultural dominators. But quite paradoxically and habitually she argues that all women as women occupy "subordinate positions" in society where they are ignored, and only some people have the power of making decisions for all. Then she concludes that feminist theory is not located at the center of cultural power, and it suffers from being invisible, "marginalized", "disdained", "excluded", namely, an "outsider" discourse. Although, explicitly declaring that the duality of man/woman, oppressor/oppressed has lost its efficiency and accuracy, Bordo maintains that without considering it as a point of departure in the struggle, it would be impossible to mobilize our forces. Accordingly, feminism has no choice but to recognize gender policy as the starting point of the movement, otherwise feminism or the feminist movement may be fragmented: by "the deconstruction of gender analytics, I fear, may be participating in a similar moment of feminist fragmentation..."

In effect, Bordo confirms that identity-gender-directed notions are false, but she finally argues that feminism has no other choice. Here, we are dealing with a sort of gendered politics, which apparently is the only feminist alternative to mobilize women in the form of a universal class/identity. The approach, against her claim, still goes through the polarized concept of gender: woman as a woman and man as a man. Hence, in her criticism of the notion of "difference" articulated in post feminism and post structuralism, she contends that the difference is an illusion and we "deceive ourselves if we believe that poststructuralist theory is attending to the "problem of difference"", and concludes that the view that "many voices can speak and be heard, clear, accessible... (Eschewed by post modern feminists) can be dialogically invaluable."
In other words, Bordo's interpretation of the concepts of *difference* and *multiplicity* only corresponds to the classical definition of people, namely, those who speak and are heard, and those who can not speak and are not heard: another version of the 'old feminist' formulation of oppressor/ oppressed she could not get rid of.

In effect, feminist strategists like Bordo, who get used to thinking of long term and universal strategies to unite all forces, would not be able to think of the other weapons and *different* tactics which are transient, local, individual, multiple, fluid, mobile, solitary and non-universal. To her, including the differences, namely, individualities, identities and sexualities in the meta-narrative of feminism would be an illusion or fantasy which would lead to 'feminist fragmentation', or feminist depoliticization. In this sense, feminism as the only possibility of identification of true political action still plays the role of the 'non-part', the 'void', which should attempt to identify itself as a 'whole' and integrate itself into the prohibited realm of the Law. And any individual action without a 'short-circuit between the universal and particular' (Ranciere), any insight of 'no women in general' (Badiou), or recognizing 'many voices can speak' have the resonances of passive 'invaluable' (Bordo), and 'banalities unworthy of being considered' (Badiou).

Contrary to this approach, Judith Butler's critical analysis demonstrates that the agent/doer/subject is not to be dissolved in the poststructuralist approach. In effect, rather than recognizing the *doer behind the deed* or in Badiou’s words, the 'subject prior to the Event' (the classical separation between action and actor), Butler believes that "the foundationalist reasoning of identity politics tends to assume that the identity must first be in place in order for political interests to be elaborated and, subsequently, political action to be taken. My argument is that there need not be a 'doer behind the deed'," rather she maintains that "the 'doer' is invariably constructed in and through
the deed. This is not a return to an existential theory of the self as constituted through its acts, for the existential theory maintains a prediscursive structure for both the self and its acts. It is precisely the discursively variable construction of each in and through the other that has interested me here. In other words, the agency does not have any fixed and stable existence prior to the cultural or social construction.

According to the traditional notions of the subject, the constructed subject does not have the potentiality of being an 'agent', since the notion of constructed corresponds to 'structure' or to 'ideology' which traditionally is supposed to produce a puppet not an agent. Hence, the political action, by definition, needs the 'preexisting subject', a superman, that 'is not fully determined by that culture and discourse'. In this sense, agency needs a prediscursive 'T' and any notion of constituted subjects would restrict the possibility of agency. Against this foundationalist approach, Butler argues that "the deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics", rather it leads to "the radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms". Hence, in Butler's analysis, any recourse to an 'T' will lead to inefficient, dualistic norms:

In Beauvoir, for example, there is an "I" that does its gender that becomes its gender, but that "I", invariably associated with its gender, is nevertheless a point of agency never fully identified with its gender. That cogito is never fully of the cultural worlds that it negotiates.

On this basis, breaking down the whole brings about the proliferation of actors, actions, tactics and struggles which are local and individual, the "points, knots or focuses of resistance" are "mobile and transitory"; namely, the resistances could be "possible, necessary, improbable,... spontaneous,
savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent, ... are quick to compromise, interested or sacrificial". Hence, it would be impossible to formulate points of resistance in terms of a universal identity or any universal structure, except in terms of multiplicities, since they [multiplicities] could "escape from both the reign of subject and the empire of structure".

Roman Polanski, vividly illustrates the fluidity of identities, and accordingly, the multiplicity of action in the film of "Death and the Maiden". The film illustrates the continuous displacement of victim and executioner, oppressor and oppressed, revenge and forgiveness, and finally the certainty of decision and the uncertainty of judgment. Here, the will would not be petrified in the circle of determinism, action and resistance, would not fall into the abyss of suspension, and the struggle would not be restricted to a rusted identity; rather, it appears more familiar, and hence, more defamiliarized than ever.

Perhaps, another version of this approach can be seen in a rural workshop which I attended in India. The urban feminists were not expected to go to the workshop to transmit a 'civilized and standard' consciousness to illiterate villagers afflicted with a reified consciousness; rather, individuals were to go there in order to stand next to the construction of the doer through the deed, not above it. The women in these workshops were not told what they were supposed to do, what they were supposed to read, and finally what they were supposed to be; rather, they were asked: what they needed. In this sense, the workshops become the "empty places for those who temporarily function as subjects". The workshops, rather than applying certain long-distance and everlasting strategies, use the local means and tactics which the rural people themselves provide. They simply attempt to help women fulfill their needs. Such needs vary from individual to individual, village to village, area to area.
and city to city. Perhaps, through their attempts, and through the mutual investment between the "rural" and the so called "feminist" realms, new realms would be opened which have the fragrance of freedom, new actions would be produced which are too distanced from the early subjective will, and eventually new identities would be born which may neither be "feminist", nor "rural". Hence Foucault argues:

To ally oneself with the proletariat is to accept its positions, its ideology, and its motives for combat. This means total identification. But if the fight is directed against power, then all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment, all who find it intolerable, can begin the struggle on their own terrain and on the basis of their proper activity (or passivity). In engaging in a struggle that concerns their own interests, whose objectives they clearly understand and whose methods only they can determine, they enter into a revolutionary process.\(^\text{90}\)
Notes


2. Slavoj Žižek (born 21 March 1949 in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia) received a Doctor of Arts in Philosophy and studied psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VIII. He is considered as a Lacanian Marxist thinker who has also described himself as a “Marxist” and a “Communist.” He is a strong critic of post structuralism and postmodernism.

3. Alain Badiou (born 17 January 1937 in Rabat, Morocco) is a French philosopher, formerly Chair of Philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS). Along with Slavoj Zizek, Badiou is a prominent figure in an anti-postmodern strand of continental philosophy. Badiou seeks to give new meanings to the concepts of being, truth and the subject.

4. Susan Bordo (born 1947) is a feminist based in the United States. She received her doctorate in a department of English that specialized in critical theory. Bordo currently holds the Otis A. Singletary Chair in the Humanities and is Professor of English and Women’s Studies at the University of Kentucky. She is well known for her *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (1993), a text that looks at the impact of popular culture (television, advertisements, and magazines, for example) in shaping the female body while also looking at typical female disorders such as hysteria, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa and bulimia as “complex crystallizations of culture”. Hence, she could be viewed as a Frankfurt School feminist who studies the role of consumer culture in the formation of the gendered body.


6. The concept is used by the former president of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, in opposition to Samuel Huntington’s conceptualization of ‘the clash of civilization’.

7. It may seem that I try to defend “post structuralism” against the attacks. This is not the case. What I try to do, on the one hand, is to explore the theoretical and strategic benefits that the critics gain by classifying the so called post structuralism into a stereotyped package, and on the other hand, to explore the possibilities that would be lost to critical thought because of their one-sided and monolithic analysis.


9. Ibid., p. 80.

10. Lacan first takes up the **Borromean knot** in the seminar of 1972-3, but his most detailed discussion of the knot comes in the seminar of 1974-5. It is in this seminar that Lacan uses the **Borromean knot** as, among other things, a way of illustrating the interdependence of the three: the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, as a way of exploring what it is that these three orders have in common. Each ring represents one of the three orders, and thus certain elements can be located at the intersection of these rings. In his view these orders are tied together in the form of a ‘Borromean knot’. The ‘Borromean knot’ is a linkage of three ‘rings’ in such a way that no two rings intersect. The structure of the knot is such that the cutting of any one ring will liberate
all of the others. In other words, it is a topological conceptualization of the Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary (RSI), in which each order is depicted as a circle that links each of the other orders [realms].

The above text is derived from <http://nosubject.com/Borromean-knot> (Date: 16 April 2009).


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 148.


18. Ibid., P 93.


21. Ibid., p. 156.


28. Ibid., p. 401.

29. Ibid., p. 400.

30. Ibid., p. 399.

31. Ibid.,p.397.


33. Ibid., p. 165

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 130.

38. Ibid., p. 133.

39. It indicates a subject who expects to be called by the Event.
40. S. Zizek, The Ticklish Subject, p. 166.


42. S. Zizek, The Ticklish Subject, p. 138.

43. Ibid., p. 143.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 163.

46. Ibid., p. 130.

47. Ibid. 133.

48. Ibid., 165.

49. Jacques Ranciere (born Algiers, 1940) is a French philosopher at the University of Paris (St. Denis) who came to prominence when he co-authored Reading 'Capital' (1968), with the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. He contributed to the influential volume before publicly breaking with Althusser over his attitude toward the May 1968 student uprising in Paris. Since then, Rancière has departed from the path set by his teacher and published a series of works probing the concepts that make up our understanding of political discourse. What is ideology? What is the proletariat? Is there a working class? And how do these masses of workers, that thinkers like Althusser referred to, continuously enter into a relationship with knowledge?

50. Claude Lefort (born 1924) a French philosopher. On the basis of Lacan's thought he argues that the gap between the Real and the Symbolic should be sustained.


52. Ranciere argues that Arendt allocates rights only to those who already have rights in polis — those whose ways of life destined them to politics, e.g. free citizens — and deprives the 'Wrong' of the rights.


54. In The Human Condition, Arendt relates labor to the biological process of the body through which laboring man fulfils the vital needs of his body. In contrast, action as true political work involves activities pertaining to the common world in which people think of themselves not as members of a society but as a whole nation. (We will deal with the Arendtian distinction at length in chapter 3).

55. J. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics".

56. S. Zizek, The Ticklish Subject, p.188.

57. J. Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics".


60. Ibid. pp. 73-74.


62. The topological conceptualization of the Real, the Symbolic and Imaginary, in which the orders are not totally separated from each other; rather there is a link between them.


64. Ibid. p.70.

65. Ibid., p. 71.

66. Ibid.


69. In this context, we can mention to the tragic death of Nada Aghasoltan on a street of Tehran and its impact on the world.

70. Jacques Ranciere, "The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics".


73. Michel Foucault, "Intellectuals & Power": A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, <http://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze>


77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p. 224.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid., p. 243.

81. Ibid., p. 223.


83. Ibid., p. 148.

84. Ibid., p. 143.


87. "Death and the Maiden" was directed by Roman Polanski in 1994. Roman Raymond Polanski (born August 18, 1933) is an Academy Award-winning Polish-French film director, writer, actor and producer. Polanski survived the Holocaust in German-occupied Poland during WW II. In 1977, he was arrested in Los Angeles and pleaded guilty to "unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor", a 13-year-old girl. Released after a 42-day psychiatric evaluation, Polanski fled to France. Now he is a French citizen and is known as a French director as well.

88. The workshop on 'Women's Empowerment' part of the Adult Education Program of Indian Institute of Education's Rural Center was held in April 2005 at Khed-Shivapur (Pune district).

89. G. Deleuze, Foucault, p. 14.