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### **The Future of Lithuanian Philosophy Seen from the (Non-Existing) Perspective of Cultural Studies**

Alain Badiou defines four philosophical conditions: science, love, art and politics. Philosophy should engage into these four conditions and produce multiple truth-events. As Badiou points out, “Philosophy, which requires the deployment of four conditions, cannot specialise in any one of them. I am opposed to every academic division of philosophy into would-be objective domains: there is nothing legitimate, or interesting, in what is termed ‘epistemology’ (philosophy of sciences), ‘aesthetics’ (philosophy of art), ‘psychology’ (philosophy of affects) or ‘political philosophy’ (philosophy of the practices of power) (*Metapolitics*, p. xxxi). Thus philosophy should devote itself to the arts, to the sciences, to love, to instances of politics “in order to constitute itself as an experimentation of a new concept of truth” (Op. cit., xxxii).

What Badiou terms as four philosophical conditions correspond to the different fields of cultural studies. The ‘event of love’ is the eternal question standing at the centre of psychoanalysis and gender studies. The ‘event of art’ grounds and engenders the discourse of visual studies (even if we talk about literature it’s more about seeing than interpreting it). The particular circumstances of our everyday life happens to be the ‘political event’ which is at focus in any critical discourse (from critique of ideology to ‘politics proper’). What event counts as being political? Badiou says that an event is political only on condition that it is attributed to collective multiplicity, where collective means the possibility of universalising. That means that philosophy can hardly say something significant without engaging into what it discuss – without examining the particular situation of different gender, without creating new affects and sensations, without sharing the position of the excluded, the discriminated, or the so-called ‘enemy’.

Let’s take for consideration the case of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas is emblematic here not as a philosopher of Lithuanian origin, but as the “philosopher of Otherness’. Levinasian philosophy opens a radical break in philosophical tradition making stress on otherness rather than sameness, on particularity rather than totality. This is why I find deeply paradoxical Levinas’ inability to take into consideration

political or gender differences. For example, when Levinas participated in a radio broadcast with Shlomo Malka and Alain Finkelkraut, he was asked the obvious “Levinasian” question: “Emmanuel Levinas, you are the philosopher of the ‘other’. Isn’t history, isn’t politics the very site of the encounter with the ‘other’, and for the Israeli, isn’t the ‘other’ above all the Palestinian?” Levinas answered: “My definition of the other is completely different. The other is the neighbor, who is not necessary kin, but who can be. And in the sense, if you’re for the other, you’re for the neighbor. But if your neighbor attacks another neighbor or treats him unjustly, what can you do? Then alterity takes on another character, in alterity we find an enemy, or at least then we are faced with the problem of knowing who is right and who is wrong, who is just and who is unjust. There are people who are wrong.” (*The Levinas Reader*, p. 294.)

Another paradox appears when Levinas defines otherness in terms of sexual difference: “Absolutely other, is the feminine...” (*Time and the Other*, p. 85) In his conversation with Bracha Ettinger Levinas was asked: “I’d like to ask you a question about the alterity of the feminine. At one point you spoke of the feminine as a flight before the light.” Levinas gives two answers, one philosophical, and another humoristic. He says: “Woman is the category of the future, the ecstasy of future. It is what human possibility which consists in saying that the life of another human being is more important than my own, that the death of the other is more important to me than my own death, that the other comes before me, that the Other counts before I do, that the value of the Other is imposed before mine is. /.../ And in the feminine there is the possibility of conceiving of a world without me; a world which has a meaning without me.” Later Levinas develops this idea in a humoristic tone: “There is too a great risk of miscomprehension. One might think that I am saying that woman is here to disappear, or that there will be no woman in the future... One might say, they construct a world, and we are all just going to drop dead... [laughing]” (*What Would Eurydice Say?*, p. 141-142.) How can we interpret this burst of humour?

### **References:**

- Badiou A. *Metapolitics*. London, New York: Verso, 2005.  
*The Levinas Reader*. Ed. Sean Hand. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.  
Levinas E. *Time and the Other*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1987.  
Bracha L. Ettinger in conversation with Emmanuel Levinas (1991-1993): “What Would Eurydice Say?” In: *Athena: Philosophical Studies*, vol. 2, 2006, pp. 137-145.