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# Alain Badiou on Cinema from Ideology to Liberation. Placing the Narratives of Forgiveness in Cinema's Second Wave of Modernity

**Abstract.** This article aims to coin the concept of “democratic attraction / affect” meaning the power of the cinema, as mass art, to produce the truth both in theory and in practice, as ideology and liberation. My working hypothesis is inspired by Alain Badiou’s perspective on cinema as a paradoxical relationship between an aristocratic component – determined by its elitist discourse, addressed to a qualified public in order to be fully comprehended – and a democratic character – as a native tendency of expressing universal social and cultural ideals of individuals – closely following the French philosopher’s polemics with the arguments of Gilles Deleuze on the cinematic universe. In the first two parts of my research I will explain the characteristics of cinema as mass art and the multiple senses of the so-called “democratic attraction / affect”, the last section of my article being dedicated to a study-case on Udi Aloni’s movie, *Forgiveness*, in the light of Badiou’s critique on it.

**Keywords:** mass art, democratic attraction, affect, emotion, cinema, narratives of attraction, modernity, Badiou.

## I. Introduction. Premises for investigating cinema as mass art through the concept of “democratic attraction”

This article aims to explore Alain Badiou’s thesis that cinema represents a “mass art”, which defines “a paradoxical relationship” between a pure *democratic* character and an *aristocratic* element. If the former is ensured by the material accessibility of the seventh art among different communities and individuals, to which the technological and capitalist practices of production, consumption and distribution of art highly contributed, the latter is reflected by the conceptual framework

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required for the understanding of cinema as a revolutionary “formal instrument of visual creation” and hence, by its elitist recourse to a “differential education” of the spectator, placed in the “minimal proximity to the history of art concerned and to the vicissitudes of its grammar” (Badiou 2013, 235).

Thinking cinema as *a mass art* engages a discourse which has to resist not only to the capitalist constraints regarding the contrast between high art and low art and their homogenization addressed by the recent challenges that the cinematic universe faced (Lipovetsky 2013), but also to the consequences of the following working-hypothesis, that Badiou enforces: “mass” is a political category. Hence, cinema is vulnerable and easily subjected to ideologies, which makes its democratization rather questionable.

In his article, *On Cinema as a Democratic Emblem*, Badiou argues that cinema particularizes its paradoxical substance on five levels, which acquire different limits and senses for its “mass” character. They are synthesized as “the paradox of the image” (235), concerning the ontological nature of art; “the paradox of time” (236), regarding the filming visibility of history; “the paradox of the seventh art”, determining its distinct position in the classical system of fine arts; “the paradox of artistic impurity”, concretizing cinema as a hybrid domain between art and non-art, and “the ethical paradox” (236), addressing different perspectives on consciousness. All these five tensions represent different paths through which the cinema develops its constitution as “an impure mass art” (239): according to Badiou, this is what allows it to be subjected to ideologies, a position which definitely contradicts Deleuze’s previous opinions on this matter.

My thesis is that the “impure” character could also be addressed as the effect of the natural condition of the individual to be both controlled and liberated, following a psychoanalytical interpretation. Hence, cinema develops among the masses what I call as “the democratic attraction”: it allows both the manipulation and liberation of individuals from different ideologies, through conflicting emotions, narrations and aesthetic experiences. Has the cinema contributed not only to the so-called democratization of tastes, following Luc Ferry’s critique, but also to the democratization of individuals? What kinds of narrative-strategies are applied in the cineaste constructions that attempt to express democracy as an ideal, not as a utopian project? My research will focus, in order to answer to these questions, on a study-case that aims to place *the narratives of forgiveness* in the terms of what Alan Badiou calls as “the cinema’s second wave of modernity”, in which *the democratic attraction* represents a path for producing the truth of the “masses”, regarding their collective identity, their historical dramas and their democratic reconstruction.

The study case will explore Udi Aloni’s movie, *Forgiveness*, in which the senses of the Jewish identity between Israel and Palestine are conceived being tributary to contrasting ideologies, closely following the possibilities for liberation, suggested by the personal experiences of the main character. As Badiou observes, “the four cultural worlds referred to in Udi’s film are: the old world of European artistic creativity; the

Arab world's subtle, quasi-timeless civility and love of life; American modernity; and irreplaceable Jewish spirituality" (Badiou 2011, 193). I will evaluate how "the democratic attraction" is manifested for each of these four cultural and fictional universes, which also represent cinematic autonomous, and yet conflicting, worlds.

## **II. The paradoxical relations of cinema as a mass art**

As an ontological art, cinema is developed through the main relationship between being and appearance, reinforcing the ancient Platonic perspective on the material world as a copy of the intellectual world. It constantly tests the limits of both the existence and the possibility, the visible and the invisible, as Foucault would put it (28). In fact, Alain Badiou prefers to apply Plato's theory to the cineaste universe, arguing that "cinema simultaneously offers the possibility of a reality and the entirely artificial dimension of this copy" (2009, 1), in a variation of formulas mediated by technology, whose main role is to create a network of simulacrum, in the sense of Baudrillard, or a chain of intertwining fictional and real worlds, in a large variation including "the copy of the false copy of the real or the false real copy of a false real" (1). This cohabitation is natural for cinema: its main constitution is given by fundamental impossible relations or, at least, by paradoxical frameworks. But this tension, between the real and what Badiou recognizes as "the artificial world" is constitutive for the cinema. At a regulative level, cinema is conceived as a "mass art", that gathers elitist and common spectators, receptions and cultural discourses. Nevertheless, the paradoxical reception of cinema is an external manner of addressing it as a "mass art". If we look at the internal conditions of its development as a cultural and social activity, we will see that its genuine tensions lie also on its conceptual significance.

The point is thus the following: "mass art" fixes a paradoxical relation. Why? Because "mass" is a political category, or more precisely a category of activist democracy, of communism. The Russian revolutionaries were able to define their actions in terms of a time when "the masses climbed onto the stage of History." We usually oppose "mass democracy" to representative and constitutional democracy. "Mass" is an essential political category. (...) However, "art", which is the other half of the syntagm "mass art," is and can only be an aristocratic category. To say that "art" is an aristocratic category is not a judgement. We simply note that "art" comprises the idea of formal creation, of visible novelty in the history of forms, and therefore requires the means of comprehending creation as such, necessitating a differential education, a minimal proximity to the history of the art concerned and to the vicissitudes of its grammar. (...) In "mass art" we have the paradoxical relation between a pure democratic element (on the side of irruption and eventual energy) and an aristocratic element (on the side of individual education, of differential locations of taste). (Badiou 2009, 2)

This definition raises different problems for Badiou's critical inquiry on cinema. Firstly, it confronts through the opposition between the two terms, "mass" and "art", the tension between a political and an aristocratic category, that it is inherent to this paradoxical relationship. In order to maintain the coherence and plausibility of Badiou's definition, one must accept that political – here democratic – contents and aristocratic elements are not naturally compatible. Secondly, it narrows the flexibility of these two concepts in other spheres of discourse: the essentiality that Badiou address to "mass" as a political category and to art as an aristocratic category means the impossibility to be otherwise. But, in a lecture in which the concept of "mass" is dependent by a political discourse, the hidden assumption is that it is essentially ideological. Thus, based on this observation, one might question the liberty of cinema as mass art under the auspices of a certain ideology. On the other hand, it is true that this liberty might be understood not in the terms of a given, but in the terms of an effect: cinema flourished in the age of avant-gardes, of artistic revolutions, of public movements of liberation from mimetic practices and classic canons of representations, of manifestos against order, reason, conceptuality, consciousness. If any avant-garde is constructed on the grounds of an indissoluble tension, such as the contrast between logic and irrationality, conformism and revolt, cinema "imposes", on its turn, "impracticable relations between aristocracy and democracy, between invention and familiarity, between novelty and general taste. It is for this reason that philosophy takes an interest in cinema." (Badiou 2009, 2) This hybrid constitution of cinema as mass art substantiates its *impure* character: it is not purely democratic, as it is not purely aristocratic, even though "mass" is a pure democratic category and "art" is an essential "aristocratic" element. Therefore, I consider that its development, as well as its reception, is based on "a democratic attraction" that the individual has for cinema as a network of contrasting and tensioned relationships. This symptom can also be applied in order to understand the contemporary evolution of art not only as a "mass art", but especially as a "consumption art", with very specific instruments of democratizing tastes and aesthetic judgments among individuals. I will address, in my paper, this "democratic attraction" through the five paradoxical elements of cinema in its main quality as a mass art, following Badiou's critique.

The first reason for which cinema proves to be a "mass art" is the capacity of its operating images to perform "a metaphysical cycle of identification" (Badiou 2009, 3), both of the real and the fictional world. It makes the cineaste universe more human, since the technique of semblance that determines any image "outdates the religious fable and universally hands out the loose change of the miracle" (3). In this manner, the image succeeds in transforming time into perception and representation, developing a secondary paradoxical relationship: that between time in itself and space. In another article, *Cinema as a Philosophical Experimentation*, Badiou pleads for the hypothesis according to which in cinema, the question of time is metaphysically developed: time is the "synthesis of experience", in a Kantian acceptance, that appears reiterat-

ed in different cineaste constructions. Time is "made of imbrications" (Badiou 2013, 224), the montage represses or rearranges things in synchronicity. Badiou's example is Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, in which the time of the confession performed by the main character, Laurence Olivier, has two manifestations, that of "a construction and montage", and that of "an immobile stretching out" (225). Here, there are two competing narratives, one of the "constructed" and external time, in a Bergsonian perspective, and one belonging to the consciousness, to the inner subject. Therefore, time appears in a paradoxical relationship: it is a metaphysical expression of opposing categories that infiltrates in the cineaste universe, since the pure duration of the consciousness and the external, impersonal time are gathered in the same framework of temporality. Cinema makes them both visible. Badiou recovers, in this logic, Visconti's *Death in Venice*: duration is cultivated by the presence of an inactive actor whose being is suspended in the time of narrative, whose face is the emblem of a "subjective immobility", in the sense of Beckett (Badiou 2004, 87), by various and implicit connections to the idea of finite and infinite history, through "pictorial themes already present in Guardi or Canaletto, literary themes from Rousseau to Proust" (86). Cinema means visitation: of a moment, of an image, of an interval.

In consequence, it makes time as visible as the space is, regardless the intersection of cinema with other mass arts, such as music or design. On the one hand, cinema takes time and space, through image, in the intimacy of its consumers, from the cinema theaters, to their bedrooms, as Badiou notices. Significant is the fact that Badiou works, at this level, in a Deleuzian acceptance. Deleuze, who remains a partisan of Bergson's thought on "movement as a physical reality in the external world and an image as a psychic reality in the consciousness, that could no longer be opposed," (235) considers cinema by overlapping it to the Bergsonian distinction of the relationship between image and movement. If Bergson makes image and movement equal, Deleuze will synthesize this contrast in the following expressions: "movement-image" and "time-image". Through this innovation, cinema is saved from its mimetic task: being surprised in its imaginary dynamics, it receives the power and the role to create, not to imitate. Nevertheless, as Badiou observes, if philosophy thinks the reality through concepts, cinema sticks to images. Hence, this rupture should be solved by the fact that cinema produces images that philosophy has to discriminate, to classify. Badiou notices that Bergson proposed a theory of the image, Pierce a theory of the signs, and Deleuze tried to conciliate this two different perspectives, realizing a synthesis. Deleuze will differentiate between "perception-images" (specific to Vigo or Vertov's creations), "affection-images" (specific to Griffith or Sternberg's productions) and "action-images" (developed as epic films and often used in comedies). Badiou is seduced by Deleuze's theory of synthesizing the interaction between philosophy and cinema in a theory that requires concepts such as time, movement, image and signs. He is concerned, though, by the fact that Deleuze restrained the power of cinema to thinking with images and not about them, as a meta-theoretical perspective on reality

and quotidian life. Besides the fact that it needs philosophy for that, he questions the potentiality of image to democratize the society and, implicitly, its subjects, opening it to the mass character. It is the point in which Badiou goes far away than Deleuze ever intended to, recognizing that it is not a gesture of critical inquiry against his predecessor. It is an authentic examination of creativity and freedom behind and beyond cinema. Democratizing means understanding humanity in its entire concept, needs and caprices, as well as to get closer to it by all the sensitive means of expression and creation. Hence, Badiou will explain in what consists the democratic attraction of cinema, investigating its relationship with other arts.

What enforces the character of mass art for cinema is its capacity to extract the popular elements of the other (inferior) six arts, isolating them from their aristocratic components and exploiting them into the cineaste creation. According to Badiou, "the seventh art borrows from the other six what in them most explicitly aims at generic humanity (2009, 3).

As it follows, cinema takes from painting "the pure possibility of changing the sensible beauty of the world into reproducible image" (Badiou 2009, 3), until it becomes "a painting without painting", fulfilled by sensible elements without their formal constitution; from music, it takes rhythmicity as "the happening of the visible" (3), performing the dialectic of visible and audible, with a narrative pretext; from the novel, cinema takes the logic of the "screenplay" (4), the seduction of the narrative that has to be consumed by the public in an indivisible structure, that resulted from the intertwining of artistic and commercial elements. From the theatre, cinema borrows the "aura" (4) of the actor, the necessity of a subject that also fulfills the function of the object of the cineaste observation. Here, Badiou remarks that separating the aura from the essence and theatricality of the text transforms actors into stars; hence, if the aura is specific to the "aristocratic" constitution of the subjects of the cinematic universe, the stars belong to the "masses", to the intangible world of notoriety. Moreover, if the "aura" is specific to the artistic character of cinema, the "stars" are an emblem of the commercial expectations and exigencies of cinema in its role of mass art. This example serves to highlight the fact that cinema "democratizes" the other six arts, confirming, in this manner, its special ontological character and its privileged position as the seventh art.

"Cinema opens all the arts, it weakens their aristocratic, complex and composite quality. It delivers this simplified opening to images of unanimous existence. As painting without painting, music without music, novel without subjects, theatre reduced to the charm of actors, cinema ensures the popularization of all the arts. This is why its vocation is universal. Such is the third hypothesis: the seventh art is a mass art because it is the active democratization of the other six." (Badiou 2009, 4)

The fourth element that attests the character of mass art, addressed to the cinema, is represented, in Badiou's scheme, by its "impure character", resulted from the mixture

of art and non-art in the cinematic creation. Compositionally, cinema is invariable "beneath" art (4). It both explores and exploits vulgar images, naïve and quotidian elements from our ordinary life, social or cultural stereotypes, "images seen one hundred times elsewhere, things of no interest whatsoever" (4). This context reminds to Badiou about Bresson's attempts to immunize art from its impure threats, conceiving a purity constantly sustained by the "cinematographic writing". In this sense, cinema has his stage of fighting against the "artistic non-being", creating a conceptual and representational "resistance". For Badiou, Bresson's creations are the most accessible and adequate example for the manner in which as a consumer, "you can only enter their non-artistic part, their failings, from art, from the grandeur of art" (2009, 4). The film can rise you up in the understanding of the immediate reality and your inner world, but this is accidental. The main premise for any cineaste production is that you can be "an absolutely ordinary spectator" (4). The cineaste experience begins as an ordinary gesture of consumption, as an adventure with hedonist expectations, and no ambitious and long-lasting outcomes. Its quality and seduction can affect you, as a spectator, but this result is an unpremeditated encounter. Therefore, the impurity consists of this minimal, but necessary involvement, which is specific to non-art, correlated with the accidental and sufficient aesthetic fulfillment of the spectator, occasioned only by authentic art. The film in itself rests "precariously on the border of art and non-art"<sup>1</sup> (Ling).

This is the great democratic advantage of the art of cinema: you can go there on a Saturday evening to rest and rise unexpectedly. Aristotle said that if we do good, pleasure will come "as a gift". When we see a film it is often the other way around: we feel an immediate pleasure, often suspect (thanks to the omnipresent non-art), and the Good (of art) comes as an unexpected bonus. (4)

As a matter of fact, from Badiou's arguments results that the paradoxical relationship between art and non-art can easily be understood through the rivalry between aristocracy and democracy. This is, nevertheless, a problematic working-hypothesis, at least for an age specific to artistic capitalist, defined, following Lipovetsky and Serroy, as an ideology "characterized by the increasing importance of different stages of sensibility and process design, through a systematic work of styling goods and commercial spaces, of generalized integration of art, look and affects of the consumerist universe" (Lipovetsky and Serroy, 234). In this logic, the cinema becomes, in the age of artistic capitalism, the authentic expression of the democratization of art that suppresses the classical differences between high art and low art: art becomes a prototype for constituting the aesthetics of existence, as a moral project for transforming your life into a work of art. Art makes different ideals of existence accessible, concrete, and even popular. In order to fulfill this mission, art consumption has as a primary effect the universalization of taste judgments, abolishing the contrasts between elites and masses and determining them, without differences, as its diverse but unite public.

It is true that even in this context, economic contrasts are still maintained: a film with an impressive budget means a great investment of high-technology and, implicitly, a great source for entertainment. Nevertheless, nowadays, the economic expression of the work of art is an instrument of branding: we buy a signature instead of a work of art, as Lipovetsky would say. Owning *a Picasso* means, at the limit, a powerful investment or capital, owned by the art consumer. But, a high price does not necessarily signify “high art” or, a notion more relative than that, “good art”. My point here is to show that even though I agree with Badiou in defining the impure character of cinema, I consider that his perspective on “good” and “bad” art should be revisited, since it does not depend by the consumer of art to see such a creation: art has “contaminated” all the levels of our individual existence, migrating from its formal and institutional dimensions, to the most intimate aspects of our quotidian life, through the design of products, PR, commercials, to cinema as a therapeutic or entertaining activity.

In cinema we travel to the pure from the impure. This is not the case in the other arts. Could you deliberately go and see bad painting? Bad painting is bad painting; there is little hope it will change into something good. You will not rise. From the simple fact that you are there, lost in bad painting, you are already falling, you are an aristocrat in distress. Whereas in cinema you are always more or less a democrat on the rise. Therein lies the paradoxical relation. The paradoxical relationship between aristocracy and democracy, which is finally an internal relationship between art and non-art. And this is also what politicises cinema: it operates on a junction between ordinary opinions and the work of thought. (4)

Therefore, Badiou’s position suggests that somehow the spectator discriminates between good art and bad art and the consumption of such cultural products depends exclusively by his intentionality. I consider that formally, “good” and “bad” art means conformity with certain canons and standards of artistic production. Pollock might not be appreciated as a good painter in Michelangelo or Rembrandt’s time: his artistic practices and works of art would not correspond to the canons of mimetic art. Is Duchamp’s urinal bad painting? For a contemporary, it symbolizes the *ready-made* character of our lives (McGushin, 114), and for this intimate correspondence with our current reality, it is “good” art. On the one hand, Badiou offers no explanation for the mechanism of differentiating, in a universal manner, good art of bad art; it simply takes this difference for granted. On the other hand, the consumption of either of them depends, according to Badiou, by the individual’s intentionality: he argues that it is a “deliberate” act. But in the society of consumption, mainly in artistic capitalism, the only deliberate act that a consumer might constitute is his disposal or presence to a space of consumption, without knowing if he is going to see good art or bad art. A film with great actors and a weak plot might be catalogued as a bad art, while a film with actors that are not notorious and has no creative narrative, might be “saved” by the impressive effects. A simple spot or some reviews are not enough to appreciate

a production as a good or a bad art: the consumption act is necessary in order to appreciate its character<sup>2</sup>. Even if these aspects are problematic in Badiou's argument, I do agree with his thesis that the dynamics of the cinematic universe allows to the spectator to "rise" with the evolution of the film and, moreover, to be "more or less a democrat on the rise". The aesthetic relativism might represent a suitable way of approaching this matter, but it is not the place, in this article, for such an investigation. What is truly important is the capacity of cinema to democratize the border between art and non-art through the spectator's becoming in the middle of the aesthetic experience. The democratic affect changes not only his constitution and evolution as an art consumer, but also the rivalry between high art and low art, between art and non-art. Relevant is the fact that over the film, the impurity of the cinema is democratizing: Badiou's "rising" should be understood also as "democratizing". This also means that living in the civilization of the spectacle, as Guy Debord argues, rising means, at limit, and overcoming the spectacle, thinking beyond its theatricality and seduction. This is why Badiou reminds that rising is a conscious act: "we only have a few dozen masterpieces, something like three Murnau, one Lang, two Eisenstein, four Griffith and six Chaplin. So that we do not see the impurity and massive banality of these spectacles" (2009, 4).

The fifth element that confirms the mass character of cinema is the ethical constitution of this cultural environment. Tributary to the Ancient perspective on tragedy, on the human *hybris* and the fatality of his destiny, the cinema of our society creates his spectacle within and without the great American battle between Good and Evil, confronting ordinary human figures and great heroes enduring common dramas. The ancient Greece and the postmodern Hollywood share the same semi-gods with different costumes and powers, in a universal moral mythology concerned by human passions, injustices and wars, all gathered around the concept of "truth". Badiou observes that philosophy became interested in the cinema because of its capacity to put the truth on the stage, to confirm and sustain its public and universal character, to express what I called as "a democratic attraction".

We know that philosophy began as a vast discussion with tragedy, with the theatre, with the impurity of the visible and performing arts. The essential interlocutors of Plato were on the stage, and included in this broader rhetorical visibility are the public stage, the democratic assembly, the performance of the sophists. We should not be surprised today that philosophy is, for an increasing part of its activity, a vast discussion with cinema. Because cinema and its derivatives, including television, represent on a human scale, after Tragedy and Religion, the third historical attempt at the spiritual subjugation of the visible, available to all, without exception or measure. Also present at the meeting, the democratic politicians and their sophist advisors, renamed "public relations consultants." The screen has become their supreme test. (2008, 6)

Badiou believes in cinema as much as Plato believed in image. It is a forced correspondence, indeed, but it is genuinely expressed in the French philosopher's thought. If Plato saved the semblance through allegory and the power of image to send the individual to the Truth in itself, cinema will be "overcome by cinema itself" (2009, 5). The relationship between philosophy and cinema might look, at a first glimpse, paradoxical. But for Badiou this is the expression of continuity: after the philosophy of cinema, the postmodern individual will face philosophy as cinema, "which consequently has the opportunity of being a mass philosophy" (5). This discussion is intimately connected with Badiou's perspectives on the productions of truth in art and in philosophy. Truth becomes the co-responsibility of art and philosophy: if the former produces them, the latter has to make them manifest. It is Badiou's opinion from his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (2004, 15). In a network of free and original opinions belonging to individuals, is there anything besides our beliefs, desires and wills? Or, to put Badiou's question, "is there something besides our 'democracies'?" (15)

Many will answer, myself among them: "Yes." Yes, there are artistic configurations, there are works that constitute the thinking subjects of these configurations, and there is philosophy to separate conceptually all of this from opinion. Our times are worth more than the label on which they pride themselves: "democracy." (2005,15)

From this perspective, the relationship between cinema as a mass art and its "democratic affect", starting from Badiou's previous quoted mention, is developed in the light of the following argument. Cinema can constitute the subjects and guide them to democracy, to a public space of the reasonable dialogue between individuals, conscious of their limits, liberties and desires. My argument is that this reasonable dialogue is ensured by the mass character of cinema that through its democratic affect opens society to democracy and creates, for individuals, a sense of belonging, through different narratives, emotions and aesthetic experiences. On this sense of belonging Badiou's examination of Udi Aloni's film, *Forgiveness*, shows up how cinema attempted to ensure the transition of different societies to democracy, configuring a narrative for this shift, based on the emotion of failure, the imminence of the change and the tragedies of the ordinary life of its subjects.

### III. The power of cinema to develop "a democratic affect".

#### The incommode narrative of modern societies facing the transition to democracy

This example enforces the concept of "democratic attraction" or "affect" within the analysis that Alain Badiou devotes to Udi Aloni's film, *Forgiveness*. According to the French philosopher, the cinematic masterpiece proposed by Aloni represents a meditation on Israel related to Palestine. The latter represents the impossibility of developing the Jewish universality. It is the native mark for the lack of the fulfilled Jewishness, while Israel is a symbol of isolation and violence. The historical conflict

between Israel and Palestine is about forgiveness in the name of the democratic attraction: on these two territories of despair and drama, the Arab world is subjected to the test of forgetting its lacks and contradictions in order to be saved by itself. The main character is the son of a German Jew who lives in USA; therefore, expressing his democratic attraction by choosing the side of the Western civilization. His drama begins with the price of a compensation: the father's resignation is substituted by the son's desire to face the enemies and hence, he enlists in the Israeli army. During a fight, he kills the son of the woman he loves. The drama exposed by Aloni represents, at a metaphysical scale, the destiny of the Jews. The main character is a metaphor for the entire Jewish society:

Either the young man, symbolizing Israel, accepts this memory of having been a murderer, and peace and reconciliation become possible, or the young man encloses himself in silence, oblivion, and repetition, thus suiciding. This is to say that continuing in the mode of its contemporary political orientation is the real death threat against Israel – a historical suicide. (Badiou 2011, 190)

Its drama stands on the ideals of democracy, liberation and self-assertion. The dilemma presented by Badiou explains exactly the formula of the affect: it is a game of equal possibilities, of unfortunate alternatives, of rational compromises determined emotionally. Truth, in these terms, is the effect of the art. Among the transition from the oriental tradition to the occidental democracy and vice-versa, truth is produced as a democratic affect. First, there is the need for freedom that Israel and Palestine dispute in their native political perspectives. Secondly, the clash between the modern America and the conservative Arabian world concludes the democratic affect as a chance for forgiveness, self-assertion, psychological comfort. These incommode narratives about closed and opened societies suggest even the bi-nationalism specific of the Arabian world as an affect that the cinema reflects in its transition, therefore in its motion. If art was ever politicized, a hypothesis largely explored by the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, and, in what concerns the cinema, this was representative for its first wave of modern cultural products, and then the next stage is the age of liberation. Democracy, freedom, integrity and personal dignity are values pursued by cinema as a cultural power of producing the truth of its societies. The democratic attraction needs both ideology and liberation in order to exist, a perspective that gives to Alain Badiou's argument a new relevance for what means, nowadays, cinema and its power to produce the truth through narration. And yet, this cinematic universe, specific to Aloni's productions, is typical for what we justified as mass-art, since its main aim is to universalize the narration on forgiveness beyond races, traditions and faiths.

### Notes

- 1 According to Ling, "cinema is for Badiou an art 'both parasitic and inconsistent', defined first and foremost by its own impurity," a perspective which remains engaged with the

French philosopher's conviction that illiterate arts have an inaesthetic discourse" (Ling 2010, 39).

2. My intention to bring Badiou's arguments on the field of artistic capitalism is not an inappropriate gesture for his perspectives and strikes. In his volume, *Cinema*, he stresses that "Malraux explained the essence of the image; he also explained why Charlie Chaplin's films were shown in Africa, and he compared cinema to the other arts. But the last sentence of the text was this: "In any case, the cinema is an industry." But is it really a question of "in any case"? In actual fact, the cinema is first and foremost an industry. And it is an industry even as concerns the great artists of cinema. The vast majority of them worked in the industrial system of the cinema. And so money, the industry, implies something about cinema itself, not just about the social conditions of cinema. This means: cinema begins with an impure infinity" (Badiou 2013, 226). Hence, the impurity might be "capitalized", beyond paradoxical relationships. Nevertheless, as a metaphysical expression, the main consequence of cinema as an industry is that of the inaccessible purity. As Badiou recognizes himself, "My own hypothesis is that it has become impossible to master that sensible infinity. This impossibility is the real of cinema, which is a struggle with the infinite, a struggle to purify the infinite" (227).

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