'Unutterable Utterances' and 'Mysterious Naming':

Nomination in Badiou and the Theatre of Mysticism

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'Hail in the name of those who seek the name for your endurance.'

—Mokhtar in Badiou's The Incident at Antioch *I.iii (2013 21)*

'A truth begins to dawn on the horizon.'

—The Stranger in Strindberg's The Road to Damascus *I (1983 204)*

Part One: A Mystic-without-Mysticism

Act One of the *The Incident at Antioch* takes place on the road to Damascus, and its action revolves around one moment of ecstatic illumination: the protagonist, Paula, 'fall[s] to the ground, arms outstretched' (2013 27), unconsciously imitating Caravaggio's *The Road to Damascus* in which St Paul falls from a horse, arms outstretched, in an ecstatic fit of divine revelation.[1] Paula is, in this moment of 'feverish exaltation' (29), 'a young woman experiencing the joys of the new' (31), thinking and speaking from a 'place out of place' (2013 29) (a Badiouian utopia). Moreover, Paula's words here become simultaneously cryptic and full of meaning: 'The pebbles in my mouth are giving way to clear words.' (27) The 'transparency' (29) to which she ecstatically refers is linguistic as well as cognitive, and, as such, the words themselves—as spoken on the stage—bring forth an excess of meaning, an

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[1] On Badiou's use of Caravaggio, see the notes to Badiou 2013 127.

excess faithful to Paula's experience of a new truth, but cryptic to her audience. She speaks in, what Badiou will call in *Saint Paul*, 'unutterable utterances'.[2]

On the basis of the above, it seems safe to venture that Paula's actions and words repeat many of the traditional patterns of religious mysticism: momentary ecstasy, a fit-like state, cryptic transparency and blinding obscurity. Paula would fit snugly into the pages of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. A convenient point of comparison—one I expand upon throughout what follows—is August Strindberg's *The Road to Damascus* trilogy, which provides a more traditionally mystical re-enactment of this moment of Pauline ecstasy. The protagonist of these plays, The Stranger, is similarly prone to mystic fits in which his language becomes both clear and obscure as he feels himself reborn; for instance,

> The clouds have now lifted, the sky opened, the wind is warm, feel as it caresses us. This is what I call living; yes, now I live, now more than ever, and I feel myself grow, extend outwards, dilute, vanish into infinity; I am everywhere, in the sea which is my blood, in the rocks which are my bones, in the trees, in the flowers; my head knocks against the sky and I contemplate the universe in which I am mixed up, and I feel in me the force of the Creator, for I am that Creator. (1983 177)[3]

Again, this speech consists in 'pure and beautiful enigmas' (303) or 'unutterable utterances'; there is little, I venture, at the level of rhetoric and pragmatics that could distinguish The Stranger's speech from Paula's.

Paula's mysticism is acknowledged within *The Incident at Antioch*, but crucially at the very same time it is also denied. Thus, as Paula undergoes her 'ecstatic revelation' (Reinhard 2013 xliii), Mokhtar comments on her as

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[2] This renewal of language is a continual theme in the early scenes of the play, see 2013 19, 31.
[3] *The Road to Damascus* has yet to receive a critical edition in English (for an older translation, see Strindberg 1939); for this reason, citations and translations are taken from the critical French edition (1983).

Like one fallen spread-eagled under the light, but it's not God speaking to her. For it's giving up those trappings that's knocking her down and making her spring back up to achieve the precision of an axiom. (Badiou 2013 31)

Paula is a mystic-without-mysticism: one that performs 'an immanent break' (2001 42), rather than submission to a truth from above. As Badiou insists throughout his work, 'Truth is a process, and not an illumination' (2003 15) While Paula is mystic-like, a radical difference separates her from religious mystics. And it is this play of similarities and radical difference that I wish to explore further in this paper, with particular emphasis on strategies of naming.

There is, of course, a simple way to distinguish Paula from The Stranger using the resources of Badiou's own philosophy—by means of the category of the obscure subject outlined in *Logics of Worlds*. I will return to this at length in Part Three; however, one example will illustrate my point. Badiou's description of the obscure subjects of love vividly recalls the tormented relationship of The Stranger and The Lady in Strindberg's *The Road to Damascus*. They fully fit Badiou's classification: they renounce the event in the name of a transcendent, atemporal fetish and a life governed by destiny, and do so by means of 'a deadly possessive reciprocity' that 'turns the enchanted present into night' (Badiou 2009 74). As one character remarks in Strindberg's play, 'they torment each other in order to finally arrive at reconciliation with God' (1983 186). However, this may distinguish the subject-positions of Strindberg's mystics from Badiou's militants, but not the names they use or the language they speak. What I am interested in, on the contrary, is the criteria immanent to language itself for differentiating Paula from The Stranger, i.e. how to distinguish the linguistic practices of mysticism from those of the mystic-without-mysticism. In other words, the theory of the obscure subject is insufficient for my purposes; more investigation is required.

To put the above another way: Badiou's own philosophy approaches mysticism in his theory of the supernumerary name. Hence, Paula's language of excessive transparency, which 'pull[s] names away from the usage that prostitutes them' (Badiou 2001 40), illustrates particularly clearly the extent of the closeness between Badiou's practices of naming and those of traditional mystics, precisely because it enacts Badiou's own 'mysterious' doctrine. That is, *The Incident at Antioch*'s emphasis on the illegal and anonymous nature of the name that announces the event to the audience is to be identified with that very doctrine of the supernumerary name in Badiou's philosophy that is subsequently jettisoned in *Logic of Worlds* precisely because it is too 'mysterious'. Badiou, by his own admission, is too much of a mystic when he invokes a name that comes from nowhere, that means both nothing and too much and that gives birth to an ecstatic subject. This is why Badiou's philosophy of the name in *Being and Event* will act as my starting-point; it is here that one finds, implicitly dramatized, the mysticism that is constantly being abjected from Badiou's system.

The guiding thread throughout this paper, as we have seen, is the road to Damascus itself in Badiou's depiction of Paul and Paula and August Strindberg's trilogy. Whether Saul actually became Paul or not at the moment of ecstatic conversion, this moment of illumination has still traditionally been taken as a site of baptism: of new names and new languages. The road to Damascus is an evental site of nomination in all its configurations (mystic, theological, theatrical and philosophical)—and it is for this reason that I deploy it in what follows to trace the similarities and differences in how Badiou and Strindberg conceive of 'the power of names' (Badiou 2005 372). To this end, Part Two provides a typology of different naming practices in Badiou, the philosophy of theatre and Strindberg's mysticism, respectively, before, in Part Three, I pursue in more detail a direct contrast between Badiouian and Strindbergian nomination, thereby building up a more detailed picture of the ways in which Badiou and the mystic theorise and practise nomination.

Part Two: The Power of Names

1.1 <u>Badiouian Names</u>

In *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou confesses to the problematic mysticism inherent in his earlier

theory of naming:

> Perspicacious readers (namely Desanti, Deleuze, Nancy and Lyotard) quickly brought
> to my notice that I was framing the ontological definition of 'what happens' both
> from below and from above. From below, by positing the existence, required by
> every event, of an event-site, whose formal structure I rather laboriously delineated.
> From above, by demanding that every event receive a name. One could then say, on
> the one hand, that there was in fact a 'worldly' structure of the event (its site,
> summoning the void of every situation), and on the other, a rather unclear
> transcendental structure (the name, attributed by an anonymous subject). As we shall
> see, I am now able fundamentally to equate 'site' and 'evental multiplicity'—thus
> avoiding all the banal aporias of the dialectic between structure and historicity—and
> that I do so without any recourse to a mysterious naming. (2009 361)

While the definition of 'what happens' from below is retained in *Logics of Worlds*—albeit

seriously modified—the 'mysterious… transcendental structure' in which a supernumerary

name is 'attributed by an anonymous subject' is completely jettisoned. Badiou is even clearer

in his Preface to the English translation of *Ethics*:

> Today I can no longer maintain that the only trace left by an event in the situation it affects is the name given to that event. This idea presumed, in effect, that there were two events rather than one (the event-event and the event-naming), and likewise two subjects rather than one (the subject who names the event, and the subject who is faithful to this naming). (2001 lvi)

In short, after *Being and Event*, the theory of the supernumerary name is disposed of, and with it the doubled-event and doubled-subject. For such a theory is too 'mysterious'. It is here then that Badiou flirts most with the mystic: mystery exists in Badiou's system to be abjected. And so, since what he abjects brings him closest to mysticism, it is here in the discarded trash from *Being and Event* that we will find a way-in to the delineation of the figure of the mystic-without-mysticism outlined in the Introduction.

To briefly sketch supernumerary nomination: *Being and Event* orients itself around the 'fundamental' thesis: 'there is some newness in being', and such newness (a truth) is recognised by means of an intervention, 'naming that 'there is'' (2005 203): 'The initial operation of an intervention is to make a name out of an unpresented element of the site to qualify the event.' (204) In fact, Badiou goes further still: as *Ethics* makes clear, this act of recognition-through-naming is not posterior, accidental nor even inessential to the event, rather it is to be identified with the being of the event itself: 'The fundamental ontological characteristic of an event is to inscribe, *to name*, the situated void of that for which it is an event.' (2001 69; my emphasis) Such nomination gives rise to a militant subject, one with 'another mode of discernment… which, outside knowledge but within the effect of an interventional nomination, explores the connections to the supernumerary name of the event.' (2005 329) The subject consists in an incessant fidelity to the originary naming by which the event is recognised; hence, both the event and the subject exist within (and themselves exude) a 'nominal aura' (398).

The name itself has two properties: it is illegal and anonymous (2005 513). It is illegal because, in the set of existing knowledge that constitutes the state of the world prior to the advent of the new (i.e. that knowledge which 'measures being to language such as it is', according to the names that already exist), there is no rule or index that might indicate the meaning of the supernumerary name. There is 'nothing in the situation, no rule whatsoever, [that] authorises [the name's] distinction from any other.' (206) Intervening nomination is thus illegal. Moreover, the name is anonymous since 'the name drawn from the void is indistinguishable precisely because it is drawn from the void' (513). Or, as Badiou puts it more fully,

> Knowledge does not know of the event because the name of the event is supernumerary, and so it does not belong to the language of the situation. When I say that it does not belong to the latter, this is not necessarily in a material sense whereby the name would be barbarous, incomprehensible or non-listed. What qualifies the name or event is that it is drawn from the void… Even if the name of the event is very simple, and it is definitely listed in the language of the situation, it is supernumerary *as name of the event*… and it is foreclosed from knowledge. (329)

The name is new—not in the material sense of being a new combination of letters or syllables—but as a signifying occurrence. And this novelty of meaning (that bears witness to but also partially constitutes a truth) comes out of nowhere: it is a new name which no one can understand, interpret or decipher on the basis of what has come before. From this perspective, intervention constitutes 'a language of the unnameable' (2001 376). In other words, 'the very secret of intervention' resides in the fact that 'legitimate nomination is impossible' (2005 289). This name subtracts from all others through an operation of hyper-

asceticism[4]; it bores an 'unreasonable hole within the tissue of language' (294). It is excessive: 'a name in excess' (2001 394).

The event is therefore partially constituted (and simultaneously recognised) through this name both excessive and empty, both indiscernible and making all the difference. Thus, early Badiouianism glorifies a language in which '*solely* the production of a supernumerary name initiates the thought of the indiscernible' (2005 319; my emphasis) or 'the *only* trace left by an event in the situation it affects is the name given to that event' (2009 361; my emphasis). In the end, what matters most is the *name*: truth and novelty are accessed, thought and experienced *solely* by means of a name that means both nothing and too much.

1.2 <u>Dramatic Names</u>

'Every name from which a truth proceeds is a name from before the Tower of Babel. But it has to circulate in the tower.' (Badiou 2003 110) It is in this way that Badiou glosses Philippians II.1 at the end of *Saint Paul*, and here, in this admittedly late text, we can still hear the reverberations of the doctrine of the supernumerary name. The name bores a hole in the confusions and dispersions of already-existing nominations to give rise to a linguistic state that is simultaneously fuller and emptier, one that repeats the fullness and emptiness of all origins. The eventual name is untimely (an issue to which I return at length at the end of the paper), a primal word in the midst of contemporary jargon.

And here once more, of course, Badiou touches on mystic motifs, particularly the Adamicism that dominates much modern mystic thinking about language, whether the *Logosmystik* of Böhme or the pasigraphy of Wilkins. Even more significant for my present purposes, moreover, is that this appeal to primal, uncorrupted names informs a tradition of philosophising *about theatre* too. One of the *Urdokumente* of modern philosophy of theatre,

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[4] See Badiou 2005 311.

Lessing's 1769 *Letter to Nicolai*, reflects on dramatic language in this precise context. For Lessing, the theatre perfects language by transforming its arbitrary and mutable signs into originary and true names. A brief discussion of Lessing's claim will therefore bring out more clearly the binding together of the three terms at stake in this paper: mystic names, Badiouianism and the theatre. Of course, it needs to be continually emphasised that in no way can or should Badiou's theory of names be reduced to this mystic Adamicism; yet, hopefully sufficient evidence has been adduced as to the their closeness as to make this juxtaposition of the Badiouian description of the name of a truth with the theatrical search for a true name appear fruitful.

In the late eighteenth-century context in which Lessing writes, such Adamic language—the language of true names—was identified with 'natural signs', pre-Babelian remnants that truly name their referent by means of a substantial ontological connection. In Mendelssohn's definition, signs 'are natural if the combination of the sign with the subject matter is grounded in the very properties of what is designated.' (1997 178) Traces of this utopic grounding relation remain scattered among post-Babelian languages in onomatopoeia, metaphor and algebraic symbolism, and, just as in Paula's ecstatic speeches in *The Incident at Antioch*, are to be recognised by a kind of transparency that exceeds our control— 'perspicuity without exertion', in Mendelssohn's terms (1997 255, 273).

According to Lessing, therefore, the task of the playwright is to 'endeavour absolutely to elevate arbitrary signs into natural ones' (1985 134). That is, the playwright must aim to recover pre-Babelian names and circulate them in the tower. Lessing envisages such a task as follows,

> Poetry must endeavour to absolutely elevate its arbitrary signs into natural ones… The means it employs to do this are tone, choice of words, arrangement of words, metre, figures of speech, tropes, metaphors, and so forth. All these things cause the

arbitrary signs to approximate more closely to the natural, but they do not make them natural signs; consequently all the kinds of poetry that employ only these means are to be regarded as the lower kinds of poetry, and the highest kind of poetry is the one that turns the arbitrary signs wholly into natural signs. Now that is dramatic poetry, for in drama the words cease to be arbitrary signs, and become the *natural* signs of arbitrary things. (134)

In drama, talk is brought to life and made present on the stage, so that, in David Wellbery's words, 'the speech itself is an action… sign and object are not only similar, but coincide' (1984 225). Wellbery continues,

Only in dramatic poetry does the poet's language function as a natural sign and therefore only in the drama does poetry achieve its ideal. As performative speech, the poem is the very reality it designates, for this reality itself is the activity of speaking… Perfected mimesis is not the imitation of an object or action, it is the action itself. (227)

The natural sign is only really possible in the fusion of sign and referent; in performance, the sign embodies what it refers to and thus meaning shines perfectly from it. Meaning is excessively present in the drama; it does not lie elsewhere. In other words, the performative nature of theatre results in true names, according to Lessing. The stage acts as a portal transporting signs back to their archaic state. Watching a play thereby becomes a kind of mystical experience, a belated repetition of Adam's acts of naming described in Genesis 2.

1.3 Mystic Names

Strindberg's post-*Inferno* dramatic work stands in continuity with this tradition. He too conceives of the dramatic endeavour as a means of overcoming post-Babelian confusion. Thus, in *The Road to Damascus* II, The Stranger tells the story of Babel as presented in the *Zohar* in which maleficent demons constructed the tower to 'confound language as well as reason' for they feared man's capacity for knowledge. He continues,

> Since that time the powers have reigned by means of discord [so that now] if some mortal is able to penetrate the secrets of the powers, no one will believe him and he will be marked with madness… Only the mad are reasonable, for they see, hear and sense what escapes their eyes, ears and heart, but they cannot communicate their experiences to others. (1983 244)

The Stranger, though, wishes to confound the demons in return, overcome Babelian confusion and attain a purer language:

> I must create a double: adjoin to my own personality that of another being who can absorb in him everything that enchains my spirit. So that my soul can find once more the purer, hotter atmosphere which will impel it still higher towards the ether, so that, transcending the Dominations, it will go up to the throne of God and place at the feet of the Eternal the woes of humankind. (248)

This is a programmatic statement for Strindberg's late dramatic art: ascent through catharsis. By creating a sacrificial double for himself on the stage, Strindberg attempts to purify his thinking and his words. A discussion from *The Road to Damascus* I illuminates this process further:

> The Mother: Why do you call Ingeborg 'Eve'?

> The Stranger: By giving her a name myself, I made her mine, and I intend to transform her completely according to my will.
>
> The Mother: So that she resembles you! (She laughs.) I've heard of sorcerers from the village who sometimes create a mannequin representing someone on whom they wish to cast a spell and they baptise it with the name of the man they have decided to strike down. Likewise, in the person of this Eve who would be your work you have tried to damn her entire race. (188)

I will return to the specifics of this baptism later in the section; for now, what is crucial is the link here established between nomination and the creation of an abject theatrical double, 'a mannequin'. A central component of the mystic ascent is the ability to name correctly.[5] Thus, once again, the problematic of the true name is at stake; indeed, Strindberg draws on a plethora of naming strategies in his plays to achieve his goals of purification and ascent. In what follows, I focus on two of them to give some indication of how Strindberg perpetuates the project of undoing the curse of Babel.

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The determining influence on almost all late-modern language-mysticism is Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences—and Strindberg is no exception. It was on 29th March 1896, Palm Sunday, that Strindberg first discovered Swedenborg:

> I came to a stop in front of a row of Balzac's novels bound in blue, picked up his *Séraphita* quite by chance… When I got home I opened the book, which was

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[5] Maeterlinck's influence looms large here, particularly the mystic names that structure *The Blue Bird*. See Rose 1911.

practically unknown to me, as so many years had passed since I first read it. Now, with a mind prepared to receive it, I devoured the contents of this remarkable work as if it were something entirely new. In my homeland and his, Swedenborg was regarded as a charlatan, a madman with a distorted and lewd imagination. I had never read a word he had written, and I was now carried away by admiration for this angelic giant of the last century, interpreted as he was here by the most profound of French geniuses… So it was that Swedenborg came into my life, in which has played an immense part. He came on the actual anniversary of his death, bringing me the palms of victory or of martyrdom. (1979 144-5)

Swedenborg was to become 'a guardian angel' (210), for in his writings were to be found, according to Strindberg, 'the answer to the principal riddles of our spiritual life' (215).

Swedenborg's founding statement of the doctrine of correspondences occurs in *Heaven and Hell*:

The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, and not merely the natural world in general, but also every particular of it; and as a consequence everything in the natural world that springs from the spiritual world is called a correspondent. It must be understood that the natural world springs from and has permanent existence from the spiritual world, precisely like an effect from its effecting cause… From this is the correspondence. (2000 §89, §96)

In such passages, Swedenborg rehashes the traditional *analogia ordonis* in which, because the effect resembles its cause but at a far lower degree of reality, the name of the effect provides a means of understanding the nature of the cause, even if a radically inadequate one. Swedenborg speaks very much in this tradition, when he distinguishes between 'a literal sense… and a spiritual sense in the Word' (§114). And yet Swedenborg—almost despite

himself—goes beyond this: for, to angels, mystics and humans before Babel, the name of the effect is *equally* the name of the cause: neither is merely inadequately predicated. Thus, 'at the present day no one can know the spiritual things in heaven to which the natural things in the world correspond except from heaven' (§110), but, yet, 'the most ancient people, who were celestial men, thought from correspondence itself, as the angels do' (§87).[6] That is, for these angels and 'ancient peoples' (as well as for other 'celestial men' like Swedenborg himself), the earthly and heavenly senses of a name are *co-primary*: both lay claim to literal truth. There are multiple literal meanings bound to each sign. And the role of the mystic is to become once more an angelic, pre-Babelian subject by affirming the excessive truths that each name carries. The mystic subject must bear witness to dual, literal meanings in singular names.

Strindberg reconceives the doctrine of correspondences in a more tortured form.[7] The subject must bear the agonising sense-contradictions enfolded into a name. The multiple truths signified by the subject's own name, for instance, ruptures one's harmonious unity in the name of a duplicitous existence. The very end of *The Road to Damascus* trilogy, in which The Stranger, having ascended to the mystic retreat of the White House, is shown around the Hall of Paintings, illuminates this property of the mystic name particularly clearly.

Just as, in the programmatic statement rehearsed above, the creator purges himself of contradiction in a dramatic double who performs him, so too here the monks of the White House are able to achieve self-identity at the expense of those they artistically depict—the two-headed great men of history. While the monks 'have only one head' (1983 356), all their painted subjects 'have at least two' (354). In this way, Father Clement has painted Luther double-headed as 'the young champion of tolerance, the old champion of intolerance' (354)[8]

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[6] See also Swedenborg 2000 §114.
[7] For Strindberg's explicit, theoretical engagement with correspondences, see 1996 178. On Strindberg's use of Swedenborg to reconstruct Adamic language, see Meyer 1987 546.
[8] See also the comments on Luther's duplicity in 'The Mysticism of World History' (1996 198).

and similarly Voltaire, 'the atheist who spent his life defending God' (356). Of the painting of F.L. Stolberg, it is said, 'Wrote a fanatical book in defence of Protestantism and poof! Is converted to Catholicism… A miracle, maybe? A little Road to Damascus without a doubt?' (357) And here we glimpse some of the significance of Strindberg's conception of the road to Damascus for a theory of nomination: the Damascus-illumination is the moment where the inconsistent senses of the name are at their most severe, the moment of acute contradiction which causes the most suffering to the name-bearer 'falling to the ground, arms outstretched'. Ecstatic illumination and the unbearable duplicity of names here coincide, making possible the subsequent ascent towards which Strindberg's drama is directed.

Moreover, according to Strindberg, there has been one exemplary subject who most fully embraced nominal duplicity and revelled in the proliferation of senses felt at these Damascus-moments: Napoleon.[9] He writes,

> Napoleon! Created by the Revolution! Emperor of the people, Nero of liberty, tyrant of equality, 'venerable brother' of fraternity. He is the most astute of all these two-headed people, for he could laugh at himself, raise himself above his inconsistencies, take on a new skin, change his soul and with each metamorphosis feel truly like a new incarnation with perfect conviction. (1983 356)[10]

Napoleon self-consciously creates new meanings for his life, revels in their multiplicity under a single name; he joyfully suffers the acute contradictions of his name, transforming them

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[9] Strindberg elsewhere considers himself the reincarnation (or at least, repetition) of Napoleon. See 1979 225.

[10] Kierkegaard is directly compared to Napoleon in this regard: 'There is only one man one could compare with this—the Dane Kierkegaard. He had, from the beginning, a consciousness of this pathogenesis of the soul, this power of giving birth from this life without fertilisation, like a tree sprouting from a shoot. It is for this reason, and also because he would not allow himself to be duped by life, that he wrote under a series of pseudonyms, each representing "a stage on life's way".' (356-7) However, notice how Kierkegaard's strategy towards nomination is slightly different: instead of bearing multiplicity in one name, he multiplies names in his pseudonyms. He thus synthesises the two naming strategies discussed in this section.

into moments of liberation. Napoleon is that Christic double or mannequin who happily takes on himself all the pain of nominal inconsistency to make possible Strindberg's own mystic ascent.

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We have already read of the role Balzac's *Séraphita* played in bringing Strindberg to Swedenborg on Palm Sunday 1896. However, the significance of *Séraphita* in its own right for Strindberg's naming practices should not be overlooked. From that day in 1896, '*Séraphita* became my gospel' (1979 145), and its own fictional performance of Swedenborg's doctrines became paradigmatic for Strindberg's own attempts in his late drama.[11]

Balzac's novel aims at re-presenting the essence of Swedenborgian doctrine, yet it ends up an unorthodox repetition. For, while he acknowledges the importance of the doctrine of correspondences 'by which the world is placed in unison with heaven' (1889 51), Balzac is rarely concerned in *Séraphita* with the multiple literal senses of each name, but rather the reverse: multiple names for one referent. Names proliferate around (in this case) a person, cumulatively aggregating meaning by means of this process of accumulation.[12]

As one character muses, the word may forever try to constrain nature, but nature always exceeds the word (1889 33); however, at the same time, words 'carry [nature] up to a third, a ninth or a twenty-seventh power… obtain[ing] magical results by constraining the processes of nature'. Language strives ever onwards to capture the world—and thus will always proliferate names—but in so doing, it potentiates and intensifies the world by means of 'a mysterious optic which increases, or diminishes, or exalts creation'. Names 'act upon

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[11] On Strindberg and Balzac, see Meyer 1987 337-8.

[12] I have explored this practice in more detail in Whistler 2012.

[us] at times like the torpedo which electrifies or paralyses the fisherman, at other times like a dose of phosphorous which stimulates life and accelerates its propulsion.' (34) The names of Seraphita/Seraphitus is where this idea of potentiation through proliferation is most evident: Seraphita/Seraphitus bears this dual name as a reflection of his/her Adamic androgyny. Again, the project of undoing the curse of Babel lurks in the background: Seraphita/Seraphitus cannot be given one proper name in a post-Babelian era of linguistic dispersion and confusion. It is for this reason that at his/her birth, his/her father (acting as an avatar of Swedenborg) proclaims, 'Our child is to be without name on this earth. You must not baptise in the waters of an earthly Church one who has just been immersed in the fires of Heaven.' (58) Hence, only a series of names can approximate. Not until the end of the novel do the characters even begin to acknowledge the plurality of Seraphita's/Seraphitus' names (104) and start their own ascent upwards but also backwards towards an Edenic state. At this point,

> Wilfred and Minna were enabled to understand some of the mysterious sayings of Him who had appeared on earth in the form of which to each of them had rendered him comprehensible—to one Seraphitus, to the other Seraphita—for they saw that all was homogenous in the sphere where he now was. (127)

That is, the other characters here begin an apprenticeship in an archaic language of true names, 'a language as superior to thought as thought is to instinct' (86)—that is, the language of correspondences. Such a language annuls the multiplicity of names that circulate after Babel, and—in orthodox Swedenborgian fashion—rediscover the correspondent names that signify multiple truths.

The Road to Damascus is also a drama of multiple nominations. The Stranger is a protagonist in search of a name, and throughout the trilogy tries on various appellations

(Caesar, Adam, Cain, Christ).[13] Through this proliferating series which parallels trials of purification and redemption, he gradually ascends to the White House to enter a death-like state of beatific stasis, and it is here he receives his final, true name:

> Finally you will be resurrected among the dead, you will abandon your former name and we will baptise you like a small child. What name shall we give you?... I see that John has been written. Brother John. (1983 359)

Having finally been baptised, the Stranger can now 'rest in peace', as the final words of the trilogy put it (360). *The Road to Damascus*, then, is a road leading from nominal proliferation and dispersion to the Edenic state of a single, meaningful name.

It is not just The Stranger, however, who undergoes name-changes, so too The Lady. Nameless at the opening of *The Road to Damascus* I, The Stranger becomes Adam in bestowing upon her one true name:

> It's strange: I love to see you in my thoughts without personality, without name. I only half know what you are called; in fact, I'd love to give you a name myself. Let's see, what can I call you? Yes, I'll call you Eve. (1983 154)

We learn later that Eve is also named Ingeborg, and indeed at the end of the trilogy, once the salvific White House is almost reached, 'on the other side of the river, with life below us, behind us' (307), The Stranger calls her Ingeborg for the first time, adding, 'I have never met Ingeborg until now, never known her until now' (333).[14]

Nevertheless, it is The Lady's initial baptism as Eve that will prove most significant for the rest of my paper, precisely because of its Badiouian resonances (even if it is a firmly

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[13] See, respectively, Strindberg 1983 195, 188, 267, 215.
[14] In fact, he first calls her Ingeborg a few pages earlier in similar circumstances (307).

non-Badiouian act of nomination). The Lady receives the name 'Eve' from an anonymous, nameless source in an encounter with a loved one. The trilogy as a whole follows The Lady and The Stranger's struggles to stay faithful to this defining event; it drives the plot and fills out their characters. As The Stranger puts it, 'Life, which before was only a vast absurdity, has now taken on a meaning, and I make out an intention where before there was only chance.' (1983 153) Moreover, 'Eve' is a name that at the moment of nomination means nothing to either The Stranger or The Lady, standing outside the Christian redemption story as they do at that point. Only later does the name retrospectively begin to be filled with meaning, in light of the consequences of the initial event and a realisation of their part in the redemption narrative. The Lady thus reveals in hindsight, 'It seems to me that I have tasted from the Tree of Knowledge, my eyes have been opened and now I can distinguish good from evil… I see now why I had to call myself Eve.' (197) Out of the 'darkness' of 'this long road to Damascus' (337), new subjects are born—subjects faithful to an initial act of nomination by a nameless voice. In The Stranger's words,

> Where am I? Where have I been? Is it winter, summer or spring? What century am I in? And what region of the world? Am I young or old? Man or woman? Am I a god or a devil?... Silence, I've just made a leap in time of thousands of years, and I am beginning to distil myself, to reassemble myself, to crystallise myself! A little patience and, soon, for the second time I will have been created and, bursting out from the dark waters of creation, the lotus flower will extend its head towards the sun to say: it is I! (277-8)

Part Three: The Future of Names

2.1 <u>The Road to Damascus 1: The Theory of Discourses</u>

In the previous part, I juxtaposed Badiou's naming of the true with dramatic true names in order to provide some idea of the rough similarities that might pertain between the two. Thus, Strindberg, like Badiou, structures his drama around names that are simultaneously empty and excessive, that are given forth anonymously, that recognise that something new has occurred, and that generate subjects faithful to that novelty. In this second part of the essay, I want to try to define more exactly the difference separating the two—that is, to return to the terms of the Introduction, to specify why Badiou's Paula remains a mystic-without-mysticism irreducible to the ecstatic illumination experienced by Strindberg's characters.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, the simplest means of distinguishing the two in Badiouian terms is with respect to the category of the obscure subject from *Logics of Worlds*. A mystic subject is an obscure subject, for it 'systematically resorts to the invocation of a full and pure transcendent Body, an ahistorical or anti-evental body (City, God, Race. . .) from which it follows that the trace [of the event] will be denied.' (2009 59) This recourse to an atemporal, pure presence allows for an ascent away from the new in the name of silent devotion to the obscure. The mystic forces 'the descent of [the evental] present into the night of non-exposition' (59), or, as Badiou puts it more fully,

> The obscure subject offers the chance of a new destiny, under the incomprehensible but salvific sign of an absolute body, whose only demand is that one serves it by nurturing everywhere and at all times the hatred of every living thought, every transparent language and every uncertain becoming. (61)

The obscure subject works in signs and ciphers, desires an atemporal release from the present and finds destiny in transcendence. The obscure subject erases truths by means of divine names, rather than naming the truths themselves.

Such obscurantism is evidently present throughout Strindberg's *The Road to Damascus*: the present is benighted, under the sway of maleficent powers[15] who communicate their existence through half-hidden signs[16]. Temporal life takes place under the curse of Deuteronomy 28: 'Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field… [etc]'. An exchange between The Stranger and his mother-in-law illustrates this gradual emergence of an obscure subject through the play particularly clear:

> The Mother: You still doubt?
>
> The Stranger: Yes, many things. But a truth begins to dawn on the horizon.
>
> The Mother: What truth?
>
> The Stranger: That there exists… things and… forces in which I did not believe until now.
>
> The Mother: Have you noticed also that it is neither you nor any other human being who guides your extraordinary destiny?
>
> The Stranger: That is what I thought I noticed.
>
> The Mother: Then you have travelled a part of the path. (1983 204)

There is a quasi-Badiouian moment here when 'a truth begins to dawn', but it is immediately covered over: any sense of novelty or eventhood is perverted into the language of timeless deities and supernatural destinies. The emergent truth is definitively occulted.

The road to Damascus is therefore not merely an ascent towards a redemptive name (as outlined in Part Two), but also a descent into ever-increasing torments of malediction and exile.[17] These parallel paths of damnation and salvation undertaken simultaneously—'the

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[15] See Strindberg 1983 235

[16] For example, The Stranger exclaims, 'I do not know whether it is someone else or myself whose presence I sense, but in solitude we are never alone. The air thickens, the air swells and entities are born. We do not see them. But we sense their presence.' (1983 152)

[17] It is for this reason that Strindberg continually confuses the road to Damascus with the road to Calvary throughout the plays (1983 209, 216, 218).

Eternal's anger is always a kind of grace' (227)—take us back to Strindberg's poetic project in which a fictional double is afflicted in order for the creator to be beatified. This double-moment in fact informs Strindberg's own interpretation of Paul: 'As Saint Paul says: his body is delivered to the tortures of Satan, so that his soul can be amended and merit its salvation' (229)—and it is here that Strindberg stands furthest from Badiou.[18]

And yet, as I argued in the Introduction, even this definitive distinction between the militant subject (e.g. Paula) and the obscure subject (e.g. The Stranger) is not enough. My task in this paper is to distinguish Badiou and Strindberg's practices of naming, and while the category of the obscure subject differentiates the subject that names, the ground of naming and its purpose, the names themselves remain indiscernible. To repeat, there seems no distinction between Paula's language in *The Incident at Antioch* and The Stranger's in *The Road to Damascus*. From a linguistic, rhetorical and pragmatic point of view, the speeches of a mystic-without-mysticism repeat those of the fully-blown mystic. My aim in the second half of this paper is therefore to discriminate more finely the differences that pertain to practices of naming *in themselves*. Where does the radical difference Badiou relies upon reside and how precisely does it manifest itself in the name? To achieve this, I turn to the theory of discourses put forward in *Saint Paul*. It is here we find Badiou's most sustained engagement with mystic discourse.

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Chapter Four of *Saint Paul* proposes 'a schema of discourses' that articulate four 'subjective dispositions': the prophet, the wise man, the apostle and the mystic. Prophetic discourse, represented in Paul's writings by the figure of the Jew, is one of signs: 'a prophet is one who

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[18] See Badiou's rejection of any reading of Paul as legitimating masochism or suffering in general, 2003 66-8.

abides in the requisition of signs… testifying to transcendence by exposing the obscure to its deciphering.' On the other hand, the discourse of wisdom, represented by the Greek, is one of immanence and cosmic totality. It is transmitted in the form of the philosophical syllogism. (2003 41) Paul's own discourse of the apostle is positioned 'equidistant from Jewish prophesy and Greek logos' (43), 'subtracted from both' (50). Apostolic discourse is 'a speech of rupture' (31) that bears witness to the event: 'What matters is to declare in one's own name that what took place took place' (44) Badiou continues,

> What imposes the invention of a new discourse, and a subjectivity that is neither philosophical nor prophetic (the apostle), is precisely that it is only by means of such invention that the event finds a welcome and an existence in language. For established languages, it is inadmissible because it is genuinely unnameable. (46)

Apostolic discourse is linguistically and rhetorically inventive, insofar as it names the unnameable by means of illegal names drawn from the void. It is the 'language of the naked event, which alone captures thought' (53). The apostle speaks anew, with fresh names both empty and full of meaning.

There is one other discourse, and Badiou elucidates it by means of a gloss on Corinthians II.12:

> Let us note in passing that Paul delineates, as if in shadowy outline, a fourth possible discourse, besides the Greek (wisdom), the Jew (signs), and the Christian (eventual declaration). This discourse… would be that of the miracle, and Paul gives it a name, subjective discourse of glorification. It is the discourse of the ineffable, the discourse of nondiscourse. It is the subject as silent and mystical intimacy, inhabited by 'things

that cannot be told'… only experienced by the subject who has been visited by a miracle. (2003 51)

This mystic will speak in 'unutterable utterances' alone (51): apophatic words that immediately negate themselves into silence, words that point to intimate illuminations impossible to communicate, words that inadequately testify to inner miracles. Such words are utterly 'obscurantist' (52). Moreover, Badiou goes on to argue that such a discourse—as soon as it is uttered—immediately become indiscernible from a prophetic discourse of signs:

> Supposing I invoke the fourth discourse, and hence the private, unutterable utterances, in order to justify the third (that of Christian faith), *I relapse inevitable into the second discourse*, that of the sign, the Jewish discourse. For what is a prophecy if not a sign of what is to come? And what is a miracle if not a sign of the transcendence of the True? (53)

Both the mystic and the prophet must make recourse to obscure signs that point beyond: the first to a transcendent realm without, the second to immaculate experience within. However, whether inner or outer, such transcendence can only be hinted at in cryptic images and apophatic practices. We are back here with the obscure subject of *Logics of Worlds* who occults the present through gnomic reference to an atemporal plenitude outside of time.

And yet… obscurantism is not to be dismissed so readily, for it haunts the very discourse from which it is supposed to be discarded. The mystic 'is like an Other within' (2003 51)—'within', that is, the very heart of Badiou and Paul's own militant language of the event. In other words, according to Badiou, Paul's apostolic discourse is constituted by means of distancing itself from the fourth discourse of the mystic as much as from those of the

prophet and wise man, but *nevertheless* subtraction from the mystical is a far more difficult and less clear-cut procedure than in the other instances.

This becomes particularly evident in Badiou's interpretation of Corinthians II.1:

> Clearly then, for Paul, miracles exist and have concerned him. He delineates a particular subjective figure, that of the 'exalted' man, who has perhaps been summoned out of his body during the course of his life. But this figure is precisely not the one the apostle is going to present. The apostle must be accountable only for what others see and hear, which is to say, his declaration. He has no need to glorify himself in the name of that other subject who has spoken with God (2003 51)

The mystic disposition is not rejected entirely; it is not even altogether avoided. It is, rather, acknowledged, then immediately silenced. Paul draws attention to its presence at the very moment he eschews it. It takes the place of 'the Other within himself'. In Badiou's terms, mystic discourse lies 'unaddressed' within the apostolic, and this seems to involve a complicated operation of almost simultaneous admission and denial of the mystical. Hence, Paul 'refuses to let addressed discourses… be justif[ied] through an unaddressed discourse, whose substance consists in unutterable utterances', but nevertheless this unaddressed mysticism still holds 'a marginal and inactive position' and 'remains a mute supplement'. (52) This is a very significant admission: the language of mysticism supplements—even if mutely—the language of the event. It does not stand outside a discourse of truths like something merely jettisoned, but remains a necessary, if continuously silenced, component within it.

Badiou's later relation to his own 'mysterious' theory of the supernumerary name bears similarities to this, as we have seen. This component of *Being and Event* stands both inside and outside the system, a vital part of its development (for it stands centre-stage in the

original exposition of the event) and yet belatedly reduced to a marginal, silent and inactive remainder. The name is perpetually abjected as 'the Other within'. Just as for Paul, therefore, Badiou's rejection of the mysterious depends on the stability of this complicated procedure of silencing from within, a constant self-purification in which mystical remnants are forever being swept into the corner. And it is the question of such stability that I now wish to tackle in the final section of this paper by having one final go at delineating the difference between Badiou's names and those of the mystic from a slightly different, if related, perspective: the temporality of the name.

2.2 The Road to Damascus 2: Hermeneutics, Apocalyptics and Pragmatics

Badiou is always in the midst of purifying his thought of mysticism. At the opening of *Saint Paul*, he makes this point, more generally, as follows,

> The crucible in which what will become a work of art and thought burns is brimful with nameless impurities; it comprises obsessions, beliefs, infantile puzzles, various perversions, undivulgeable memories, haphazard reading, and quite a few idiocies and chimeras. Analyzing this alchemy is of little use. (2003 2)

While this image is intended to apply to Paul's oeuvre, I am arguing that it needs also to be referred back to Badiou's own philosophy: the supernumerary name is treated as an impurity forever being burnt off in the attempt to distil pure Badiouianism. The irony, of course, consists in the fact that, since the above repeats alchemical imagery quite explicitly, it immediately raises the spectre of the mysterious once more, drawing Badiou's language back into proximity to those fully-blown mystics, like Strindberg, who never tire of alchemical metaphor and who likewise insist on a continual process of self-purification. They too exclaim, 'I will be purified like gold is purified by fire' (1983 232)!

And so the question of what distinguishes such indiscernible images recurs. As a final attempt to elucidate it, I want to consider Badiou's difference from the mystic in terms of three *tenses* of the name—that is, in terms of the temporalities which structure processes of meaning-acquisition. The question, then, is in what timeframe do names gain meaning. Badiou and Strindberg alike insist on the emptiness of the name in the present; they both, that is, agree that the name is at present senseless with respect to existing languages—so then the ways in which it comes to gain meaning are crucial. And it is my contention in what follows that the time in which this happens ultimately, if precariously, distinguishes Badiou's names from those of the mystic. Initially, however, a rough classificatory schema is required. There are three tenses of the name on which I wish to focus: the first (hermeneutics) is past-oriented; the latter two (apocalyptics, pragmatics) both oriented towards the future.

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The hermeneutic tradition interprets a name in terms of its effective history: meaning takes the form of baggage that each word carries forward. It is why memory, community and the transmission of texts become such significant categories. Ricoeur's comments on the name of God illustrate this clearly: 'Naming God only comes about through the milieu of a presupposition… This is the presupposition: Naming God is what has *already taken place* in the texts' (2000 163; my emphasis) In other words, names are rooted in 'a historical drama', 'bound up with the founding events in which the community of interpretation recognises itself enrooted, set up and established. It is these events that name God.' (170) The task of the hermeneut is therefore to recognise that meaning has always already occurred and so to allow the past to manifest itself in all of its complexity. This gives rise to 'a poetics of politics' (181) grounded in responsibility to the already-existing truths of tradition, as well as an

obligation to come to terms with one's own identity in light of its ineradicable roots. In short, meaning arrives from the past, and a name has always already received its sense.

Badiou's hostility to hermeneutics is well-documented[19], and is as virulent here as elsewhere. For example, Ricoeur's stress on 'the duty to remember' leads, according to Badiou, to 'the victory of the Christian vision' (2006 27.1). The hermeneut is necessarily a 'Christian subject' (27.2), for meaning is only acquired here in relation to 'founding events' and transmission through communities of interpretation (churches). The fundamental conservatism of this conception of names evidently impedes the arrival of the new. As Badiou writes of Paul, 'The apostle is neither a material witness, nor a memory.' (2003 44)

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An equally popular strain of recent philosophical reflection on the name identifies the advent of meaning with the messianic or apocalyptic. In Derrida's definition of the messianic, it is 'a logic turned toward the future… in a heterogeneous and disjointed time' (1994 181). The name receives meaning suddenly from the void.[20] This conception of the name informs Derrida and Levinas' writings on language, but it is in the early work of Philip Goodchild that I wish to locate it briefly here.

On Goodchild's basically Bergsonian philosophy of language[21], words fail to get at life, so the acquisition of meaning requires the destruction of the word. Only by 'relinquishing its grasp on the sign' does thought 'return to actual lived experience' (2002 238). That is, vital forces 'remain secret' (228), unable to be symbolically represented, for 'the sign does not contain a trace of the life of the thing' (117). At present, language kills. In fact, signs only signify at all successfully with respect to the future, by indicating a meaning-

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[19] See, for example, Badiou 2004 22-40.
[20] See Derrida 2002 213-4.
[21] See Goodchild 2000 106, 150-1.

to-come that cannot yet be delivered: 'The sign constitutes a promise for faith of the coming of the truth… Finally the apocalyptic moment may arrive.' (228-9) At the moment, words fail, but this does not preclude the possibility of a radical break in the future that will ultimately 'plunge [thought] into the categories of life' (223). This is why Goodchild insists upon 'construct[ing] ontology on the basis of the future' (x), even if such construction-work requires patience in expectation of the rupture-to-come. If writing a philosophy-book is doomed to failure now, all one can do is wait: 'Absolute faith allows the future to be constituted as a gift… Absolute faith waits.' (237)

Badiou's response to such apocalypticism is simple: 'If everything depends on an event, must we wait? Certainly not… Thought does not wait, and it has never exhausted its reserve of power.' (2003 111) He substitutes optimism in the power of the faithful subject for such pessimism. For Badiou, the subject can always act now in the wake of the event; the future Goodchild so fervently prays for has already taken place.

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Hence, Badiou replaces the apocalyptic future with a pragmatic one, involving the ad hoc working out of meaning in signifying practices. His is a pragmatics of the name. The evental name is meaningless for the moment, but the task of the faithful subject is to keep on uttering it, slowly devising a new 'subject-language' that spirals outwards from the supernumerary name and that remains illegal from the point of view of pre-existing languages. The accumulation of meaning depends on the labour of the subject: the militant does not wait; she talks.[22] In *Being and Event*, Badiou describes this process of meaning-acquisition as follows,

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[22] See Badiou 2003 88.

>[Initially, outsiders] generally consider that these names are empty…. an arbitrary and content-free language… These witnesses, in a certain sense, are right. The names generated—or rather, composed—by a subject are suspended, with respect to their signification, from the 'to-come' of truth… [They] *displace* the established significations and leave the referent void: this void will have been filled if truth comes to pass as a new situation. (2005 398-9)

More precisely, however, from the militant subject's perspective, 'The subject generates names whose referent is *in the future anterior*… Such names "will have been" assigned a referent or a signification.' (398; my emphasis)

The subject works at language, 'bend[s] and change[s]' pre-existing meanings so as to articulate the novelty of the event. Here resides the 'power' of the speaking subject—in the capacity to alter, emend and generate meanings for the sake of the new. (2001 82) Texts that bear witness to the event therefore have a pragmatic function: they form part of the ongoing labour of a subject-language in constituting a new form of words out of the ruins of the old. Thus, Badiou writes that truth demands 'those enquiries, sermons, works and statements in which these names are realised.' (395) There is no responsibility towards a founding past, nor is his concern the self-conscious failings of an apocalyptic text written in the hope that it will one day mean something. Badiou's future is homogeneous and meaning-acquisition is gradual. To quote from *Saint Paul* once more, 'Truth is a process, not an illumination.' (2003 15)

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Badiou, then, insists upon a futural pragmatics of the name, flatly rejecting both hermeneutics and apocalyptics as models for meaning-acquisition. In Strindberg's mystic theatre, however,

one finds a much more inclusive and, for this reason, eclectic range of practices: Strindberg embraces many different modes of meaning-acquisition in *The Road to Damascus*, and in consequence his names possess more than one tense. This rich temporal texture is to be definitively contrasted with Badiou's purified future anterior.

As we have already seen at length, the assortment of names circulating in *The Road to Damascus* are all old ones—names mainly drawn from the Old and New Testaments. This is true not only of the names received on the stages of life's way (Cain, Eve, the Prodigal Son etc), but also the final true name bestowed on The Stranger, John, which explicitly makes reference to John the Baptist (both 'preached in the desert' [1983 359]). As we have seen, Badiou never denies that old names can be deployed in new ways; however, what distinguishes Strindberg's names at this juncture, and approximates to a Ricoeurian model, is the fact that the characters only make sense of their new names in reference to old stories. They begin to see themselves as repetitions, re-enacting the Biblical stories again and again.[23] As the trilogy unfolds, the sense that there is nothing new under the sun grows stronger: each character is doomed to repeat the same part *ad infinitum*. These are names that gain meaning from the past.

At the same time, however, apocalyptic symbolism is also present. The river and White House in *The Road to Damascus* III, in particular, point to a heterogeneous future-to-come, where a radically new form of beatific life is possible. In the White House, time stops and meaning attains fullness; it is only here—at the end of time—that The Stranger is able to receive a a true baptism. The action prior to this moment had consisted in glimpses of redemption, obscure signs gesturing towards the White House. This is equally true of the transitory names that the characters receive: they await meaning in the White House; they only gain their significance in relation to the final name, John.

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[23] Nowhere is this shown better than in the court case of *The Road to Damascus* III where the Tempter demonstrates at length that all human subjects merely repeat Eve's primal sin (1983 321-5).

Moreover, in addition to a hermeneutics and an apocalyptics of names, traces of a *mystic pragmatics* can also be found throughout *The Road to Damascus*. Indeed, how else does a Strindbergian drama function if not through the gradual accumulation of senses for names through their continual textual circulation and dramatic performance. Names are coupled with, then divorced from others; they are forgotten, then remembered; they are predicated of literal and metaphorical properties; they are spoken in different voice, different tones and from different postures. And this process is nothing else but the way in which names gain meaning in the theatre. When The Stranger baptises Eve at the beginning of the trilogy, the sense of the name exists in the future anterior (as it does with traditional baptisms); it will have meaning only once it has been deployed, circulated and worked upon. The plays themselves perform a pragmatic labour on names.[24]

In opposition to Badiou's insistence on temporal purity, Strindberg mixes tenses: the past, the apocalyptic future and the pragmatic future co-exist, all cumulatively contributing to the accumulation of meaning in his plays. He practises a confusion of the tenses. It is here, moreover, that I consider the distinction between the Badiouian name and the mystic name to be greatest. The mystic's empty name is filled from tradition, from the coming apocalypse as well as from the pragmatic working out of a text. Badiou, on the other hand, insists on a constant vigilance in maintaining the purity of the pragmatic mode. Names for the true are kept pristine by means of the perpetual warding off of 'nameless impurities' (such as hermeneutic and apocalyptic meaning-acquisition). Discursive purity is to be maintained at all costs. One might ask in closing, however: if 'philosophy is always (re)naming' (Badiou 2009 521), is such a drive to purity at all feasible? Perhaps instead, just as the mystic mode of discourse collapses into the prophetic, pragmatic naming cannot uphold the integrity of its

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[24] Again, we must return to the The Stranger's rationale for this act of nomination: 'By giving her a name myself, I made her mine, and I intend to transform her completely according to my will.' (1983 188) This is the perspective of the playwright: characters receive names as part of a process of formation, of manipulation. The Stranger, in effect, claims: Eve will have become my double, for she will have become 'Eve'—and the same is true of Strindberg's mystic pragmatics as a whole.

borders either. Or perhaps, just as the supernumerary name is constantly expelled as 'the Other within', so too other modes of meaning-acquisition exist mutely within the system as internal tears—marginal, inactive supplements to the official system.

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