

A Badiouan Interpretation of Christ in Hosle's Rationalistic Philosophy of Religion

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Abstract: In the essay *God as Reason*, Vittorio Hosle attempts at sketching a rationalistic philosophy of religion where he provides a rationalistic interpretation of Christian theology. While such an attempt provides Christianity a place in rational secular society, it needlessly reduces the unique, divine figure of Christ into a mere historical figure, thereby dissolving the very foundation of Christian doctrine. Admitting to the difficulties of traditional Christology, Hosle openly resorts to such a reductive interpretation of the figure of Christ. This paper, however, proposes an interpretation that could salvage the figure of Christ in Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion. Drawing from Alain Badiou's interpretation of St. Paul, I argue that the Christ-event can be interpreted as inevitably exclusionary, rationally contradictory, and specifically divine without resorting to any fideistic interpretations. Therefore, a fully human and fully divine Christ can properly be maintained within a rationalistic philosophy of religion.

Keywords: Badiou, Hosle, St. Paul, Christianity

INTRODUCTION

While Christianity in Europe has been grappling with the wave of secularism that has swept its continent, Christianity in the Philippines continues to thrive with its undeniable influence in civil and political society. Such unparalleled influence, however, has been shook by the rise of Rodrigo Duterte as President. Veering away from the tradition of public decency, he openly cursed God, the Catholic bishops,¹ and even the Pope.² Transcending rhetoric, the Congress, under his watch, almost passed a divorce law in the country,³ a piece of legislation that the Church has since fought hard to kill.⁴

Therefore, although it is true that the Philippines is still predominantly Christian, religion has seen itself locking horns with secular society—a confrontation that has become more apparent with the abovementioned events. Hence, it is imperative to think about the role of religion today in a continuously secularizing society such as the Philippines.

The unfortunate response of liberal society is to limit the religious in the private sphere and ban it altogether from public discourse—an unthinkable policy in the Philippine setting and the very tendency that

¹ Ted Regencia, “Philippines’ Duterte: ‘Kill those useless bishops,’” in *Al Jazeera* (05 December 2018), <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/5/philippines-duterte-kill-those-useless-bishops>>.

² Pia Ranada, “Duterte curses Pope Francis over traffic during his visit,” in *Rappler.com* (30 November 2015), <<https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/rodrigo-duterte-curses-pope-francis>>.

³ Filane Mikee Cervantes, “House panel approves absolute divorce bill,” in *Philippine News Agency* (17 August 2021), <<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1150751>>.

⁴ Christian V. Esguerra, “It’s complicated: The battle for divorce law in Catholic Philippines,” in *ABS-CBN* (25 September 2019), <<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/25/19/its-complicated-the-battle-for-divorce-law-in-catholic-philippines>>.

Benedict XVI wanted to change.⁵ He insisted, and even made it his Petrine ministry, that secularization is not about banning the religious from the public sphere; it should rather be about including all religious perspectives in a more rational public discourse—the very topic of the famous debate between the then Cardinal Ratzinger and Jurgen Habermas in 2004. While Habermas argued that religious positions ought to be “translated” into a secular language,⁶ Benedict XVI did not seem to agree. The latter thinks that religious perspectives have no instrumental value: they are, on their own, valuable in the public sphere.⁷

But for the religious perspective to be as valuable as Benedict XVI suggests, it has to have a firm rational basis over and above its reliance on revealed truths, implying an urgent need to revisit the dialectic between faith and reason. Specifically, for Christianity to be able to forge a valuable message to the world today,⁸ the dialectic between faith and reason ought to be revisited once more.

In a now famous essay, Vittorio Hosle attempts at formulating what he calls a *rationalistic philosophy of religion*⁹ which aims to provide a philosophically defensible version of Christianity, basing his theology on the Hegelian notion that God is Reason. If his attempt at a rationalistic philosophy of religion were to be successful, this is a great leap forward for the rationalization of Christian faith, and therefore to its worthwhile

⁵ Benedict XVI, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, trans. by Michael J. Miller and Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 133-142.

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, trans. by Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge and Malden: Polity, 2017), 77-121.

⁷ Virgil Nemoianu, “The Church and the Secular Establishment: A Philosophical Dialog between Joseph Ratzinger and Jurgen Habermas,” in *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 9:2 (Spring 2006), 17-42.

⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. by J.R. Foste (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1968), 19-21.

⁹ It is important to note that Hosle uses “philosophy of religion” in consonance with the Anglo-American category of the philosophy of religion. As a German-speaking philosopher, he prefers the translation “philosophical theology.” Nevertheless, as I write in English and to follow Hosle’s preference, I use the term “philosophy of religion.”

grounding in secular society. While such an approach is indeed promising, Hosle runs into various difficulties in traditional church doctrines, namely:

1. God, His divinity, and reason,
2. The concept of grace,
3. Ecclesiastical authority, and
4. The uniqueness of Christ's figure.

Hosle was able to evade all these difficulties except (IV): the figure of Christ. Even with his attempts at rationalization, he unwittingly diminishes Christ as a divine figure, thereby losing the very core of Christian teaching. From (IV), Hosle outlines the following problems from traditional Christology:

1. The doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*,
2. The logically contradictory nature of Christ's humanity and divinity, and
3. The irreducibility of Christ's divinity

To overcome these three outlined difficulties posed by orthodox Christology, this paper proposes an interpretation of the figure of Christ from St. Paul, as interpreted by Alain Badiou. Using Badiou's St. Paul, I show: (1) that the Medieval doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* may continuously be maintained since any truth is exclusionary, (2) that within the Christian situation, the contradictory logic of being fully human and fully divine can rationally be maintained, and (3) that the uniqueness of Christ's figure coincides with his Resurrection as a Badiouan event: a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence that takes an other-worldly status through subjective fidelity. Therefore, through Badiou's interpretation of St. Paul, this paper provides the conceptual tools in order to maintain the figure of Christ within Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion.

HOSLE'S RATIONALISM AND ITS PROBLEMS

Adopting a Hegelian ontology, Hosle enumerates at least four difficulties that a rationalist philosophy of religion encounters: (1) rationalism subjects God to reason, thereby reducing the divinity of the former while enhancing the latter's, (2) it cannot take into account grace, (3) it undermines ecclesiastical authority, and (4) it cannot take into account the primacy and uniqueness of the figure of Christ.

First, if God is reason, then God is no different from any other rational being. In a sense, if God is reason, then God becomes identical with the self—a clear impossibility. As the Absolute Other, “God” cannot be the Self against which the other is defined. Hosle is right to debunk this implication as this denies the privilege that reason accords us: that it is through it that we get to know God. In other words, our reason makes us closest to God's image and likeness by being able to contemplate his existence. As Hosle himself puts it, “The self is clearly not divine—but there is something divine in it.”¹⁰ It is also an unnecessary bifurcation between God's nature and reason itself. The objection assumes that God is distinct from reason itself, thereby reducing God's divinity. But if God himself is reason, there is no way that God's divinity is reduced. John the Evangelist himself conflates the God with the Greek notion of reason.¹¹

Secondly, if God is reason, he cannot freely give graces to his creatures who are in need of them. Grace now becomes a necessary dole out from a God who cannot act but in accordance with rational principles. Hosle notices that the underlying assumption of this contention is that God's will is incompatible with his rational nature. In a sense, because God acts *rationally*, he becomes *compelled* to do things in a certain way and therefore grace cannot be freely given by God. Of course, a grace not freely given by God ceases to be grace. But Hosle points out that there is no reason

¹⁰ Vittorio Hosle, *God as Reason: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 11.

¹¹ Jn 1:1.

for us to accept the objection's assumption. As it is unfathomable for us to conceive of a good person committing murder, it is also unfathomable for us to conceive of God to act irrationally. In no way does this mean that God's actions are determined; it is just *natural* for Him to act rationally. Therefore, the graces given by a rational God are still freely given to us.

Thirdly, if God is reason, there is no need for the Magisterium of ecclesiastical authorities. Truly, if God becomes reason, every rational being is now endowed with the capacity of knowing God directly. Hosle, however, points out that when a person finds the truth, she is not satisfied in dwelling in truth alone. One, she needs to have a community of the same belief which will sustain her own belief. Secondly, a community is needed to serve as a gatekeeper, as in a scientific community, to sustain and represent the consensus among believers and sometimes even act as an expert on the claims of the faith. Ultimately, the believer should have the emotional sustenance that the truth needs in order to flourish. Hence, more than an epistemic community, the Church in this conception serves as an ontological grounding for the faithful.

Fourth, if God is reason, then there is no need for Christ. This is perhaps the most difficult to circumvent out of the four contentions against theological rationalism. Traditional Christology does not and cannot allow much of rationalist reinterpretations of Christ. Hosle enumerates these three difficulties that emerge:

1. Coming from the medieval doctrine *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, orthodoxy tends to exclude those who have different conceptions of the figure of Christ. On the basis of reason, such tendency is of course morally unpalatable;
2. It seems logically contradictory to accept that Christ is both fully human and fully divine; and
3. A completely historical reconstruction of Jesus will significantly reduce whatever divine attribute he may have had.

Given these three, Hosle goes on to outline an attempt to overcome these difficulties. He first argues that the Medieval doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is immoral as it stands. To the contemporary liberal temperament, this is, of course, a welcome remark. However, this threatens to dissolve the very idea of founding a church or even just delineating any kind of belief, making it unpalatable to more orthodox Christians. While it may be true that condemning everyone outside your church to hell may be immoral, there are certain boundaries that have to be drawn. For instance, citizenship entails that a citizen enjoys the rights and privileges accorded to her own citizenship; as a Filipino cannot enjoy the perks of an American passport, a non-Christian should also not enjoy the perks accorded to a Christian. Hence, whether we like it or not, the very idea of religiosity is helplessly exclusionary. However, as I would argue below, Hosle's rejection of the doctrine can be justified with proper qualifications.

On the second and third difficulties, as with his unorthodox notion of the Church, Hosle contends that we need to revisit our conceptions of Jesus. This entails the primacy of historicism in determining who Jesus really was. Hence, if historical analysis tells us that Jesus was never divine, we need to accept the primacy of the scientific method. Such an approach, however, will helplessly alter Christianity as we know it; *Christianity* rests on the divinity of Christ as its fundamental doctrine.

Benedict XVI has already outlined the limits of such a historical method,¹² which he says cannot possibly take into account the *lived* expression of faith through which Christians have read and continue to read Scripture. Although Hosle is correct in saying that "the desire of appropriation ... cannot replace historical work,"¹³ it is undeniable that the desire for scientific accuracy cannot replace a hermeneutic of faith. This leads to the second difficulty, i.e. that Hosle's counterargument limits a *rational* reading to a mere *scientific* reading. He agrees with Benedict XVI

¹² Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two: Holy Week*, trans. by Vatican Secretariat of State (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), xvi.

¹³ Hosle, *God as Reason*, 22.

that reason ought not to be reduced to mere scientific reason and yet he contends that we interpret Jesus Christ on the basis of a scientific method alone. Hence, if rationalism ought to take into account the figure of Christ, it needs to take into account the lived faith that informs the faithful's interpretation of the figure of Christ.

In this sense, Fideism seems to be the only way to take into account the figure of Christ: the belief that "faith is in some sense independent of, if not outright adversarial toward, reason."¹⁴ Perhaps it is at this point that reason should give away to faith: a position made most famous by Immanuel Kant.¹⁵ In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he attempted to provide a taxonomy of the tools of reason in understanding the world, including our own understanding of God. In the CPR, he infamously concluded that he had to set aside reason in order to make room for faith.¹⁶ The ultimate object of faith, therefore, can only be allowed by reason once it reaches its limit.

Kant is the first phase of what Benedict XVI calls the *dehellenization* of the faith, i.e. the removal of the Hellenistic roots of Christian faith, with its second phase coming in from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, especially in the work of Adolf von Harnack. Harnack argues that we need to return to the simple message of Jesus as man. Such return makes theology more scientific, therefore justifying theology's place in the university. Noticeably, the advocated method is a purely rational one devoid of faith and any value judgment—an approach characteristic of scientific investigations in the natural sciences. This means that dehellenization does not only devoid reason of faith, but of any value

¹⁴ Richard Amesbury, "Fideism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2022), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/fideism/>>.

¹⁵ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by M. Weigelt and M. Muller (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007).

¹⁶ Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," in *Vatican.va*, par. 9, <https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html>.

judgment at all. This reduction of Jesus to his mere historicity makes him a mere advocate for a certain cause—an interpretation which Benedict XVI rightly rejects.¹⁷

But unlike the Fideist, Benedict XVI himself reiterates the role of reason in faith. The Hellenization of faith at its onset only means that reason is inherent to it and not alien from it. In his Regensburg address, Benedict XVI cites a 14th century dialogue between the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II and an educated Persian man. Manuel II, as a polemic, argues that acting contrary to reason is contrary to God's nature. He reads Act 16:6-10 as "a rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek inquiry."¹⁸ Therefore, if we are to maintain this role of reason in faith, a Fideist approach in this regard may not be the answer. The figure of Christ can and should be maintained within Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion, and this paper will now turn to Badiou's interpretation of St. Paul.

INTERPRETING ST. PAUL

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."¹⁹ These words of St. Paul provide the basis of his theology, and consequently his ontology. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul was primarily concerned with the justification of those who were not initially part of the Old Testament, i.e. those who do not exist in the eyes of the law of Moses. What this entails, of course, is a brand-new conception of what it would mean for one to be saved. In other words, salvation should no longer be about being *born into* one of the twelve tribes, but it is now about *gaining* this salvation.

Following Gal 3:28, it is important to dissolve *prima facie* differences into a more inclusive conception. This means a *de-*

¹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Seek That Which is Above*, trans. by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 66-67.

¹⁸ Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University," par. 5.

¹⁹ Gal 3:28.

substantialization of ontology which severs the essential substance of individuation in order for the distinction to be dissolved. Such de-substantialization leads to what Alain Badiou calls *genericity*, a kind of set (a concept borrowed from Set Theory) which escapes any current mode of determination. Badiou ascribes the following four theses to St. Paul:

1. Human subjectivity is constituted by the Christ-event, i.e. his Resurrection;
2. Truth is subjective;
3. Faith is important as truth is a process and not an illumination; and
4. Truth is indifferent to the state of the situation.

Alain Badiou conceives of truth as a process that begins with an event,²⁰ an unprecedented, undecidable, indiscernible, and unnamable happening in a situation.²¹ It is both an epistemic and metaphysical category, escaping both kinds of determinations. One of the more famous examples of an event is the May 1968 riots in France²² which were never expected to be as historic as it has become. The event also forced everyone to decide whether they were for it or against it, making it a real undecidable and indiscernible. As it unfolded, nobody knew what to call it because no one knew its scale and the possibilities that it gave birth to—this makes the 1968 riots unnamable. It is noteworthy that since the said event entailed undecidability, indiscernibility, and unnameability, it has completed the fourfold process of the “becoming” of a truth for Badiou. Hence, the event of May 1968 has given birth to the truth of emancipatory politics. It is this very notion of truth that Badiou rightly reads in St. Paul.

²⁰ Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, trans. by Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 61.

²¹ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), 211-222.

²² Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, trans. by Norman Madarasz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 84.

Although he recognizes the importance of Christ's Jewish situation, St. Paul practically reduces the Christian faith to a single assertion: that Christ is risen.²³ It is the belief in the Resurrection of Christ—and nothing else—that constitutes Christian subjectivity. Hence, the Resurrection constitutes the event from which the truth of Christianity is based. Such reduction of the Christian narrative to the Resurrection answers the previous problem for the Gentiles: how can they be saved if they were not circumcised? The answer was simple for St. Paul: the historical prophecies to which Christ was the fulfillment was no longer as important if one is a Gentile.²⁴ The important thing is that Christ is risen and that practically denies the substantive exclusivity of salvation.

Such radical nature of Christ's Resurrection garnered controversy, leading to the arrest of St. Paul when he returned to Jerusalem.²⁵ The Jews were primarily scandalized because of Paul's insistence that salvation is now for all. This scandal culminated in the Council of Jerusalem where the early Church settled with the division of the law: the Jews will continue to follow the law while the Gentiles may be incorporated into the fold without following all of the laws, especially circumcision.²⁶ Such resistance on the part of Jews has time and again forced Paul to remind early Christians (especially Jewish Christians) to beware of Jewish prophets who impose Mosaic law to the Gentiles.²⁷ For instance, according to Mosaic Law, bringing uncircumcised men to the temple desecrates the space; it is this kind of laws that is no longer applicable to Christians, as St. Paul insists. Because the Resurrection is an event in the Badiouan sense, it is *generic*—it frees us from the determination of any law. And with their fidelity to the Christ-event, the Gentiles can no longer be subjected to the Mosaic Law.

²³ 1 Cor 15:14-16. Cf. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. by Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 33.

²⁴ Rom 2:25-29.

²⁵ Acts 21: 27-31.

²⁶ Acts 15:1-12, Gal 2:1-10.

²⁷ Gal 6:13.

Genericity is a technical notion which Badiou borrowed from set theory.²⁸ A generic set is constituted within a set using the elements that the larger set has. However, the generic set is something that forced into the situation “on the edge of the void.”²⁹ This means that the situation does not recognize what is in the generic set because it sits on the edge of the void. The generic set, on the other hand, is forced into the situation by the *subject*,³⁰ which constitutes the procedure of *fidelity*. It is therefore essential for the subject to latch on to the event for its subjectivity. At the same time, it is also essential for the event to have a faithful subject. Without a faithful subject, the event will vanish into oblivion because it is the subjective fidelity that sustains it. Hence, the faith of the subject creates the truth that the event began, making truth subjective. This is why for St. Paul, the Christian faith ought to be declared.³¹ And such faith alone provides the justification for one’s salvation.

The Christian subject, therefore, is only justified as long as she remains faithful to the Christ-event (as in thesis 1). Truth also becomes subjective as it is this faith that creates its truth from the Christ-event (as in thesis 2). And because of the mutual dependence of event and fidelity, truth becomes a process and not a mere illumination (as in thesis 3). Lastly, the Council of Jerusalem showed that the Christ-event is indifferent to the Jewish situation, freeing Gentiles from circumcision without sacrificing their own salvation (as in thesis 4).

Ultimately, according to this interpretation, Paulinian ontology is de-substantial—it is devoid of substance on which traditional metaphysics is based. And it is precisely this de-substantial nature that Paulinian ontology is a *rational* ontology, at least according to Badiou.

Badiou adopts the axiom that mathematics is ontology—an axiom because Badiou himself admits that this is a decision, rather than a

²⁸ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 345-361.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-63.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 411-430.

³¹ Rom 10:10.

theorem.³² It is his conviction that mathematics grounds rationality that is in philosophy, owing also to their common origins. Mathematics has long been held as the paradigm of rationality as they hold up on their own without any need of a posteriori data. Its a priori nature shows that unlike any other models of rationality, mathematics alone is in no need of any other basis but itself.³³ Hence, mathematics can very well be what Hosle alludes to when he claims that science “is not the most basic form of rationality, but is grounded in some antecedent form of reason.”³⁴ Therefore, it seems that only in a de-substantial ontology can Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion can thrive, specifically in a Badiouan interpretation of St. Paul.

PAULINIAN ONTOLOGY AS BASIS

Through the de-substantialized ontology that Badiou has outlined, I now attempt to use it as a basis for defending the figure of Christ within Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion.

A de-substantial Paulinian ontology means that Christian subjectivity is neither racial, sexual, or substantial; it is *generic*. Anyone can be a Christian (and therefore can be saved) so long as she is faithful to the Christ-event, leading us to the first problem that Hosle encountered: (1) the Medieval doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. This doctrine is understandably outdated as it is not deemed immoral to condemn other people just because they disagree with us. And yet in any belief system, as I have argued earlier, such exclusion is inevitable, but not without qualifications.

Badiou conceives of fidelity as a process through which the subject determines which elements are linked to the name of the event. This is why

³² Badiou, *Being and Event*, 4-6.

³³ Alain Badiou and Gilles Haeri, *In Praise of Mathematics*, trans. by Susan Spitzer (Cambridge and Malden: Polity, 2016), 32.

³⁴ Hosle, *God as Reason*, 5.

St. Paul is able to dissuade the Galatians from turning “back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits.”³⁵ It is also under the same exclusionary logic that Paul urged Philemon “on the basis of love,”³⁶ to treat the slave Onesimus “no longer as a slave but ... a beloved brother.”³⁷ In his pleading of Philemon to treat his slave as a brother, Paul does *exclude* slavery from the faith to the Christ-event. In other words, “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”³⁸ Since Christ’s resurrection earned everyone their own freedom,³⁹ it makes sense to exclude slavery. But notice that Paul’s urging is out of love, and never through force. Such choice of verbal appeal over violence shows the *rationality* of such Paulinian fidelity. As mathematics provides a common ground for rational discussion, Christianity based on such de-substantialized, mathematical ontology provides the same.

Using the de-substantialized Pauline ontology, therefore, part of the fidelity is the necessary exclusion of those outside of it. Therefore, the ontology successfully grounds the medieval doctrine that Hosle was at pains to destroy. At the same time, Badiou’s St. Paul is able to ground an arena of rationality that allows for rational admonishments and critical discourse. Perhaps the proper question now is the definition of a church. If the *ecclesiam* can mean those outside of the Church as an institution, determined by their faith in the Christ-event, then perhaps Hosle was incorrect in rejecting this doctrine. However, if the *ecclesiam* only refers to an institutional Church that does not respect the genericity of Paulinian ontology, then Hosle is perfectly justified in rejecting such outdated doctrine.

Secondly, (2) the concept that Christ is fully human and fully divine can also be accommodated in such a rational ontological framework. While it is true that this is an obvioyus contradiction, the logic of truth does not

³⁵ Gal 4:9 (NRSV-CE).

³⁶ Phm 1:9 (NRSV-CE).

³⁷ Phm 1:16 (NRSV-CE).

³⁸ Rom 14:23 (NRSV-CE).

³⁹ Gal 5:13.

owe anything to the logic of the situation. Badiou defines truth as a “hole in knowledge.”⁴⁰ Hence, it makes sense that it does not make sense. The full humanity and divinity of Christ, if it were true, should not make sense to the standard way of thinking that the situation endorses. The contradiction should not bother the Christian subject so long as she remains faithful to the Christ-event. Paul himself says that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God.⁴¹ This does not mean that he is denying every wisdom that the world has; this only means that the logic of truth (God's) cannot be determined by the situation's (the world's).

Lastly, (3) the divinity of Christ can be rooted in the eventness of the Christ-event. An event, so to speak, is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. As Levinas characterizes it, it is *thaumaturgical*. The mere intensity of the event-encounter divinizes the event itself into its own transcendence. Although an event reaches a transcendental aspect, it is nevertheless a local creation. Just as the Christ-event is constituted within the Jewish situation, it is still universal as it includes everyone in its call to fidelity. Despite its locality, therefore, it remains generic. It is this very genericity that Christ's nature can be considered divine within the Christian situation.

Insisting on the immanence of the event, however, Badiou's materialism and atheism becomes manifest. It is not surprising, therefore, that he dismisses the Christ-event as an outright fiction, calling Paul an “antiphilosopher.”⁴² Although he goes in great lengths to defend Paul as a thinker of the universal, he thinks that what Paul was talking about is mere fable. The event, for it to be truly an event, had to happen and because Badiou is an atheist, he cannot believe that Christ could have been resurrected, more so to be divine. While Badiou's own objection to the Christ-event can be justified, it obviously cannot be justified *within* the Christian situation which rests on the Christ-event. In this sense, Badiou can properly be situated outside of the situation which bases itself on the

⁴⁰ Badiou, *Being and Event*, 557.

⁴¹ 1 Cor 3:19.

⁴² Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 108.

Resurrection of Christ, thereby affirming St. Paul's assertion that the sole basis of Christian faith is the Resurrection of Christ. And Badiou, not having believed in the existence of the event, cannot and will not recognize the divinity of Christ.

CONCLUSION

Vittorio Hosle, in his attempt to formulate a rationalistic philosophy of religion, runs into the problem of the figure of Christ. With the insistence that God is Reason, Hosle encounters the following problems from traditional Christology:

1. The doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*,
2. The logically contradictory nature of Christ's humanity and divinity, and
3. The irreducibility of Christ's divinity

In answering these, Hosle unwittingly reduced the figure of Christ into a mere historical artifact, thereby altering the uniqueness of the Christian message. In this paper, situated the Badiouan interpretation of St. Paul in Hosle's rationalistic philosophy of religion, allowing it to circumvent these problems and maintain the figure of Christ within the system.

In the Badiouan interpretation, (1) was taken into account with the notion of the event and subjectivity. Because the Christ-event is unrecognizable in the Jewish situation, the event is itself exclusionary. And subjects who remain faithful to the Christ-event are the only ones who are able to sustain and recognize the Christ-event as event, providing more nuance to the Medieval doctrine *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Secondly, (2) was properly answered by the truth's indeterminacy. Because Badiouan truth bores a hole in knowledge, it determines its own rules of consistency, allowing for the contradictory nature of Christ. Lastly, (3) is answered by

the eventness of the Christ-event. As an event is unprecedented, it takes on a quasi-divine attribute as it becomes a nothing and a something in the situation it is in. Therefore, although Christ was a historical figure, Hosle's historicism would only reduce him into a mere historical entity. But by interpreting his Resurrection as the Christ-event, Paul was able to show that Christ is both historical and ahistorical at the same time, making Christ truly divine within the Christian situation.

Therefore, the Badiouan interpretation of St. Paul provided proper reasons for Hosle to circumvent the problems he encountered in taking into account the uniqueness of the figure of Christ. Even though Badiou openly rejects Christ's Resurrection as "fable", it only proves the Paulinian insistence on faith as the proper posture of the subject towards the event he bears witness to.

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