# Inoperativity as Category: Mathematising the Analogous, Habitual, Useful Life in Agamben's *The Kingdom and the Glory, The Signature of All Things* and *The Use of Bodies*

## William Watkin

## Abstract

This paper investigates the frontiers of contemporary thought by considering inoperativity in the later volumes of Agamben's Homo Sacer sequence in relation to Badiou's work on category theory. Specifically, it suggests that elements of Agamben's method, for example analogy and signatures, can be mapped onto Badiou's philosophical category theory. It then moves to suggest that some of the paradoxes that concern Agamben can be resolved by categories, before arguing that a post-differential philosophy of habitual use-of-bodies can best be broached through a reconsideration of habitual use in terms of categorical functions.

*Keywords: inoperativity, habitual use, form-of-life, use of bodies, category, function, Agamben, Badiou*

●

Gorgio Agamben's first sustained engagement with inoperativity is to be found in *The Kingdom and the Glory,* Homo Sacer II, 2 (Agamben, 2007). My own initial reading of the text was concerned primarily with the relation of the signature, Kingdom and its economy, Glory, to the signature Sovereign and its economy of Bare Life, accepting the significant realisation that Homo Sacer is an incomplete political statement without an archaeology of Governance and Glory.[1] At the same time, in my reading of the book in the tenth chapter of *Agamben and Indifference*, I was grappling with the conception of Glory in relation to a highly sophisticated critical archaeology of political theology that included two triune modes of theology, a concomitant double conception of redemption, and the mapping of this complex economy of salvation and glorification onto a secularisation of this structure via our modern political economy in a manner that,

---

[1] When I am using terms as examples of signatures, paradigms or economies I capitalise them, as Agamben often does, to indicate their specific usage in this context.

Corresponding author: William.Watkin@brunel.ac.uk

however, disallowed any kind of chronology or clear causality thanks to the philosophical archaeological method. That said, in that my chapter is subtitled 'The Articulated Inoperativity of Power', my mind was always focused on the term "inoperativity", in particular its relation to the indifferential suspensive modality that I argued typified all of Agamben's mature work. The conclusion of my analysis centred on the closing chapter of *The Kingdom and the Glory,* called simply 'The Archaeology of Glory', which includes a difficult and detailed consideration of inoperativity that Agamben himself draws our attention to in subsequent work on the term (Agamben, 2016: 93), so I will begin by summarising this conclusion on glory as inoperativity, before moving on to the real purpose of this paper, a sustained analysis of what it means to live after inoperativity as dictated by the conclusion of the entire Homo Sacer series in *The Use of Bodies*, specifically by considering the constructive potential of analogical reasoning, and how this reasoning can be extensively mapped onto the philosophical category theory developed in Alain Badiou's *Logics of Worlds* (Badiou, 2009) and my own *Badiou and Communicable Worlds* (Watkin, 2021).

## Inoperativity and of the Economy of Glory

Agamben summarises the thesis of *The Kingdom and the Glory* towards the beginning of the final chapter. Theology is composed, it appears, of a double signatory economy pertaining to the two trinities, economic trinity, which is 'God in his praxis of salvation in which he reveals himself to men' and immanent trinity which 'instead refers to God as he is in himself' (Agamben, 2011: 207). The opposition between these two trinities is articulated into an economic fracture or non-logical dialectic between praxis and politics, to be found in the model of salvation, on the one hand, and ontology and theology, to be found in the model of God's immanence, on the other. The book itself is mostly concerned with the political theology of governance and in particular *oikonomia*. *Oikonomia* is sometimes presented as a signature, and at other times is part of a paradigmatic pairing, but our reading of it is concerned the fact that it is a function of operativity that stands between two dialectically opposed paradigms as the basis of the continued efficacy of a specific signature. We can see immediately how all this fits together when Agamben says: 'Our investigation has tried to reconstruct the way in which these original polarities have, at different levels, developed into the polarities of transcendent order and immanent order, Kingdom and Government, general providence and special providence, which define the

operation of the machine of the divine government of the world' (Agamben, 2011: 207).

Uniquely, I believe, the two signatures in play here, Kingdom and Government, are further articulated into a larger-scale signature, Divine Governance or, if you prefer, Power. So that while we have two book-length studies of the two signatures, *Homo Sacer* for Sovereign power and now *The Kingdom and the Glory* for Governmental power, the book suggests that these two signatures can be further articulated into an economy of common, transcendental power, Sovereignty, and proper immanent power, Governance, as two sides of a single paradigmatic economy of Power as such in the West since the Greeks. Essential to this double articulation is that they form the two parts of the "machine" of divine government so that while *oikonomia* is identified as a paradigmatic part of immanent power and praxis, it is also, of course, an element of every signatory function. We are now able to define the "operativity" of a signature, here the signature of Power as such, as the articulation of two paradigms by an economy that allows the signature which oversees them to persist in its historical and spatial consistency. Operativity refers to a situation in which all of the elements of the metaphysical machine are functioning; inoperativity refers, naturally, to when they are not.

What then of Glory? Agamben goes on to explain that:

> Glory is the place where theology attempts to think the difficult conciliation between immanent trinity and economic trinity, *theologia* and *oikonomia*, being and praxis, God in himself and God for us […]. In glory, economic trinity and immanent trinity, God's praxis of salvation and his being are conjoined and move through each other […]. *The economy glorifies being, as being glorifies the economy*. And only in the mirror of glory do the two trinities appear to be reflected into one another; only in its splendour do being and economy, Kingdom and Government appear to coincide for an instant. (Agamben, 2011: 209)

The point Agamben is making is that God is glory, and yet humans and angels exist to glorify him. Without God there can be no glorification, and yet without subjects to perform the praxis of glorification, the glory of God would remain closed inside him and thus inoperative. Finally, glorification, and its secular equivalents such as acclamation or badges of office, are empty gestures. Glory and acclamation are speech acts which possess no content of their own, rather they activate or make operative the political and theological economy which

founds the Being of transcendence, God's glory before we were even created, and of the founded beings of salvation immanent to this world. Glory in this way is the theological economy which makes the dialectic of power operative, but in itself it contains nothing, it is empty, devoid of meaning or reference. Glory, like all economies, is a functional relation between the plenitude of signatory meaningfulness and paradigmatic meaningfulness, that is itself empty. It is the revelation and realisation of its emptiness that initiates the process of the inoperativity of the glorification machine.

I basically left it there in 2014 with *Agamben and Indifference*. Thanks to Agamben's philosophical archaeology, I broke the metaphysical machine with indifferential suspension and was satisfied. As to what came after, I was at a loss, at least from the perspective of Agamben's work, so I began to look for answers in other, diverse, sometimes contradictory methods, and left my Agamben books on the shelf, vowing never to return to them until I had fully expressed my ideas on indifference and communicability that were born out of reading Agamben's work, but which could not come to fruition through critical, philosophical archaeology alone.

## Nonrelationality as a form of constructive inoperativity[2]

Since I began my work on inoperativity just under a decade ago, two significant publications have dramatically altered my approach to this question. The first is the appearance of the final volume of the entire Homo Sacer project in 2014, *The Use of Bodies,* the second is Alain Badiou's 2006 text *Logics of Worlds*. The significance of *The Use of Bodies* is that the role of inoperativity becomes reconfigured in such a manner as to move it away from metaphysical critique, the question of how to render the metaphysical machine inoperative, and to shift it towards post-metaphysical potential, or the question of how to live outside the dialectical and relational constraints of metaphysics. In the remarkable 'Epilogue: Toward a Theory of Destituent Potential' the mode of living as destituent potential which Agamben has for quite some time called form-of-life without real clarity as to what this would constitute, comes to be redefined in a way that sets it apart from the metaphysics of *being at work*, in place since the Greeks, to a *use of bodies*, initially negatively defined as a mode of enslavement by Aristotle, but

---

[2] By constructive I mean in an entirely non-technical sense of a mode of inoperativity that is not just a mode of metaphysical critique, but which is projective in the sense of suggesting inoperativity can create, construct, establish as well as undermine or suspend.

reconceived by Agamben as a positive means of living in light of inoperativity. As there is a sister piece to this essay that considers *The Use of Bodies* in this light, I will not belabour the definition of destituent impotentiality here except to say it is clear that inoperativity has a central role to play in it (Watkin, forthcoming). The question is, if every relational mode is captured by the dialectical *diairesis* of metaphysics, how can one live *in-relation* in a world where the apparatus of metaphysics has been rendered inoperative? This is a particularly pressing problem as one of the central results of *The Kingdom and the Glory* is that inoperativity has been captured by theology as regards the idea of redemption into a perpetual Sabbatism. In addition to which, inoperativity as empty signifier of power, being able to see the machine is both still and vacuous or, lacking internal essence together with efficacious and functional external relations, is a negative component of the inoperativity of power. So, one cannot live in a state of glorious inoperativity and escape the theology of power as Agamben wishes.

If suspensive inoperativity alone cannot free us from metaphysical signatures because, like difference, inaction is a constituent part of the functioning of the system, at the same time it is clear in *The Use of Bodies* that inoperativity also has a constructive role to play, especially when it comes to the discussion of the significance of nonrelational relationality in the book's final pages.[3] For example, Agamben says:

> Let us define relation as what constitutes its elements by presupposing them, together, as unrelated. Thus for example, in the couples living being/language, constituent power/constituted power, bare life/law, it is evident that the two elements are always mutually defined and constituted through their oppositional relation, and as such, they cannot pre-exist it; and yet the relation that unites them, presupposes them as unrelated. What we have defined in the course of this study as the ban is the link, at once attractive and repulsive, that links the two poles of sovereign exception. (Agamben, 2007: 272)

---

[3] I use the term "nonrelational relationality" here because Agamben uses "nonrelation", as does Badiou, and my own work excavates the notion that "relation" is a construct having multiple senses and considers this in connection with indifferential nonrelational relation. Particularly here, for Agamben, relation is a construct of metaphysics, but he concedes that "contact" is another mode of seeing what we would call "relation". Insofar as relation is a widely used term in mathematics, logic and philosophy, where a much broader sense of the term obtains than that which one finds in the dialectic of identity and difference, I retain it and explain this using nonrelation.

The next paragraph continues with the theme of nonrelational contact in a manner that is profound, complex and seemingly paradoxical. Agamben proposes that, '[w]e call a potential destituent that is capable of always deposing ontological-political relations in order to cause a contact […] to appear between their relations' (Agamben, 2007: 272). It may seem that a nonrelationality of this order cannot be termed a 'contact'. If one suspends relationality as such, not just the ontico-ontological or constituent-constituted relation but relation qua relation, surely one appears to be calling for a total lack of contact. Non-relationality of the void in Badiou for example is a situation such that relationality of any order cannot be established because the void is absolutely in-different, it is not part of the context called relational differentiation.[4] Is Agamben arguing the same here? It appears not. Rather:

> Where a relation is rendered destitute and interrupted, its elements are in this sense in contact, because the absence of every relation is exhibited between them. Thus, at the point where a destituent potential exhibits the nullity of the bond that pretended to hold them together, bare life and sovereign power, anomie and *nomos*, constituent power and constituted power are shown to be in contact without any relation […]. Here the proximity between destituent potential and […] 'inoperativity' appears clearly. In both, what is in question is the capacity to deactivate something and render it inoperative […] without simply destroying it, but by liberating the potentials that have remained inactive in it in order to allow a different use of them. (Agamben, 2007: 272–3)

These are not only exceptionally important statements for any student of inoperativity, they come to define, for me at least, the future of Agamben studies and more widely 21st century philosophy as a whole. Let me, therefore, try to break these statements down a little for the reader. A human who lives out their life as a form-of-life is one that commits to a life of means without ends. To do so they have to be liberated from the mode of relation that captures and defines their

---

[4] In my work, I differentiate between radical non-relationality, such as the void or the event, which does not even enter into the language of relation, and indifferential nonrelation, where the metaphysics of relation, say in terms of essence and properties, is suspended due to multiples being without essence and quality neutral. As you can see, I write them differently.

subjectivity in terms of their status as beings at work. We shall call this relationality 'metaphysics'. An element of metaphysics is the intention to convince you that relation qua relation can only be determined as regards *diairesis*, and only ordered as regards a tripartite hierarchical and founded machine of operations. To live without relation means to live in an anarchic, anomic state which is, of course, part of metaphysics. The essential task of metaphysics is to construct a certain idea of relationality that determines the potential of the human as regards life as such and work, as always already divided, dialectical and predetermined. Meaning that in order to speak of a mode of relation as "together, as unrelated" becomes impossibly disordered.

Agamben then argues for another mode of relation which he calls "contact" here, "unrelation" elsewhere and which more generally is encompassed by the term 'analogy'. Analogy means to think of one thing in terms of another in such a way that one is allowed to assign them a common function, which however has nothing to do with their essence or their quality. This is a functional relationality defined by Agamben as "contact without any relation" which would first allow one to think of anomie without any dialectical relation to *nomos*, and then to think of anomie, not on its own, but relationally with respect to any other object or term, determined by your liveability or means, without any predetermined ends. This is the aim of Homo Sacer in its entirety. You can see embedded in it my original thesis, to live as a body in relation to other bodies in a manner that indifferentially suspends the dialectical dictates of how we must live relationally thanks to those controlling signatures. This is the first function of inoperativity. But the nature of the second demand is less clear, the demand that we live a kind of constructive inoperativity, where we don't just suspend relations, anomie without any relation, but resume a new logic of nonrelational relationality, anomie in relation to anything else, determined by the need of the subject to use those two bodies together. This second sense of inoperativity remains complex and obscure, so let's return to Agamben's comments and see how they allow us to understand the second kind of inoperativity with a degree of clarity. I will proceed schematically, breaking up the complex final couple of pages of the book, and the whole Homo Sacer project, into subsections that I will then gloss.

## The Six Steps Towards Living the Form-of-life qua Nonrelational Inoperativity

> All living beings are in a form of life, but not all are (or not all are always) form-of-life. At the point where form-of-life is constituted, it renders destitute and inoperative all singular forms of life. (Agamben, 2016: 277)

§1 A form-of-life is a means by which a subject lives in a nonrelational manner. Instead of acquiescing to the metaphysics of a Being at work, they live according to the use of bodies, starting with the use of their own body. When a subject uses her body, then the singular ideas of forms of life, or how we live now, become inoperative because the metaphysical, dialectical diairesis located within the hierarchical triumvirate of signature, paradigm and arche, is suspended. Agamben, throughout the text, first of all gives examples of the use of bodies, slavery being perhaps the most powerful, and then he calls for a habitual use of bodies or *hexis*, meaning that you begin in contemplation by making use of your body as an object of a thought that is not dialectical and then over time habitually use your body in this nonrelational manner, such that the metaphysics of being is permanently suspended.

> It is only in living a life that it constitutes itself as a form-of-life, as the inoperativity immanent in every life. (Agamben, 2016: 277)

§2 Inoperativity overtakes potential in Agamben's work as a defining moment of anthropogenesis. Humans are not most fundamentally possessed of impotential, which would mean the possession of a capacity that they choose not to use, but rather of inoperativity, they use a body in a nonrelational manner that therefore escapes both biological and metaphysical determination. Life is then defined as the immanence of inoperativity, or the ability to live life in terms of its pure liveability, which implies the use of one's body in nondeterminate and yet consistent ways.

> The constitution of a form-of-life coincides, that is to say, with the destitution of the social and biological conditions into which it finds itself thrown. (Agamben, 2016: 277)

§3 As we have just said, the human is able to act outside the dictates of its biological determination, but the development of culture meant that a much more powerful determining factor than evolution came to capture our actions: that of metaphysics. So the idea of human life qua potential or impotential was, tragically, co-opted by metaphysics as its founding modality of conceptual coercion. We were, it appears, liberated from our instinctual drives, only to be more effectively incarcerated by our human concepts. In this sense, inoperativity is the third age of the human: to live neither by the dictates of our genes nor by our dialectics means that true human potential is to live out a double non-determination, free from replication and free from relation.[5]

> Inoperativity is not another work that suddenly arrives and works to deactivate and depose them: it coincides completely and constitutively with their destitution, with living a life. (Agamben, 2016: 277)

§4 For inoperativity to be constructive and not just suspensive, it needs to escape the circumlocution of the idea of the inoperativity of inoperativity or the indifference of indifference that I excavated with in *The Kingdom and the Glory* (Watkin, 2015: 232–7). This means that there are basically two forms of inoperativity. The first involves suspending the economy of metaphysical relation, while the second is an inoperative yet operational modality of relation defined by the use of bodies, rather than the being at work. Work then is reconstituted as functional use, in a manner that negates the metaphysics of work or praxis which has defined human ethics since the Greeks (Agamben, 2016: 3–23). Rather than a sovereign subject using material to produce works which define their subjective superiority to the point that another human, a slave, can be defined as a piece of equipment or part of the master's body, the new subject simply uses bodies when needed, but in doing so is always first and foremost using their own body as object so as to depose themselves from the subjective sovereign position.

> [F]orm-of-life, the properly human life is the one that, by rendering inoperative the specific works and functions of the living being, causes them to idle, so to speak, and in this way opens them up to possibility (Agamben, 2016: 277–8).

---

[5] Dawkins famously notes in *The Selfish Gene* that genes are really only a biologically embodied form of a greater principle that both genes and cultural memes adhere to, namely the "replicator principle".

§5 To idle suggests indifferential suspension, and also seems to draw us back to the theology of acedia, inaction, Sabbatism and so on. Here, however, what we see is that inoperative works are not suspended or idle, but rather render idle the economy of metaphysical works, for the express purpose of allowing us to explore a new kind of non-relational relationality between use and body. Only when metaphysics is suspended can a constructive inoperativity develop with inoperativity, like non-relation, meaning a mode of work that is not defined by metaphysical operativity and a mode of relation that is not determined by metaphysical relationality.

> Contemplation and inoperativity are in this sense the metaphysical operators of anthropogenesis. (Agamben, 2016: 278)

§6 The true impotentiality of the human being is not to possess a capacity and not use it, but to actively and habitually pursue an activity that is self-related: how can I use my own body in a desubjectivated, non-metaphysical fashion and one that is outward. How can I then ethically extend this use of my body to encompass the manner in which my body utilises, but does not capture, dominate, litigate or indeed use up, other bodies?

What this form of unique reasoning results in is a modality of politics and art, with poetry being Agamben's principal example of inoperativity both here and in *The Kingdom and the Glory,* (Agamben, 2016: 245–8) defined not as tasks, and certainly not as works, but rather as the dimension in which the metaphysics of works, conceived as the production of beings at work, 'are deactivated and contemplated as such in order to liberate the inoperative that has remained imprisoned in them' (Agamben, 2016: 278). This then is the purpose of Homo Sacer as a whole: first to render inoperative the various signatures of our control — Sovereignty, Life, Time, Poverty, Office, Language, Government, Body, Power — in order then to propose a means by which we can constructively proceed into an indifferentiated and inoperative form-of-life that is not inactive, but which acts in a manner that exceeds the economic operativity of the metaphysical machine, or is never even captured by it. With this promise now in hand, it is with excitement and anticipation that you turn the page to see what the details of this new form of lived inoperativity would resemble, only to find, crushingly, an extensive bibliography. Not only is the book at an end, but the entire project is concluded, and the reader is no closer to an understanding of how to live their life as a mode of contemplative, habitual, inoperative destituent

potential, beyond living as a classical slave or a mediaeval monk, which are neither particularly attractive nor indeed feasible options.

## Analogy *qua* Category

At a certain point in *The Kingdom and the Glory,* Agamben notes what appear to be two contradictory conceptions of the function of the *oikonomia.* This leads him to infer that *oikonomia* has two contradictory meanings for Christian theology — a clear indicator, he says, of the presence of a signature. First, economy is the organisation of God's unity in relation to the trinity, and secondly, economy signifies "the historical dispensation of salvation". In truth, the signature *oikonomia* does not have two meanings, but rather represents 'the attempt to articulate in a single semantic sphere […] a series of levels whose reconciliation appeared problematic: non-involvement in the world and government of the world; unity in being and plurality of actions; ontology and history' (Agamben, 2007: 51). The role of the economy here is to resolve the specific theological aporia of God as both one and many, founding and founded. That Agamben says that the signature in play here is marked by two contradictory meanings is important in that every signature, meaningless in itself, all the same composes two meanings, encased in paradigms which are meaningful, which it places together so that one can found and the other be founded. Thus contradiction is the mark of the signature and the cause of its collapse, but only if a signature is described using classical or syllogistic logic.

It is not that signatures have two meanings that contradict each other, but rather that they possess a single referential semantic function or sphere, here economy, which allows them to put together opposing terms such that the impossibility of the system of one *and* many, transcendental *and* immanent, identity *and* difference, power *and* governmentality, is made possible by the economy looking to solve the problem found on one side by means of a solution located on the other side and vice versa. The result is that solution A not only contradicts solution B, but when this contradiction occurs, problem A looks for the solution to this contradiction in B. Finding solution A in problem B, however, puts problem B in contradiction with itself, and it searches for solution B in problem A. B finds its solution in A, only at the expense of making A return to contradiction and so on, seemingly endlessly. Instead of this being a contradiction indicative of the modality of traditional logic however, what we learn in *The Kingdom and the Glory* is that the two elements in play operate according to a

paradigmatic ana-logic, such that the two levels 'do not contradict themselves, but they are correlated and become fully intelligible only in their functional relation. That is to say, they constitute the two sides of a single divine *oikonomia*, in which ontology and pragmatics […] refer back to each other for the solution of their aporias' (Agamben, 2007: 51). Which is another way of saying that the circular illogicality of the structure is itself what makes it intelligible, operative, communicable, and effective, thanks not to traditional logic but to analogical reasoning.

Earlier in the text, for example, speaking of how a signature like *oikonomia* can transform itself through time, space and culture and yet retain consistency, Agamben says that with *oikonomia,* in its various different manifestations in different discursive formations, there is not a transformation of the sense of the word, *'but rather a gradual analogical extension of its denotation'* (Agamben, 2007: 20), and further that it is the relative stability of the sense of the word that allows for its extension into these new areas of denotation. The modality of extension here cannot be semantico-epistemic, as in the extensional-intensional pairing you find in Frege for example, because the two fields in question have nothing in common and signatures are content neutral. Thus the normative analytical mode of the extension of a concept over truth objects in the world cannot be applied. This is because the movement of knowledge is not transmitted in terms of content, but as regards the analogical structuration of source and target, which suggests that what we are looking at here is a modality where the analogical reach of a term extends into worlds (semantic spheres), and in so doing also transforms these worlds in such a way as to conform to its truth values. It is, in this sense, something akin to a coercive extensionalism, which I believe is a good definition of the operativity of signatures through paradigms.

Ana-logic is referenced several times in the book and has been a core component of Agamben's thought for decades, especially in its suggestion of a mode of thinking something that stands to one side. This is exemplified in, among other places, his comments on the quality of the halo (Agamben, 1993: 53–8). It reaches full expression, however, when he engages properly with his most immediate source for analogical reasoning, Melandri's *La linea e il circolo*, in *The Signature of All Things*, in particular in those crucial early pages where he explains the para-digm. Agamben begins his discourse on analogy by summarising Melandri's definition:

> Against the drastic alternative 'A or B', which excludes the third, analogy imposes its *tertium datur*, its stubborn 'neither A nor B'. In other

words, analogy intervenes in the dichotomies of logic (particular/universal; form/content; lawfulness/exemplarity; and so on) not to take them up into a higher synthesis but to transform them into a force field traversed by polar tensions, where […] their substantial identities evaporate. (Agamben, 2009: 20)

Throughout *The Kingdom and the Glory* and *The Use of Bodies* Agamben occasionally, but pointedly, suggests that analogy is a mode of co-relational reasoning wherein the dialectic of relation, part and whole, or inside and outside is deactivated so that one can arrive at a nonrelational relation. This nonrelational relation is a mode of relationality that escapes the hierarchical dialectic of common and proper that determines how paradigms function as part of the economy of the signature. While Agamben looks to Melandri's philosophy of analogy in this instance, we would argue that there is a much more accessible, consistent, communicable, and widely transmissible form of analogical reasoning to hand which better defines analogy, and prepares it for constructive inoperativity. I am referring to the mathematics of functional relation called category theory, explained in great depth by Alain Badiou in *Logics of Worlds* and *Mathematics of the Transcendental*, and further developed in my own *Badiou and Communicable Worlds*, a theory which is constructed consistently as a mode of nonrelational relationality. Leaving Melandri literally to one side here, then, for the rest of this paper we are going to speak of his analogical reasoning as an example of the wider language of philosophical category theory.

According to Badiou categories are nothing other than the topological mapping of the consistency of the function of relation. In category theory, the basic relation is determined by mapping a function from a source to a target. The function between source and target is what relates the two objects by simply saying A is related to B because A performs this function on B, or better A and B form a functional pairing due to this function. This relation of function that runs between A and B is generally called an 'analogy'. In terms of categorical functions, the relation between A and B due to function $f$ amounts to the two objects' being related not as a result of elements which they share in common but because something that A does is the same as something that B does. In the classic example of analogical reasoning, wink:eye = smile:mouth, one can say that eye as A and smile as B are related due to the function [expression] or $f$.

According to Melandri, analogy means negating the dialectical reasoning intrinsic in the A or B contradictory pairing, which is an ideal proposition for the indifferential suspension of oppositional, contradictory logic. But it does not seem

to take us any further than suspension. In contrast, with categories one never enters into the classical logic of contradiction, not least because, as Badiou's work shows, categories are logics in the plural. Specifically, they utilise some classical logic, and some intuitionist logic.

In intuitionist logic, the either A or B relational coupling is suspended by the refusal to accept the excluded middle, for example. In intuitionist logic, not-A cannot be negated such that not-not-A = A, unless you can visually show this using topological diagrams. What this does is to break the co-dependency of the A—B relation, such that A≠B is not the same as saying A is true and B is false, or that B is the contradiction of A. For example, the nonrelationality of A and B can, in category theory, be a form of relationality where both relate to C, the categorical world, but never to each other. These are called POSets.

More significantly, the relation between A and B is rarely contradictory but a degree of relation such that A is not the same as B but A relates to B, and thus shares similarity with B, *to some degree*. Categories, then, are also examples of modal logics. Thus, instead of A = B or A ≠ B, in category theory you would write B●A or B is affected functionally by A. On this reading, after Melandri, categorical analogy, which maps a functional analogy from A to B, does not have to conform to the contradictory relation; indeed, for nearly every relation, it is instead defined by an intuitionist degree of relation. If A is negated, its negation is not falsity, which means that, if you negate its falsity, you do not get back to truth. Indeed, categories have their own unique kind of negation as a result of this, called the 'reverse'. There is, therefore, no fundamental link between A and B, or truth and falsehood. Rather, A has a functional relation to B of degree, not of absolute relation, such that the functional relation between two objects can be suspended, without the whole edifice of contradiction collapsing: indeed, categories still make extensive use of classical logic in terms of their foundation on basic axioms of set theory. This being the case, category rather than analogy appears the more fruitful potential of a constructive inoperativity.

I appreciate that this is a rather bold proposition. Therefore, in order to justify it, I propose systematically to map Agamben's comments on analogy onto category theory. Before I do that however, it may be useful to define categories and their basic operations.

A category is nothing other than the mathematics of meta-structural relations between objects. These objects can be conceptual constructions. The central philosophical question we glean from categories is not to think of one thing in terms of another as regards properties they share in common in relation to a

being which does not share this property, but rather to think of one thing in terms of how it acts on another, and how this functional relation defines worlds such as they are and differentiates beings not in terms of *what* they are, but in terms of what they do to each other.

Categories then formalise the basic existential function of all beings in all worlds, a function which we shall call "relation", but which could also be termed the "use of bodies". Categories therefore concern the fundamental motivation for all kinds of thought: the means by which units are bound together into a larger unit in which all participate, and other units with which they share little or nothing in common, but which have something in common with that shared-in-common larger unit. All considered from the perspective of how one unit is tied to another not in terms of what they are or what they are like, but what one does to another, without recourse to the architecture of dialectical metaphysics. On the surface this might sound like another way of describing sets, but sets allow us to know what things are, by breaking them apart to see what they are composed of, whereas categories allow us to know what things do, by looking at the relations between them, leaving the object as such untouched, fully composed, devoid of analysis.

A "category" is a transcendental function located in the least-largest position above all of its components. As we shall see later, they are another form of signature. These smaller components are called "diagrams". As we shall see later, diagrams are a kind of paradigmatic pairing. The transcendentally located category oversees the degrees of relationality between the objects in its line of sight, given to it by its position of slight superiority. A category is defined solely by being the transcendental least-largest position from which all diagrams of a world can be related to by at least two objects: the object in relation to itself and the category the object is included in.

Being visible is a function, the fundamental function: Badiou calls it universal exposition. If you can be "seen" in a world, this asserts that you are held in a functional relation with at least one other object, such that this larger object acts on you with a basic existential operation: as a being, you exist, to some degree of intensity, in this world, relationally speaking. A category structures relations, between the diagrams it oversees, and between itself and all its diagrams. It organises relation by showing it in diagrams of visibility. What a thing actually is, and how it acts on another thing, without changing its own "essence" or that of the thing it is dominating, while being able to register that the existence of these two so-called "things" is entirely dependent on what a thing does, not what it is, is the quintessence of the philosophy of categories and, I contend, of analogy.

Most definitions of a category are a disappointment insofar as they comprise simply listing or drawing what a category consists of, and Badiou's definition in *Mathematics of the Transcendental* is similarly descriptive and minimal:

> *A category consists of objects and arrows, provided that, given two arrows: there always exists the composite of these two arrows; this composition is associative; and for every object we have an identity arrow, which is neutral in any composition in which it operates.* (Badiou, 2014: 20)

If categories are hard to define, but easier to simply describe, this at least means that they benefit from being a mode of visually mapping functions across different domains, so if you wish you can see an actual picture of a category when you struggle to picture it in your head. Here, for example, is the classic diagram of a commutative triangle, a central function in nearly all categorical worlds:
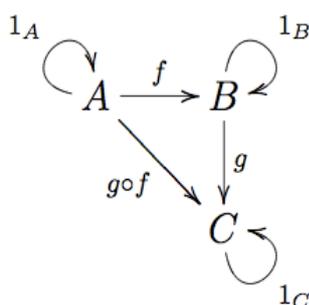


We can map this diagram onto Badiou's rather bland definition. We have our objects, $A$, $B$ and $C$, and the arrows that travel between them: $A \rightarrow B$, $B \rightarrow C$, and $A \rightarrow C$. These are commonly called "morphisms". We also have a composite arrow. The arrow from A to C is functionally the same as the combined arrows from $A$ to $B$ and $B$ to $C$ making the arrow combination $A$ to $B$ to $C$ a composite or composable. It is composed of more than one function, here written $f$ and $g$, and this composition of functions is, functionally, the same as the function that runs directly from $A$ to $C$, called $g \bullet f$. In category theory notation you read from right to left. Thus, we can say that the line between $A$ and $C$ is composed of the two functions that exist between $A$ and $B$ and $B$ and $C$, so that the two directional choices are functionally the same. This is called a 'commutative diagram', commutative meaning that you can swap the two sides of an equation and get the same result. For example, $A \rightarrow C = A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$, or here $C \bullet B \bullet A = C \bullet A$.

Thinking some more about Badiou's definition we can also say of this composite of functions that it is associative, which means that the directionality

from *A* through *B* to *C* has to be preserved, in that order, although you have no need to consider this particular composite function in any specific order. For example, you can look at the composite function A to B to C first and then look at *A* to *C*, or look at *A* to *C* first if you wish. But when you choose to look at *A* through *B* to *C*, then that local order has to be maintained. This is important as the function *A* to *C* is not the same as the function *C* to *A*, if such a function exists. If two sets of functions can be said to be the same and are thus placed on either side of an equation, then one can replace the other but only if the direction and order of the functions is preserved. Categorical functions are asymmetric in their composition — direction matters.

Given the dynamic between the symmetry of commutation, each side of the equation being the same, and the associative asymmetry of the side in question, the order in which you move through its functions matters, and motivates a certain philosophical conception of categories. Commutation captures the symmetry of relation between two objects, and that which they share in common is equivalent, irrespective of whether you compare A to C or A to B to C. Association captures the associative asymmetry of functions 'within' the relative compositions of A and B. This is important because commutation conforms to classical, contradictory logic, while association treats the category by being intuitive. For example, while classically we might say $C \bullet B \bullet A = C \bullet A$ in our triangle, we cannot say that $\neg\neg(C \bullet B \bullet A) = C \bullet A$, because while the two sides are functionally the same, they are not functionally equivalent: for example, $C \bullet B \bullet A$ has twice the number of functional relations as $C \bullet A$. You can make them equivalent, but you cannot assume equivalence.

Looking at the diagram again, we can say that each of the objects here has to have a functional relation with itself represented by the self-enclosed or reflexive arrow attached to each object. This gives us the basic sense of the duality of all relational functions in a world. Each object in the world has to relate to itself: it exists in a world to a certain degree of intensity, and it has to relate to the categorical world itself. The first relation is ontological, in the sense that it relates to the question as to why there is something rather than nothing; while the second is categorical, in the sense that if there is something, it exists in this world by relating to at least one other thing: the world itself.

An important stipulation in Badiou's work states that when a multiple appears in a categorical world as an object, the existence of the object is determined by the degree of relation of a multiple to itself: for example, how intensely an anarchist appears *qua* anarchist in a demonstration, and to other

appearing multiples. Thus, no multiple appears in full in categories. A second stipulation lays down that, if two multiples appear with identical relations with identical objects of identical intensity, then they are the same object, at the level of appearance, even if they differ ontologically. What this means is that their diagrams of analogy are identical. Finally, just because two objects are bound together by a functional relation, does not mean that they cannot also share other kinds of relations with other objects. Each of these relations is a new functional arrow or morphism. These relations can be contradictory in a classical sense, as long as they can be mapped functionally in a categorical sense.

Let us recap. Categories are analogical because they map objects across two objects, A and C here, in such a way that the structural composition of the two objects remains untouched. Categories never break objects open. They are non-ontological and thus non-dialectical, because they are not concerned with what two objects are, but with analogies between them due to a single functional mapping of one onto another: wink is to eye as smile is to mouth according to the function of expression. Any object can be mapped functionally onto another if they share some fundamentals of structure in common, poetry being a prime example of this. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" means "shall I map the common functions between the lover and a summer's day, loveliness and temperateness, onto a degree of relation, the lover being superior or "more". If two objects are mapped functionally in an identical fashion, in terms of how they appear in this world, they are identical. Again, this breaks with ontology in that essence is irrelevant because what the object is does not pertain to the functional praxology of categories. The effect of commutative symmetry therefore is to remove objects from essence and property, and define them entirely by how they are being used here in this analogical relation.

That said, as we saw, categories also have an element of associative asymmetry. Just because wink is to eye as smile is to mouth, it is not the case that mouth is to smile as eye is to wink. The first analogy was of [expression], the second, which would need a new diagram, is [host of expression]. This is why if I define wink as A, and not-A as smile, then first we can see that not-A does not negate A, it just isn't A, and not-not-A does not return us to wink. What this shows is that categories are not linear pairings in a dialectical zone of tension, but tabular groupings, and if you want to negate something then you do not go back to the opposite, the oscillating dynamic of the *oikonomia*, but forward and up, to a new set of diagrammatical relations. Now we can see that a difference in categories may not be equated analogically with opposition or indeed relation. Two different objects can be said to be identical if they share the same function, while their

difference can be preserved in the composable and associative divergence between A to C and A to C via B. Showing us that as regards relational identity and difference, identity is not ontological but functional, and functional difference is defined by the composable asymmetry of associative symmetries. Whatever else one needs to say here, which would potentially comprise an immense study, two facts are clear. First, categories are a fully worked-out system of analogy that exceeds Melandri's work, and second, categorical relation does not succumb to the problems of dialectics or contradiction. This means that our argument remains robust: categories are the formalisation of the analogical mode of reasoning that in some way 'succeeds' the metaphysics of opposition that occurs after its inoperativity.

## Analogous Functional Mapping of Category Theory onto Agamben via Melandri: (A●M●C)

Having given a thumb-nail sketch of categories let's try to map them analogically onto Agamben's conception of analogy drawn in part from Melandri. His first reading of analogy involved the assertion that the ordered pair in question is not then synthesised into a single unit. What this does is to intervene in logic at the dichotomous level. It implies that it is not the pairing that is at issue when it comes to metaphysics, but the nature of their ordering and the logical assumption of Aristotelian syllogism means that the two parts can be fused together or held permanently apart. What Agamben's suspension is looking for are states of contact where separation is maintained, but wherein the contact is neither synthetic/dialectic nor analytic. According to him, such states form a force-field of provocative irresolution which, in essence, can render metaphysics inoperative. His specific concern is the means by which the substance of the two terms is removed. I am taking this to be a standard philosophical sense of the term as unchanging substrata or being as substance. He is correct that the analogical mode, what we will call the "categorical mode", is able to relate two objects together irrespective of their substance, their ontological multiplicity, meaning in this sense that all such objects of analogy are substance-indifferent. What seems to be of particular concern here is not so much what the objects "are" in an ontological sense, but how the relation between two elements determines the function of metaphysics in such areas as part/whole, inside/outside…

Following on from this, Agamben notes: 'The analogical third is attested here above all through the disidentification and neutralisation of the first two,

which now become indiscernible. The third is this indiscernibility' (Agamben, 2009, p.23). Analogy, categorisation, has to be pitted against the conception of the two that is presented in Western thought. Thus, the first function of analogy is disidentification. What this proposes is that two terms can be placed in relational contact without any mode of identity. Their relationality is their being in relation: it is in this sense a matter of topology. Two objects are placed in relation according to a space.

Agamben assumes in his work that this relation has to be a mode of contact, but I think he misconstrues the various modes of relation that do not depend on contact and its implication of touching. For example, when speaking of a category, the two things related can be seen from the same position, but this does not imply that they 'touch' each other in any way. The second function is neutralisation. They are rendered content-indifferent. The third term is the indiscernibility between the two. Thus, indiscernibility is here read as the nonrelational analogy between two units. On our reading the category would be this indiscernibility.

Agamben now develops his ideas on analogy in relation to Plato's work on recollection as a paradigm for knowledge, where the sensible is placed in nonsensible relation with itself. He goes on to conclude that,

> the paradigm is not a matter of corroborating a certain sensible likeness but of producing it by means of an operation. For this reason, the paradigm is never already given, but is generated and produced [...] by 'placing alongside'. (Agamben, 2009: 23)

Let us dwell on the functions he ascribes to the paradigm here. The first is that the paradigm cannot be captured by the terms of our tradition because it is a functional relation and not an actual thing with properties. Paradigm on this reading is functional relation. The second issue is that a paradigm is a derived element. Paradigms are the result of the process of relational functions: they are indeed relational functions. Paradigms are content-neutral. They are functions, not beings in the traditional sense. Bare life is not a state, but a modality of functional relation within the conceptual signature "Life". The final point is more confusing. The para- here is not alongside but rather between. A paradigm is a function between two objects. The para- element however is retained in the commutative triangle of association. Here then para- means one of two ways to travel functionally from A to C, directly, in which case the functions are synthesised; or indirectly, in which case they are analysed. This means that the

para-/ana- pairing in Agamben is captured by perhaps the most philosophically challenging and fruitful aspect of categorical relation: the oscillation between symmetrical commutation and asymmetric association, a result I would argue of profound significance for future study.

Agamben closes his all-too-brief engagement with analogy by explaining:

> The paradigmatic relation does not merely occur between sensible objects or between these objects and a general rule; it occurs instead between a singularity (which thus becomes a paradigm) and its exposition (its intelligibility). (Agamben, 2009: 23)

If we take a paradigm as a functional relation between a singularity and its exposition, we can see here in the choice of words alone that paradigm is just another name for any functional relation between two objects of a category. Here, however, Agamben is speaking of a paradigm's capacity for being both exemplary, singular and categorical, and exposed. This is perhaps the most pertinent of all the examples for this describes perfectly the standard function of the internal stability of relations between all objects in a world, or under the auspices of a very large category or signature. In category theory, every object is both exposed, which is to say, seen by the transcendentally placed category, and exemplary, by being allowed to occupy a local position of exposition with respect to the other objects it relates to with a greater degree of intensity. This function is called the "envelope" and explains how larger objects capture smaller ones due to relational degrees of intensity of relation to a third. Envelopes are, basically, localised mini-categories meaning that at any time, any object can be exposed by an exemplary object above, and expose an exemplary object below. This is best described by the relation of dependency. If B is bigger than A, then it is said that B has all of A in it plus one element. As such, B depends on A, it takes all of A on trust, and just adds one to it. This explains precisely what to Agamben appears a contradiction: that a member of a set can also furnish the name of the set. From the perspective of classical logic, metaphysics, and analytical logic, it cannot be, as demonstrated by Russell's paradox and Gödel's incompleteness theorems, but from within category theory, it can, thanks to envelopes and dependency relations.

If we summarise the components of the paradigm, remarkably we see that they map perfectly onto the relationally ordered pairs of categories.

Agamben says the following in respect of paradigms:

1. They form a tertiary relation that exceeds the either/or dichotomy of classical logic and contradiction.
2. Hierarchy of relation is replaced by a force field of relation.
3. This force field negates substantial identity.
4. The analogical third = the indiscernibility of the relational pairing due to a process of disidentification.
5. A paradigm is never presented but always produced.
6. This production is determined by a topology and not by substance.
7. As such when a paradigm is produced, it is granted its singularity qua appearance due to its being exposed, a seeming paradox.

Let is now take the same seven operations and present them in terms of category theory:

1. Categories concern a tertiary functional relation between an ordered-pair of objects which is not determined by classical interdictions on contradiction: $\geq$
2. The force field of relation is the function: $B \bullet A$
3. The function replaces the essence of a being appearing due to qualities: essence is now function.
4. The relation between two objects is disidentified: it is not captured by the metaphysical dialectic of identity and difference.
5. A categorical relation is the result of the product of a function: relation is a function.
6. A categorical relation is determined by the topology of relation represented by the commutative triangle: relations are tabular, symmetrical, composable, and associative.
7. A paradigmatic object stands in for, is exemplary of, all the objects it envelops which depend on it: enveloping and dependency.

What we have performed here is in fact a categorical functional mapping between Melandri's analogy, Agamben's paradigm, and Badiou's presentation of category theory. We have mapped the three dissimilar discursive objects onto each other by only focusing on their functional analogies. This mode of mapping different languages onto each other at a meta-functional level is, in fact, the main purpose of category theory, which is able to map differing modes of mathematics onto the same functional language. It is also, remarkably, the single purpose of Agamben's conception of signatures.

## Philosophical Archaeology as Category Theory

What we are arguing is that inoperativity is category theory. This argument is based on three pieces of evidence, the first being that the post-contradictory logic of destituent potential is one of nonrelational relationality that Agamben calls "analogy" and which we are proposing is another way of saying "category". Categories map functional relations between objects that exceed the dialectical, hierarchical and disputative reasoning of metaphysics. Our second piece of evidence is that Agamben's philosophical archaeology is clearly categorical. As we saw, a category is composed of commutative triangles of relation. At the apex sits the category itself, which has a transcendental function but which has no content, merely the function of universal exposition: it can see everything else to such a degree that we can say that all the objects in this world commute — they can be seen by at least the category. This is called the "maximal" in category theory, the "transcendental functor" in Badiou, and is clearly what Agamben intends by the idea of the content-neutral, communicable, transcendental position he calls the "signature". A signature is, in other words, a historicised category.

Below the category is an ordered pair defined with regard to the relationality of the things paired, not in respect of their essence or qualities. This relationality in metaphysics is dialectical, but in categories it is simply functional. Thus, the economy of dialectical pairs is replaced by an inoperativity of nonrelationality or the means by which two objects are related under the auspices of a transcendental functor due to a function outside the metaphysics of relation that has been in place since the Greeks. Finally, the *arche* is represented in any world as a halting point called, in category theory, the "minimum" (we will leave this to one side here as the *arche* is not our main concern).

What is astonishing about category theory is that it maps perfectly onto analogy, as the mathematisation of analogical relations, and then maps perfectly onto philosophical archaeology, in a manner that solves the aporias that the signatory method ultimately collapses under. The signature's false transcendentalism is replaced by a transcendental in the sense of the position of universal exposition for any collection of ordered pairs of relation. The paradigmatic economy is rendered inoperative so that a much simpler analogical operation of mapping a function between two bodies can be developed. Even the oddities of paradigms are covered by categories: specifically, the way a paradigm can be exemplary and summative at the same time. Finally, the retroactive fictive problematics of the *arche* are rendered inoperative in favour of the fact that every

world is in possession of a functioning halting point, called the minimum, vouchsafed by the founding of categories on sets, meaning that all categories can rely on the set-theoretical mainstays of the empty set and the Axiom of Foundation. A minimum is not the empty set, but is stable thanks to the empty set. When a world became the world that it is, it immediately established a non-contradictory minimum as halting point such that we can say that every world is well-founded.

## Inoperativity is Category: The Three Proofs

Category theory is a developed and consistent theory for a world based entirely on relations which, however, do not depend in any way on the problematics of the metaphysics of relation. Categorical worlds are nothing but relations, and in this sense then are the means by which one can live constructively in a nonrelational manner. In other words, if one wants to know how to live nonrelationally in a modality of constructive inoperativity that depends on a logic of analogy rather than contradiction, then the answer is simple: you live according to categories. What this then allows us to propose, quite remarkably I think, is that *The Use of Bodies* is in reality a liberating and historicised theory of categories in that the use of bodies can simply be re-described as functions between bodies. With this result in hand, our third proof, let us look once more at the elements of a post-metaphysical world hinted at in those last few pages of Homo Sacer.

First one needs to render the metaphysics of relation inoperative using indifferential suspension. Then one needs to reconsider the being at work as the body of use. In category theory, as Badiou explains, the difference between ontology and categories is that the ontology of multiples concerns the composition of beings, what they collect, while categories leave objects closed in on themselves, concerned as it is with the functional relation between objects. Sets, he notes, are intrinsic, categories extrinsic (Badiou, 2014: 13). This is especially important as the sustained early example of the use of bodies is the status of slaves in Greek society as bodies with no interiority. In categories, all bodies operate qua slave bodies: they remain radically closed so that the classic ontological aporias of foundation, the one qua essence, and multiplicity, the relation between ones due to their properties, are never engaged. As a result, Aristotle's theory of classes is irrelevant. Yes, you can solve classes with sets, but in the case of categories, you don't need to. So, instead of a being at work or an essence possessed of some properties, you have a body of use, or the functional relation between two bodies

whose entire definition is that these are two bodies that have been used in tandem. This use does not alter their ontology, even if they are used together in a contradictory mode, because existence is not determined by the composition of the body but the relation of one body to another due to use.

Now we need a theory of nonrelation. As we saw, nonrelation actually means nonrelational relationality or a mode of relation that renders inoperative the dialectics, metaphysics, theology, and politics of relationality that signatures, paradigms, economies and *arche* keep in play. Categories formalise an entirely immanent system of nondialectical relationality wherein hierarchy is simply functional topology. Hierarchy is a certain use of bodies for the period of the function, not a permanent, empowered, theological or sovereign position. Given sufficient space, one could also demonstrate that dialectics can be mapped onto categories like any other kind of reasoning.

Our thesis, thanks to our three proofs, is therefore as follows: categories are analogical; philosophical archaeology is historicised category theory; and use of bodies means functional relations between objects. The first mode of inoperativity was as I described it in *Agamben and Indifference*, that of indifferential suspension. However in *The Use of Bodies* a second inoperativity is proposed as a mode of destituent potential or the ability of a subject to use itself and other objects as bodies outside of the dictates of metaphysics. In this sense, inoperativity means use that is not captured by the metaphysics of work due to being, Aristotle's formula, in the same way as nonrelation means a mode of relationality that is not a dialectic between common and proper overseen by a transcendental concept and founded on an originary moment. **The name for such an inoperativity is 'category'**. This inoperativity is basically the idea of function as expressed in category theory. It is analogical, as Agamben has it. It is triangular as philosophical archaeology requires, but in each instance it renders inoperative the metaphysics of dialectical or transcendental synthesis in favour of the logic of exposition.

This reveals that above all else, inoperativity is a process. To render inoperative the *oikonomia*, you need to actually render the signature as transcendentally inoperative, the pairing of your paradigms dialectically inoperative, and the foundational moment of the *arche*, temporally inoperative. Finally, when you have achieved this, you can say that the use of bodies has replaced the being at work, and have at your disposal an entire language of thought — category theory — which immediately tells you how you can live in a state where the machine of metaphysics and power is rendered permanently idle.

In answer to the question of how one should live, now that the machine of metaphysics is inoperative thanks to indifference, we live as if objects are held in functional relations with other objects, which can and must include ourselves, under the auspices of a categorical world-order which is neither determined by our genetics nor our cultural inheritance. A wonderful, life-changing and life-affirming result, if it were not for the fact that it directly contradicts Badiou's own sense of categories as not the solution to the problem of signatures, but the very source of their power and unassailable stability.

We are left then with a powerful potential for future thought, the overlap or analogical mapping of Agamben's theory of signatures and Badiou's application of categories. I believe this locates us on the very cusp of a full, consistent and potentially liberating description of why things are the way they are, to put it bluntly, at least in terms of how signatures and categories underpin and legitimate power and its dispositifs. Alone this is an exceptionally powerful philosophical and political tool. Yet if it can be shown that such a fruitful analogy exists, a conclusion that has wider implications for an entente between archaeological and mathematical strands of contemporary thought more broadly, the fact remains that the conceptions of radical change in the state of affairs in Agamben and Badiou are fundamentally — one might say, permanently — at odds. How can it be that Agamben's idea of habitual uses of bodies in any way finds analogical parity with Badiou's radically intermittent, disruptive and singular event? That is a question I must leave hanging for now with just one comment: could it be that both thinkers, lodged as their work is in a firmly 20th century continental sense that radical change constitutes real politics, have misconstrued the true import of inoperativity as category, not as a mode of disruption, but as the portal to a new thought of radical indifference?

•

## References

Agamben, Giorgio (1993), *The Coming Community*. Trans. Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Agamben, Giorgio (2009), *The Signature of All Things: On Method*. Trans. Luca D'Isanto and Kevin Attell. New York: Zone Books.

Agamben, Giorgio (2011), *The Kingdom and the Glory*. Trans. Lorenzo Chiesa (with Matteo Mandarini). Stanford: Stanford UP.

Agamben, Giorgio (2016), *The Use of Bodies*. Trans. Adam Kotsko. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Badiou, Alain (2009), *Logics of Worlds*. Trans. Alberto Toscano. London: Continuum.

Badiou, Alain (2014), *Mathematics of the Transcendental*. Trans. A.J. Bartlett and Alex Ling. London: Bloomsbury.

Dawkins, Richard (2006), *The Selfish Gene.* Oxford: Oxford UP.

Watkin, William (2015), *Agamben and Indifference*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Watkin, William (2021), *Badiou and Communicable Worlds*. London: Bloomsbury.

Watkin, William (Forthcoming), 'Agamben's Impotentiality: Separation, Nonrelationality and Destituent Potential in *The Use of Bodies*', *Italian Studies*.