



Alain
Badiou

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Thinking the Paris Killings of 13 November

Alain Badiou

Translated by Robin Mackay

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This evening I would like to talk about what happened on Friday 13 November: what happened to us, what happened to this city, to this country, and ultimately to this world.

I would first like to say in what state of mind I think we should speak of what is an atrocious tragedy. Because, obviously, as we know, and as is being dangerously hammered home by the press and by the authorities, the function of affect, of sensible reaction, is inevitable in this kind of situation, and in a certain sense indispensable. There is something like a trauma, the feeling of an intolerable exception to the regime of ordinary life, an unbearable irruption of death. This is something we all feel, and which we can neither contain nor subject to criticism.

But all the same, we need to realize – and this is the starting point for considering what I call our ‘state of mind’ – that this inevitable affect, in these kinds of tragic circumstances, exposes us to