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Philosophy of ‘Truth Ethics’: Love/Friendship through Kurosawa Films and Badiou’s Philosophy

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Abstract: Alain Badiou in his philosophy on ethics underscores four fields of truth procedures—love, politics, art, and science—that seek to break with the existing order or conventional flow of things. These four fields indicate both collective (politics, art, and science) as well as individual (love) instances of the subject’s relationships and actions. The individual realm of ‘love’, which is the central focus of this study, however, as a generic, complex category does not clearly explicate the significance of the associated concept, friendship. Akira Kurosawa’s filmography is illustrative as it opens up a possibility for disentangling the concept of friendship from love along with making significant contributions to the ethics of truth, particularly with respect to the “friendship event”. His films vividly capture some of the essential themes of Badiou’s philosophy of truth ethics, including “break”/“encounter”, referred to as ‘event’, “keep going”/“perseverance”, and “fidelity”. Even if the philosophers Badiou and Kurosawa do not make direct references to each other’s works, this research reveals significant parallels between cinephilosophy created through “cine-images” and the written philosophy. By analyzing Kurosawa’s films in the light of Badiou’s philosophy of truth ethics, and vice versa, this study embarks on exploring the complementarities between the works of the two. The study showcases how love and friendship as truth procedures are formed in particular contexts in Kurosawa’s filmography, and how they intersect with other truth events, particularly politics. Most importantly, this study does not view Badiou’s “truth events” such as love, friendship, and politics as mutually exclusive categories; rather, they are seen as complementary in practice.

Keywords: Akira Kurosawa; Alain Badiou; friendship event; truth procedure



Citation: Öztürk, S.; Ahad, W. Philosophy of ‘Truth Ethics’: Love/Friendship through Kurosawa Films and Badiou’s Philosophy. *Philosophies* **2024**, *9*, 113. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies9040113>

Academic Editor: Bernd Herzogenrath

Received: 5 June 2024

Revised: 22 July 2024

Accepted: 24 July 2024

Published: 29 July 2024



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1. Introduction

Alain Badiou’s philosophy of truth ethics posits that people live in a world of situations, that is, everyday actions, conversations, and opinions before an “event” occurs. ‘Event’ refers to the “break” or deviation from the existing order or conventional flow of things, the first step towards the process that Badiou calls a “truth procedure” [1] (pp. viii–x). The philosopher underscores four fields of truth procedures—love, politics, art, and science. When an event occurs, subjectification processes begin. The subjects both constitute the truth and are constituted by it. The subject is formed on the axis of whether it is connected to the event or not. Badiou explains three classifications of the subject in his book *Logics of World: Being and Event II* [2] (pp. 50–67): (i) loyal subject, who accepts the event—for example, a love encounter—and remains faithful to it; (ii) reactive subject, who experiences the event but rejects it. S/he is not interested in it and tries as much as s/he can to prevent others from being interested in it. S/he continues life as per the established codes while denying the importance of the event; (iii) cover-up subject, who covers up the event and glorifies the previous situation. In addition to denying that an event has occurred, this subject sees the event as an illusion, myth, and harmful activity. The main difference between the reactive and the cover-up subject is that while the reactive subject

accepts that the event has occurred and rejects it, the cover-up subject does not recognize this innovation.

The faithful subjects maintain fidelity to the event and exhibit their “perseverance” in the face of problems and consequences. Perseverance indicates the subject’s struggles against the odds while pursuing a cause or truth [1] (pp. xi–xiii). Fidelity refers to commitment to the cause and guarding oneself against betraying and corrupting the cause. In Badiou’s terms, betrayal is one of the three evils that can harm a truth or cause. The other two are “delusion”, which means confusing the “simulacrum” of an event with the genuine event, and “terror”, an attempt to impose the unqualified and total power of a truth (for a broader discussion on evil see “The Problem of Evil” in Badiou’s *Ethics*, 2002) [1]. Keeping in view the vast scope and details of the subject, this research article only examines the themes of betrayal/fidelity and perseverance.

The four fields of truth procedure highlighted above indicate both the collective (politics, art, and science) as well as individual (love) instances of the subject’s relationships and actions. The individual realm of ‘love’, which is the central focus of this study, however, as a generic, complex category does not clearly explicate the significance of the associated concept, friendship. In this regard, Akira Kurosawa’s filmography is illustrative as it opens up a possibility for disentangling the concept of friendship from love in Badiou’s ethics of truth. More importantly, the films vividly capture the above-mentioned essential themes of Badiou’s philosophy of truth ethics, including “break”/“encounter”, “keep going”/“perseverance”, and “fidelity” [1]. By analyzing Kurosawa’s films in the light of Badiou’s philosophy of ethics, and vice versa this study embarks on exploring the complementarities between Kurosawa’s films and Badiou’s ethics of truth.

Love/Friendship and Truth Ethics

A number of philosophers theorizing friendship follow the Aristotelian differentiation of three kinds of friendship: friendships of pleasure, friendships of utility, and friendships of virtue [3]. Scholars assessing the attributes of friendship ground their research mostly on the virtue and utility aspects. Friendship is one of the essential relationships of human existence, whereby each friend shows a special kind of concern for the other for his/her sake [4–11]. That is, friends must value each other’s joys and be sensitive towards their disappointments. Another essential attribute of friendship is shared activity, shared pursuit of interests and values [8] that contribute to the intimacy of friendship, or what Helm [12] terms as “plural agenthood”. There are various reasons people find friendship worthwhile and invest their time and energies in the relationship. An instrumental view suggests that friendship could be “life-enhancing”, making friends “feel more alive” [13] and raise their self-esteem [5]. Yet, scholars have highlighted the significance of friendship that is not merely instrumental. Cooper [14], for example, argues that living well requires knowledge of what is good for one’s own life; as individuals are perpetually endangered by the possibilities of self-deception, friendship, whereby one friend acts as a mirror for another, can shield one against the threat of this self-deception by allowing one to accurately evaluate one’s own life. Furthermore, as Cooper states, shared activity of friendship enables friends to “continuously” engage in activities that characterize good life “with pleasure and interest” (p. 310). While there is always a possibility of derailing from moral and intellectual values and activities, mutual sharing in friendship reinforces friends’ intellectual and practical capabilities to understand the worth of such activities. As for the friendship’s social value, when members of a society are engaged in this relationship, which characteristically entails caring for the wellbeing of others, the result is overall good for the society [13] (p. 238). Considering that friendship essentially involves acting for friend’s sake, the process becomes a source of moral excellence for the society [15].

While it is established that friendship is essentially valuable for both the individuals involved as well as the broader society, the relationship between friendship and conventional universalistic theories of morality—i.e., consequentialism and deontology—is facing growing scholarly criticism [15–20]. The criticism is particularly directed towards the issue

of incompatibility between moral theories and friendship: friendship concerns itself with particular duties for specific people, whereas moral theories are concerned with goodness of broader states of affairs [15,21]. Scholars even suggest that these special obligations to specific individuals “are constitutive of the relationship” of friendship [5] pp. 352. It is this question of partiality towards one’s friends that challenges the basic tenets of conventional moral theories. As has been showcased by researchers, one’s special concern for a friend can not necessarily always fall in line with the demands of impartial moral duties, thus leading to a sort of “moral schizophrenia” that does not allow unifying one’s motives and moral reasoning [16].

The ‘states of affairs’ whose goodness the universal theories aim to promote are more congruous with what Alain Badiou calls ‘situation’, the conventional realm of established interests and identities of a society. The essential characteristics of this realm, according to Badiou’s thesis, are that it is objective and static, and its structure aligns with the aspirations of the dominant who govern it (in Althusserian terms). While the moral theories of consequentialism and deontology focus on the ultimate goodness of states of affairs, these social structures, classifications, and identities, which seek total conformity on the part of the members of a situation or state, are overlooked in the process.

Badiou’s ethics of truth seeks to break with this conventional realm. ‘Event’ is thus an affirmation of the subjects against the situation, and their strong fidelity and commitment to the truth/cause; it “is founded only on the subjects who ‘bear’ its trajectory”; it transcends the private or petty interests of those individuals—the subjects fashion the ‘finite’ points of an ‘infinite’ truth [1] (p. ix). The event is the field of exceptional innovations and truths which is sustained through the active “proclamation of those individuals who constitute themselves as the subjects of a truth, as the ‘militants’ of their cause”. According to this philosophy of ethics, the members in their localized spaces and contexts idealize principles and persons to which they stay true, and decide the course of action. As Peter Hallward [1], in his introduction to Badiou’s *Ethics*, aptly states:

“Inaccessible to the classifications of the state, the truth comes to pass as a universal-singular, particular to but unlimited by the contents of the situation in which it comes to exist. Such a truth procedure can begin only with some sort of break with the ordinary situation in which it takes place.... An event has no objective or verifiable content. Its ‘happening’ cannot be proved, only affirmed and proclaimed. Event, subject, and truth are thus all aspects of a single process of affirmation: a truth comes into being through those subjects who maintain a resilient *fidelity* to the consequences of an event that took place in a situation but was not of it.”

A field of truth procedure, such as the personal relationship of friendship, is thus concerned with the subjectivity of the agents or individuals involved in friendship, the localized nature of the context, and the commitment to the cause. As far as love is concerned—which subsumes all three aspects of the Aristotelian definition of friendships—while we recognize that the category involves a variety of relationships and feelings, including romance between two individuals, parental care, non-anthropocentric concern, and so on, the analysis of love in this study particularly focuses on the classical male and female romance, as portrayed in Kurosawa’s films. However, the study also recognizes that love shares many of the attributes of friendship, as will be demonstrated, and faces similar dilemmas (objective ethics versus subjective concerns) in relation to conventional ethical philosophy. Therefore, without treating love and friendship as mutually exclusive, the study views the two as continuous, as in both cases an individual seeks to insert certain value into another (agape) [22]. Therefore, the films that are included for analysis in this research are both love-centric and friendship-centric.

This study showcases how friendship and love as truth procedures are formed in particular contexts in Kurosawa’s filmography, and how the two intersect with other truth events, particularly politics. Most importantly, this study does not view Badiou’s “truth events” as mutually exclusive categories; rather, they are seen as complementary in practice. A personal relationship of friendship between two individuals can also translate

into a collective political cause; an *artistic* creation on *friendship*, for instance a Kurosawa film, can also carry a wider *political* message, and so on. Badiou, in his essay “Cinema as “Philosophical Experimentation”, has already showcased how film as a “mass art”, through its narrative and aesthetic techniques, can contribute to philosophy by synthesizing ruptures and bridging oppositions. An individual’s deviation (rupture) from the norm can be presented as revolutionary, and at the same time such an act can be synthesized with the social norm, resolving the problem of “schizophrenia” or split between the individual and the social—a co-existence of discontinuity and continuity [23].

This study attempts to compare Alain Badiou’s views on ethics, and the ethical dimensions of Akira Kurosawa’s filmography, a director whose films have influenced important filmmakers across the world of cinema. The philosophical works of the two have many intersecting points concerning friendship and ethics. The study reveals the parallels between cinephilosophy created through “cine-images” [24] and written philosophy, even if the philosophers do not make direct references to each other’s works. Additionally, the study aims to showcase how Kurosawa’s films can contribute to Badiou’s ethics of truth, particularly with respect to the ‘friendship event’.

This research focuses on the following films of Akira Kurosawa: *The Hidden Fortress* (1958), *Yojimbo* (1961), *Dersu Uzala* (1975), *Ikiru* (1952), *Red Beard* (1965), *Madadayo* (1993), *One Wonderful Sunday* (1947), *Seven Samurai* (1954), and *No Regrets for Our Youth* (1946). The selection of the films is based on their treatment of the main theme/s of friendship/love. It should be noted here that friendship/love does not form the central theme of most of these films; Kurosawa’s filmic narratives are complex, laden with a multiplicity of social and political themes. Therefore, as we analyze the friendship/love event in his filmography, it is by default that this theme is intertwined with other themes, most importantly politics. Additionally, it must be noted that Kurosawa’s filmic career spanning from the late 1930s up until the early 1990s saw multiple phases, each owing to and affected by national and global events, as well as his personal, financial, and intellectual experiences. From an early age Kurosawa was exposed to Western motion pictures and theater through his father and also developed an interest in painting. His older brother Heigo Kurosawa, who committed suicide at a young age due to his failing career, was also an important formative influence for Kurosawa. When Kurosawa was thirteen years of age, Heigo took him to witness the devastation caused by the Great Kanto earthquake and the Kanto Massacre of 1923, which had lasting imprints on the to-be filmmaker’s mind. In many ways, the images of these events figured in the imagery and narratives of his films, eventually affecting his reflections on human life as a whole [25]. Heigo also introduced Kurosawa to the novels of Maxim Gorky and Fyodor Dostoevsky, and the films of John Ford, Fritz Lang, and Sergei Eisenstein, which would play an important part in shaping Kurosawa’s filmmaking style [25] (p. 13). Kurosawa made his directorial debut in the midst of World War II and his filmography was plagued by many ups and downs caused by censorship and financial woes, which would affect the filmmaker’s art and budgets substantially. Despite creating some of the world’s greatest art, Kurosawa was faced by financial constraints throughout his career, both within Japan and outside, when many of his films failed to attract commercial gains. The impact of this failure was such that he even tried to commit suicide in 1971. An important fact concerning Kurosawa’s works has been that they cover a wide range of subjects spanning both contemporary issues, such as the influence of the U.S. cultural colonization of Japan post-WWII, the impact of nuclear attack on Japan, and political repression, as well as historical period films. Still, humanistic undertones run all across his film narratives and aesthetics.

2. Friendship Event and Truth Ethics

In this section we shall explore various themes captured in Akira Kurosawa’s filmography that are associated with the friendship event. The themes primarily include loyalty, value/meaning to life, and the master–apprentice relationship. According to some researchers, as discussed above, these aspects of friendship, particularly partiality or special

care towards one's friend, are the cause of the split between universal objective ethics and friendship. But for Badiou and Kurosawa, these are fundamental to the friendship event and overall society. Our analysis of select films of Kurosawa shall reveal how these themes related to friendship figure in the film narratives, and how Badiou's philosophy of truth ethics and Kurosawa's filmography complement one another.

Even in Kurosawa's films that could be considered furthest from the topic of friendship we see a vital role of friendship in critical moments. In *The Hidden Fortress*, a film produced in 1958, friendship overrides the sense of honor associated with samuraihood. *The Hidden Fortress* was produced after many of the director's films following *Seven Samurai* had failed to attract Japanese audiences due to their dark mood. This was the period when Japan was rapidly growing and living standards in the country were rising. Recognizing the necessity for switching to a light-hearted film, he produced *The Hidden Fortress*, an action-adventure comedy set in medieval times, which became a commercial and critical success. The film is about a princess, her loyal general, and two peasants who all need to travel through enemy lines in order to reach their home. Tadokoro is faced with choices between the strict laws and honor code of the samurai on the one hand, and his friendship with the princess on the other. He chooses friendship, prioritizing his bond with the princess over the rigid moral laws and honor code of the samurai. As is always the case in Kurosawa's art, human beings are the measure of all things, transcending criteria such as samuraihood and princesshood. In the film, we see traces of a friendship based on trust and loyalty between the princess Yuki and the samurai.

However, the friendship between two peasants struggling for survival is more complex. The peasants could easily betray each other, the samurai, and the princess for gold yet the film does not portray the peasant characters in simplistic good and evil terms. Instead, the film presents the characters who are inherently pure and well-intentioned but gradually transform due to the struggle for survival, unable to transcend their interests beyond biological necessities. Kurosawa presents cinematic images of characters who slowly evolve through their experiences. By the end of the film, hope and even miracles seem to occur. The two peasants seem to begin the process of committing themselves faithfully to friendship, setting aside their self-interests. Initially unable to share and steadfastly adhering to positive encounters with others, the peasants compete to give each other the gold the princess has given them as a reward at the end of the film. In Kurosawa's works, friendship is the process of transcending selfish interests, remaining faithfully committed to relationships, not treating one's friend as a means to an end, and, in terms of Badiou's ethics of truth, the transformation from a biological being governed by interests to an immortal being. Both Kurosawa's filmography and Badiou's truth ethics challenge the notion of friendship which is solely instrumental and ego-centric [5,13] (p. 351). For them, friendship is an evolution of a personal relationship in the broader matrix of socio-political and economic circumstances.

Another film, *Yojimbo* (1961), which is set in the nineteenth century and portrays the struggle of the samurai class against the merchant class, the samurai Kuwabatake Sanjuro and the tavern owner trust each other from the outset and do not betray their friendship. We see no expression of this friendship through long and extensive dialogues in the film; we do not even encounter emotionally laden images that demonstrate the depth of their friendship in their encounters and communications at the tavern. We see their friendship more in their actions, based on trust and respect. When Sanjuro learns that the tavern owner, who risks his life to bring him food to his hiding place near the graveyard, has been captured and tortured, he immediately takes action to rescue his friend. Despite having no personal gain, Sanjuro fights to the end to save his friend solely for his friend's well-being. The tavern owner, despite enduring torture, does not betray Sanjuro. Here the friendship event is not only established and sustained through words; rather, action lies at the heart of it. While Badiou considers "betrayal" as one of the essential threats to the ethics of truth, Kurosawa in that respect provides an illustration of a situation, as in *Yojimbo*, explicating the possibilities of betrayal and individuals' resistance against it.

Furthermore, in *Ikiru* (1952), friendship plays a vital role in giving meaning to life, as exemplified by the character of Watanabe. *Ikiru* is based on Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* contextualized in contemporary Tokyo's bureaucratic setting whereby a cancer patient Watanabe searches for the meaning of life before his death. The film takes a satirical approach to bureaucracy and the post-war cultural colonization of Japan by the U.S. Watanabe, who has spent years immersed in routine activities within bureaucratic mechanisms, lacks deep and lasting friendships in his workplace. The cold and emotionless attitudes of his son and daughter-in-law reflect onto Watanabe's routine at home. When he is diagnosed with stomach cancer, an earthquake of circumstances occurs for Watanabe, triggering anxiety. Has he lived a meaningful life? How will he live the rest of his life? These are the questions brought about by the shockwaves of the news that he has only six months left to live. Seeking to learn how to live life as a living mummy, he attempts to form a friendship with someone he meets at a bar. The person he meets has remained in the first stage of Kierkegaard's 'either/or', focusing solely on aesthetic pursuits and unable to progress to the ethical stage. The life he teaches Watanabe revolves around hedonistic activities aimed at distancing him from sorrow and grief. Initially, these activities seem to bring pleasure to Watanabe, but this escape phase does not last long, and he returns to being a living mummy. At this moment, a meeting occurs, an event as Badiou describes it. He encounters a young woman named Yoyo from his workplace on the street. This encounter, borrowing from Spinoza, elevates Watanabe from a state of low potency to a state of high potency. Watanabe's power of existence increases. Remaining faithful to the event, he meets Yoyo again later. This is not a love affair; it is a friendship event. Watanabe tries to understand how Yoyo can find happiness in small things. He experiences enlightenment during a moment when Yoyo plays with a toy at a birthday party in a café. With this enlightenment brought on by the shockwaves, he takes action, takes initiative, and spends the rest of his life trying to build a playground for children. Recalling Badiou's assertion, the encounter between the young and the elderly, death and life, demonstrates the film's ability to synthesize opposites—a new relationship between continuity and discontinuity is created. A new "pure" relationship with time embodied in human beings and the surrounding objects is created against the structural time [23] (p. 219). Friendship, for Watanabe, lays the foundation for deviation from the norm. In *Ikiru*, friendship is experienced in a master–apprentice relationship style, where age is not the defining factor. Elderly Watanabe seeks to learn how to live a meaningful life, how to find happiness in life, from a young woman. He explicitly presents his request: "Will you teach me?"

Ikiru's portrayal of friendship between an elderly male and a young female both challenges as well as upholds some of the conventional scholarly notions of friendship. The film illustrates how friendship can transcend ageism and sexism; it does not necessarily require two "equals" to establish a friendship; and despite the presence of two opposing sexualities, the sexual aspect can still remain immaterial [6,21,26]. The contingencies and broader sociological circumstances also play a significant role in determining the form and content of friendship [27]. Yet, the film also complements the existing notion that friendship aids in giving meaning to one's life, as has been demonstrated [5,13].

Another of Kurosawa's films, *Red Beard*, was released in 1965 after multiple successful productions in the 1950s and early 60s, including *Rashomon*, *Seven Sumarai*, *The Hidden Fortress*, and *Yojimbo*. *Red Beard* fully focuses on humanistic themes and age as well as profession are central to forging friendship, becoming defining factors for the mentor–apprentice and doctor–patient relationship. There are three apprentices, and at the top is Doctor Niide, also known as Red Beard. The relationship between the intern doctor Yasumoto and Red Beard is both of a master–apprentice relationship and a friendship based on respect. While Red Beard's practical knowledge impresses Yasumoto, Yasumoto's newly acquired theoretical knowledge from school aids Red Beard, thus making this relationship simultaneously a symbiotic one. This cannot be mechanically reduced to the descriptions of an instrumental or transactional relationship, for a human factor underscored by 'respectability', as well as the entire workplace setup, are significant elements of this friendship, making this

relationship more complex (for a broader discussion on friendship and respect see Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* [28]). In this respect, this relationship is more in line with Badiou's 'event' or 'truth procedure' than the objective, universal ethical theories that cannot apprehend this evolution of friendship holistically. Additionally, Red Beard's relationship with one of his patients, Otoyō, can also be described as friendship. The friendship among these three apprentices and Doctor Niide itself brings about transformation in all of them. For Kurosawa, friendship is the kind classified by Aristotle, purely for the good of one's friend.

One of Kurosawa's last films, *Madadayo* (1993), which followed a turbulent professional and personal journey throughout the 1970s and 80s, presents images that further expand the master–apprentice relationship into friendship. In an interview at the time of the film's release, Kurosawa said his movie *Madadayo* is about "something very precious, which has been all but forgotten: The enviable world of warm hearts" [29]. The film depicts the intimate friendship between retired, mischievous, humorous, and life-affirming Professor Uchida and his students, even after retirement. The cinematic images of the film, like the calmness and retired life of the professor, progress calmly, away from actions. Years later, his students continue to celebrate their teacher's birthday every year, even after getting married and having children. They have collectively collaborated to solve Professor Uchida's material and spiritual problems. The film shows that the student–teacher relationship cannot merely remain in a formal format, only within the confines of the school; it should spread to all of life and post-school in a more informal style that includes humor, irony, and jokes. Throughout the film, the students and the teacher remain faithfully committed to their friendship for life.

One of the important works that represents a turning point in Kurosawa's artistic career is *Dersu Uzala* (1975). The film comes in the aftermath of multiple back-to-back setbacks that resulted in failure to secure funding for further works, which forced the filmmaker to almost take his own life in 1971. Then, in early 1973, the filmmaker was approached by a Soviet studio offering him to work with them. This resulted in the production of *Dersu Uzala*, an adaptation of Russian explorer Vladimir Arsenyev's autobiographical work *Dersu Uzala*. The film presents another dimension of the master–apprentice relationship that differs from that in *Red Beard*. When city dweller Arseniev encounters the hunter Dersu in the wild, the seeds of friendship are sown. Both Arseniev and Dersu remain faithful to the event. Arseniev acknowledges Dersu's practical and theoretical mastery of nature. He is practical as he succeeds in surviving through practical actions, such as during the sandstorm scene. Theoretically, his view of nature is animistic; nature is a living organism, and instead of dominating its parts, we must live alongside them. Throughout the film, Dersu takes on the role of a master in Arseniev's theoretical and practical transformation. However, when problems begin to arise in Dersu's eyesight, Arseniev supports him, inviting him to stay at his home in the city. As Dersu leaves, Arseniev gifts him his most valuable weapon. The relationship between Arseniev and Dersu is selfless and solely focused on the good of the friend. They remain loyal to their friendship till the end. Their friendship plays a central role, especially in the transformation of Arseniev, the city dweller. The theme of staying loyal to a friend is further illustrated in Kurosawa's 1985 film *Ran*. After King Hidetōru is betrayed, the fool of Hidetōru assumes the role of a monarchical parrhesiastes to help the king overcome his schizophrenic state and, beyond that, as a true friend, he does not leave the king alone. Despite all difficulties, he continues to stay with him, not betraying him. Moreover, the fool senses where the betrayal will come from with his artistic intuition. He tries to convey the problems to the king through music, dance, and irony, helping the king come face to face with reality. The concept of friendship in *Ran* is associated with not leaving someone alone in difficult times.

Moreover, *Dersu Uzala* also touches upon an interesting mode of friendship, elevating the relationship to a cosmic level. While in other films Kurosawa's heroes are generally connected to important social and moral imperatives, in this one Dersu is connected to cosmic truths, forming a cosmic friendship with diverse species of the universe. The protagonist of the film, Dersu Uzala, communicates with every living and non-living

entity in nature before meeting Arseniev. Such a friendship encompasses pre-human and trans-human dimensions. Dersu speaks with fire, water, and wind as if they were people. Dersu believes that these forces are alive. In one scene, Dersu explains that the sun is the most important man because if he dies, everything else dies too. We also see this trans-human relationship in *Madadayo* where we encounter images that extend friendship to human–animal friendship. After Professor Uchida’s cat Nora goes missing, he falls into an emotional breakdown. Despite the moral support from his former students, the professor’s emotional breakdown continues. However, when another cat visits the professor’s house and the professor adopts it, the professor’s emotional breakdown begins to heal, and then he starts to return to life.

In almost all the cases discussed in this section, the beginning of friendship is marked by some sort of break from established conventional rules—on account of ageism, sexuality, professional duties, and so on. Besides, everywhere, as we have noted, loyalty to one’s friendship, and sustenance of friendship—which forms one of the core components of Badiou’s ethics (see Peter Hallward’s discussion on “betrayal”) [1], and which has caused a “schizophrenia” among scholars of traditional moral theories already discussed in this study—have been central to Kurosawa’s filmography. In none of the varied cases discussed above have we seen personal loyalty between friends causing any sort of conflict with the larger good.

Additionally, in Badiou’s ethical philosophy, rather than acting in the name of an ideal morality, we can speak of a process-based ethics that begins and progresses according to encounters and experiences. Similarly, Kurosawa’s films focus on characters that progress through the truth process around love, friendship, and politics, and not through producing actions in the name of an ideal morality or moralism. Kurosawa’s characters evolve with all their weaknesses, strengths, and contradictions of the human condition, and that is what Badiou’s truth process entails.

3. Love Event and Truth Ethics

In Kurosawa’s films, love does not often occupy a prominent position; however, in the places where it does, it stands out not just for its melancholic or dramatic dimensions but also for its intellectual dimensions. Secondly, love generally finds its place alongside its political dimension. In the filmmaker’s post-World War II early creations, such as *No Regrets for Our Youth* (1946), love becomes an event transitioning to the ethics of truth. This film is one of those where politics and ethics intertwine with love. This film, which criticizes Japan’s pre-war political oppression, reflects the influence of democratic ideals over the filmmaker. The evolution of its central female character Yukie’s love for Noge as an ethical commitment after Noge’s death is notable. Yukie, who is initially extremely selfish, enters the event of love after starting to see Noge not just as a friend but as a lover. However, after marrying Noge, she makes Noge’s fight for freedom, solidarity, and anti-fascism her own cause, intertwining the event of love with the political event.

No Regrets for Our Youth can be considered one of Kurosawa’s most political films. The film compares different dimensions of political truth through four different characters. Professor Yagihara, despite being dismissed from his position due to his anti-fascist views, does not engage in active opposition. The professor’s daughter Yukie, initially selfish and unconcerned with social issues, transforms into a character with a strong character and political actions after falling in love with Noge. Another student of the professor and also in love with Yukie, Itokawa, does not conflict with the fascist regime and becomes a prosecutor for the government. However, even under those conditions, Itokawa does not betray Noge, Yukie, and the professor. The main event in the film is Yukie’s transformation. Noge has lived according to the principles he believed in from the beginning, not betraying the cause and even risking death for it. What transforms Yukie is not just the love affair; rather, it is the influence of Noge’s anti-government activities after marrying Noge. After Noge’s arrest, Yukie is interrogated, and the ill-treatment she receives during the interrogation triggers the political event. Yukie’s phase of detachment from current situations begins

during Noge's arrest and Yukie's interrogation, and transitions to the phase of loyalty with Noge's death in prison. Thus, it is the combination of all the factors that triggered her first-hand experience of the broader situation. She brings his ashes to his parents, farmers in the countryside, and tells them she is his wife. Noge's father rejects her, believing that she has come to mock them because their son was convicted of being a spy, but Yukie stays and works at the rice fields with them. They are scorned and harassed in their village, and Yukie tries to convince them of her sincerity and that their son was a good man. The work in the rice fields is hard on her, but she is determined to prove her mettle, even to the point of working through a severe fever. Yukie remains committed to the principle of "perseverance" in the face of the villagers' exclusion of Noge's family and herself and continues to stay and work in the village. The principle of "keep going!" thus can be replaced with "keep struggling!" to describe her fidelity.

One of Kurosawa's films that presents love between two individuals in a sociologically most-complex form is *One Wonderful Sunday* (1947), set amidst the devastation of post-war Tokyo. The film presents a layered narrative showcasing everyday struggles of the social subjects and their affirmation against everyday challenges that normally eludes our memory or historiography. The political dimension of the film lies in the individual subjects' assertion against their circumstances and allowing their love to survive adversities. Until the middle of the film, the viewer is not sure whether or not Yuzo falls in love with Masako, since he seems unhappy and responds negatively to every situation. They have thirty-five yen between them, so what could they do with this little money? Their desire to live together at home is impossible for them since they are unable to afford a place of their own. Economic reality curbs their desire to be realized. Nonetheless, Kurosawa seems to demand us to ask the following question: Now that you are a couple, and love each other, and today is Sunday, and you meet each other to spend your time, what options do you choose? One option is to complain about material conditions and live under future projections. Another option is to live the moment and affirm life under your love relationship. Yuzo has stressed-out material conditions and seems very unhappy, but Masako seems happy for whatever their real conditions are. The two meet a series of negative events: first, they find an apartment so that they can live together but cannot afford to rent it. Yuzo plays baseball with children but damages a shop accidentally. They cannot get into a club since the manager does not like their shabby clothes. It rains when they go to the zoo, and they have no umbrella. These centripetal situations cannot allow a social subject to escape the daily routine.

The moment that forces Yuzo to enter into the love affair begins during his feeling of loss after breaking up with Masako. The event happens when they go back to the apartment Yuzo is sharing with a friend. At this point the film offers an illustration of how to avoid reducing love to mere sexual pleasure. Since the beginning of the movie, Yuzo's basic desire is to have sex with Masako, whereas the latter aims to live the love experience. When Yuzo shows his sexual desire for her, Masako leaves the apartment. The film narrative clearly seeks to rescue love from the ego-centric romantic desire for the other through objectification (eros) and treats romantic engagement between two individuals as an expression of unity, same as the unity between friends [30–33].

Yuzo is alone at home, it rains outside, and he contemplates his actions. When she comes back, his face changes; he seems happy and until the end of the movie he maintains fidelity to the event. The rain stops, and they go to a café where Yuzo gives his coat to the restaurant as collateral since he does not pay them. Yuzo's emotion changes from a pessimistic attitude to an optimistic one. Thus, through the adventure they experience on Sunday, these two young individuals strengthen their love through struggle and commitment. The film is textually dense, not only portraying individuals' unity for life affirmation against circumstances but also their assertion of individual subjectivity (Masako's refusal to be treated as a sex object for pleasure by Yuzo despite being in love with him). Scruton, writing in particular about romantic love, claims that love exists "just so soon as reciprocity becomes community: that is, just so soon as all distinction between my interests and your

interests is overcome" [34] (p. 230). The film opens up a possibility for comparison between love and friendship. As has been showcased in this study, love, just like friendship, can enable individuals to give meaning to life, and guard us against self-deception [14].

One of Kurosawa's creations where love intertwines with politics is *Seven Samurai* (1954). In this film, love as an event emerges at first sight between the young samurai and the village girl. From the very inception love is not exempt from tensions between samurais and villagers in traditional Japan where class divisions are sharp. Thus, apart from being an individualistic romantic affair, love becomes a battlefield at the intersection of struggles between the codes of the traditional social structure. Romantic love, despite involving lovers defying the entire social structure for their love, cannot resist their class positions and cultural codes here. After the victory of the samurai and peasant coalition in the war, the two classes return to their old positions, and the coalition is over. The peasants no longer need the samurais. In the final sequence, the three surviving samurais, including the lover, watch the villagers harvesting rice to the rhythm of a song. The love between the young samurai and the village girl is crushed under socially forbidden traditions. The girl cannot even dare to look at the samurai while gathering rice. In a close-up, the melancholic facial lines of the young girl reveal her hesitation to look at the samurai she loves. The young samurai also cannot dare to pursue his love. Neither of them has the courage to pursue their emotional gravitation and to remain loyal to their love and create an exception. In Badiou's terminology, they "betray" the event of love.

However, the conformity to the situation by the lovers in *Seven Samurai* should not be lightly compared with would-be "betrayal" in the case of, for instance, *One Wonderful Sunday*. This is where the application of Badiou's philosophical concepts on the truth procedure flatly runs the risk of falling into generalization—just like the conventional universalist theories. For any analysis of film, or by extension any piece of art or literature, in the light of Badiouian philosophy, one has to take into consideration the context and setting, the broader sociological circumstances of the time and place, and the respective discourses, popular as well as scholarly, surrounding the ideals of emancipation, rights, agency, and so on, in order to fully apprehend the meaning of the terms. At the same time, one must also fully consider the subject matter of the artistic narrative in question: if a film narrative is fully dedicated to the subject of love/friendship, the scrutiny has to be more extensive than a narrative where a different subject dominates the narrative or plot and love/friendship occupies a peripheral space. For example, "betrayal": in the case of *One Wonderful Sunday*, a film set in a contemporary and relatively more progressive setting, Yuzo's abandoning of Masako on account of her refusal to submit to his sexual desire would have been more serious not only for undermining her individual will and letting his own desire deceive him, but also for betraying the broader ideal of women's agency; in the case of *Seven Samurai*, a historical film from a different era, "betrayal" should be interpreted less severely.

4. Conclusions

Kurosawa's filmography focuses on a variety of subjects and settings, thus making it a repository for examining ethical questions surrounding humanistic themes—love/friendship being one of them. More importantly, by presenting stories within disparate contexts, the director's films allow us to examine individual subjectivity as well as a synthesis, or imagining of new relationships, between multiple planes, such as individual and social, historical and contemporary, continuity and discontinuity, which are essential to Badiou's philosophy of ethics. Furthermore, given how layered his film narratives are, they make it inevitable for the analysis to consider an intersectionality study, something that is necessary for understanding the truth ethics of Badiou.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.Ö. and W.A.; methodology, W.A.; validation, S.Ö. and W.A.; formal analysis, S.Ö.; investigation, S.Ö. and W.A.; resources, S.Ö. and W.A.; data curation, S.Ö.; writing—original draft preparation, S.Ö.; writing—review and editing, W.A.; supervision, S.Ö.;

project administration, S.Ö.; funding acquisition, no funding required. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors, Serdar Öztürk and Waseem Ahad, are employees of *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi* and *TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation)* respectively. The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study, in the collection, analyses or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

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