

NOTES ON *BEING AND EVENT* (PART 4)

PART 4: THE EVENT: HISTORY AND ULTRA-ONE

MEDITATION 16: EVENTAL SITES AND HISTORICAL SITUATIONS

- 1) Intro: Heidegger and the non-natural
 - a) For H, mathematics / technology is non-poetic, non-natural, culminates in modern nihilism.
 - b) B will agree that “that which is not being” is the non-natural (the evental, the historical)
- 2) The abnormal
 - a) Singular multiplicities are presented but not represented (not a part, not a subset)
 - b) Approximate image: a family w/ one member who is not recognized by state
- 3) Evental site
 - a) Definition:
 - i) An entirely abnormal multiple: no element is presented in the situation
 - ii) The site is presented, but none of its elements are
 - iii) Thus the site is not part of the situation
 - iv) Such a multiple is “on the edge of the void” or “foundational”
 - b) Example:
 - i) A family with all singular members, which only appears as a family group
 - ii) So none of its terms are counted-as-one; only the multiple of the terms forms a one
 - c) Consequences:
 - i) An evental site is on the edge of the void bcs
 - (1) From perspective of situation the multiple is made up of non-presented multiples
 - (2) Thus “beneath” the multiple there is nothing
 - (3) So evental site is the minimal of structure
 - (a) It belongs to the situation
 - (b) But none of its elements belong to it
 - (4) IOW, its consistency is composed of what is inconsistent (from perspective of situation)
 - ii) An evental site is “foundational” bcs
 - (1) It is minimal for the count of the situation
 - (2) It is presented and hence it can help compose (it can belong to) larger multiples
 - (3) But its elements are not presented so its composition cannot be presented
 - (4) That is, it is “undecomposable”; it blocks the infinite regress of composition
 - (5) Thus these sites “found” the situation as “absolutely primary terms”
- 4) Evental site vs natural multiplicity
 - a) Evental site
 - i) Neither intrinsic nor absolute
 - ii) A multiple can be singular in one situation and normal in another
 - iii) Thus historicity is “relative”

- iv) A historical singularity or evental site can always be normalized
- b) Natural multiplicity
 - i) Conserves its normality and the normality of its elements
 - ii) Nature is thus “absolute”
 - iii) It is impossible to singularize natural normality
- c) Summary
 - i) History can be naturalized, but nature cannot be historicized
 - ii) There can be no unity between nature and history
 - iii) Evental sites are local; natural situations are global
- 5) Relation to vulgar Marxism
 - a) For theory of history
 - i) We cannot think History with a capital H
 - ii) We can only think the historicity of situated evental sites
 - b) For theory (“topology”) of action
 - i) The origin of overturning can never be the state of a totality
 - ii) Rather, all radical transformations originate in a “point” (= situated evental site)
- 6) Opening to a “typology of situations”
 - a) Historical situations (w/ an evental site)
 - b) Natural situations (w/ only normal multiplicities, thus no evental sites)
 - c) Neutral situations
 - i) Neither life (nature) nor action (history)
 - ii) Some combination of singular, normal and excrescent terms
- 7) Concluding contrast with Heidegger
 - a) Heidegger:
 - i) Thinking nature and being via the poem
 - ii) Math exacerbates forgetting of being, leading to nihilism
 - b) Badiou:
 - i) Nature is not the way to being
 - (1) By balancing presentation and representation it “weaves the greatest oblivion”
 - (2) It buries inconsistency and turns away from the void (the proper name of being)
 - ii) History’s subtraction from math / ontology is the way to being
 - (1) By subtraction from state / representation
 - (2) Being (void) comes forth in presentation
 - (3) At point of history (void / situation connection) being-multiple is “revealed” [*s’avérer*]

MEDITATION 17: THE MATHEME OF THE EVENT

- 1) Construction
 - a) The event is not presented, though it can be localized w/in presentation
 - b) Usual method
 - i) Conceptual construction of method
 - ii) Rejection of the event into pure empiricity
 - c) Badiou’s inversion
 - i) Structure or count-as-one is pure evidence of presentation (empirical)
 - ii) The event is conceptually constructed
 - (1) Can only be thought by anticipating its abstract form
 - (2) Can only be “revealed” [*avérer*] in retroaction of intervening practice
- 2) Localization of an event

- a) No event immediately concerns totality of a situation
- b) It is always in a point; it always concerns *a* [un] presented multiple
- c) Events are attached to the point of historicity of a situation
- 3) Evental sites are necessary but not sufficient conditions for events
- 4) Matheme of the event
 - a) $e_x = [x \in X, e_x]$
 - b) where X = evental site; e_x = “event of the site X ”; x = element of the site X
 - c) “event of the site X is equal to all elements x belonging to X plus the event itself”
- 5) Does this matheme correspond to the intuitive idea of an event?
 - a) An image: take the words “the French Revolution”
 - i) Historians can compile an infinite list of components (facts) / elements of the site
 - ii) The “halting point” is the way in which “Revolution” is itself an element
 - (1) That is, the way in which the consciousness [*conscience*] of the time (and our own retroactive intervention) unifies the event by the addition of the signifier of the event (i.e., “Revolution”)
 - (2) IOW, the French Revolution as event presents
 - (a) An infinite multiplicity of facts
 - (b) And itself as “immanent résumé and one-mark” of itself as multiple
 - b) Conclusion: yes, the matheme corresponds with the intuitive idea of an event
- 6) Consequences of this definition for the relation of event and situation = (bedrock of B’s edifice)
 - a) The event’s belonging to the situation of its site is undecidable from standpoint of situation
 - b) [IOW, the state can neither confirm nor deny an event; only militant subjects can decide whether or not an event has taken place by committing themselves to a truth procedure]
 - c) Let’s look at the formula $e_x = [x \in X, e_x]$
 - i) You can’t decide if the event belongs to the situation by examining the elements x of the site bcs by definition they are presented but not represented, that is, they are not presented in the situation
 - ii) Thus you can only look at the signifier of the event, e_x
 - iii) But here you come upon an undecidable, bcs of the circularity of the question
 - (1) To know whether an event is presented in a situation you have to know that it is presented as an element of itself
 - (2) IOW, did “Revolution” play a role in the *conscience* of the Revolution?
- 7) Forecast: only an “interpretive intervention” can declare an event present in a situation
- 8) Right now, we can only examine two separate hypotheses
 - a) The event belongs to the situation
 - i) In this case, it’s a singular multiple and the state cannot count any event
 - ii) But if event belongs to situation
 - (1) It is not itself on edge of void
 - (2) Bcs it presents itself as signifier
 - iii) So the event blocks its total singularization
 - iv) An event does not coincide with an evental site
 - (1) It mobilizes the elements of the site
 - (2) But adds its own presentation of itself
 - v) So from standpoint of the situation, a belonging event is “ultra-one”
 - (1) The event pulls itself off the edge of the void by its own one-ness, its own self-presentation in the situation (its being recognized as signifier of the event)
 - (2) The self-belonging of the event is “ultra-one”
 - (a) Its counts the same thing as one twice

- (b) As presented multiple and as self-presented
- b) The event does not belong to the situation
 - i) It doesn't present anything except its elements, which are by definition not presented
 - ii) So from standpoint of situation, nothing is presented by the event
 - iii) That is, the state can't recognize the French Revolution bcs it doesn't recognize "Revolution" as signifier of an event, but only as a "pure word"; it only recognizes an infinity of facts
- 9) Consequences of this undecidable
 - a) Summary:
 - i) If the event belongs to the situation
 - (1) It ruptures the site's being on the edge of the void
 - (2) By putting itself between itself and the void
 - ii) If it's not in the situation, it names only the void
 - b) Double function
 - i) The event is both name of the void and ultra-one of the presentative structure
 - ii) So we have "ultra-one-naming-the-void" as a "torsion" of the historical situation, which "deploys" the "being of non-being" or "existing"
 - iii) Et c'est cet ultra-un-nommant-le-void qui déploierait, à l'intérieur-extérieur d'une situation historique, en torsion de son ordre, l'être du non-être, c'est-à-dire, *l'exister* [italics in original].
 - c) Necessity of interpretative intervention
 - i) By declaring that the event belongs to the situation it bars the void's irruption
 - ii) But it does that only in order to force the situation to confess its own void
 - (1) Which lets forth [*faire ainsi surgir*] the "existence of a non-being"
 - (2) From inconsistent being and the interrupted count
 - iii) [JP: rather crudely, I think this means that militant truth procedures let us see the artificiality of state categories. That is, declaring that an event has taken place means that history is built up out of nothing, that there is nothing natural in history despite the state's attempts at normalization / naturalization, and that we are therefore free to transform the situation in which we find ourselves]

MEDITATION 18: BEING'S PROHIBITION OF THE EVENT

- 1) Intro: 2 surprising results of investigating the ontological schema of the event
 - a) Every pure multiple is "historical" if we allow the name of the void, \emptyset , to be a historical situation, which is possible only in ontology
 - b) Ontology forbids the event; it does not admit historicity; event is a concept external to ontology
- 2) The ontological schema of historicity and instability
 - d) Take A as a non-void multiple which cannot belong to itself $\sim(A \in A)$
 - e) And $\{A\}$ as its singleton (i.e., set with only A as an element)
 - f) Then A is on edge of void for situation $\{A\}$
 - i) $\{A\}$ has only A for an element and A does not belong to itself
 - ii) Thus $\{A\}$ does not present any other element of A
 - g) Thus w/in situation $\{A\}$ the multiple A is an evental site
 - i) It is presented in $\{A\}$ (in fact it is the only multiple presented)
 - ii) But nothing which belongs to it is presented in $\{A\}$
 - h) Thus the formalization of a historical situation (a situation which contains an evental site)
 - i) $\{A\} \cap A = \emptyset$
 - ii) "The intersection of an evental site A and its historical situation $\{A\}$ is the void"

- i) There is at least one eventual site B in any historical situation A
 - i) $A \cap B = \emptyset$
 - ii) Here B founds A
 - (1) Belonging to A finds its halting point in what B presents
 - (2) IOW, B is undecomposable for A
 - (a) B helps make up A (B is presented in A)
 - (b) But the elements of B are invisible in A (nothing in B is presented in A)
- 3) The axiom of foundation
 - a) The foundation on the edge of the void or site is a “general law of ontology”
 - b) Axiom of foundation
 - i) Any non-void set has at least one element whose intersection with initial set is void
 - ii) $\forall a [(a \neq \emptyset) \rightarrow (\exists b) [b \in a] \& (b \cap a = \emptyset)]$
 - iii) Any non-void multiple contains an Other
 - iv) Such a halting point establishes “original finitude”
 - v) [The axiom of foundation says a set must be founded on something that is undecomposable relative to the set. That means it contains a point of alterity, that is, something that has nothing in common with the set. In ontology, that means it must be founded on the null-set, a set that has nothing in common with any set. This means a set cannot be self-founding, that is, it cannot belong to itself. In that case, its allegedly “founding” element would have something in common with the set, that very element.]
- 4) The axiom of foundation is a meta-ontological thesis of ontology
 - a) The axiom of foundation is not interesting to working mathematicians as they work
 - b) It’s rather a meta-theoretical concern about categories of situations (historical vs natural)
- 5) Nature and history
 - a) Objection: doesn’t the axiom of foundation make everything historical and eliminate naturality?
 - b) We have to take into account the ontological difference btw being and beings, that is, btw
 - i) Being = presentation of presentation, pure multiplicity
 - ii) Beings = presentation of a multiple, so that we have a presented multiple
 - c) IOW
 - i) The ontological situation names the void as existent (null-set axiom)
 - ii) Non-ontological situations consist only by ensuring void does not belong to the situation due to action of the state of the situation
 - d) IOW
 - i) Ordinals as ontological schema of natural situations are founded by the void
 - ii) Historical situations are founded by non-void terms
 - e) Gap btw ontology (thought of ontological situation) and thought of non-ontological situations
 - i) In general (i.e., in non-ontological situations)
 - (1) What is natural is stable / normal
 - (2) What is historical contains multiples on the edge of the void
 - ii) In ontology
 - (1) What is natural is founded solely by the void (all normal sets start w/ null-set)
 - (2) Non-natural sets schematize the historical
- 6) The event belongs to that-which-is-not-being-qua-being
 - a) The signifier of the event belongs to the event; this would be formalized as self-belonging
 - b) But the axiom of foundation forecloses self-belonging sets
 - c) So there can be no ontology of the event; IOW, ontology declares that the event is not
 - d) So ontology
 - i) “brings forth” that-which-is-not-being

- ii) At point of impossibility of ontology as discourse of being-qua-being
- iii) this “exhibits” its “signifying emblem”:
 - (1) The multiple presenting itself
 - (2) In the brilliance abolishing being of the “mark-of-one”
- e) Il fait donc advenir le ce-qui-n’est-pas l’être, comme point d’impossible du discours sur l’être-entant-qu’être, et exhibe son emblème signifiant, qui est le multiple tel qu’il se présente, dans l’éclat, où l’être s’abolit, du trait-d’un.
- f) [JP: So we have to do a symptomatic reading of ontology and look at what it makes illegal. In doing so, we see its de-limiting of being and can read the event as that which is not being, as that which being puts outside itself as unsayable.]

Meditation 19: Mallarmé

Due to time constraints this semester, I’m not going to comment on this meditation. Maybe later.