

NOTES ON *BEING AND EVENT* (PART 8)

PART 8: FORCING: TRUTH AND THE SUBJECT. BEYOND LACAN

[As I explain below, I'm only doing an outline of Meditation 35 here. It's been a long semester, and work that I've deferred in order to have time to do this course is building up. I hope to return again to this challenging book some other time, when I'll be able to rework these notes. JP]

MEDITATION 35: THEORY OF THE SUBJECT

- 1) Introduction: Badiou's subject vs modern metaphysics of the subject
 - a) Preliminary definition: subject = local configuration of a generic truth procedure
 - b) Six ways to distinguish B's subject from "modern metaphysics" of subject
 - i) Not a substance
 - ii) Not a void point
 - iii) Not the organization of a sense of experience / transcendental function
 - iv) Not an invariable of presentation; subject is "rare"
 - v) Not a structural necessity
 - vi) Not a result or an origin
- 2) Subjectivization: Intervention and operator of faithful connection
 - a) Problem of double origin
 - i) Intervention names the event and an "operator" pursues the generic procedure
 - ii) Is the emergence of an operator a second event? Is the operator faithful or self-interested?
 - b) Subjectivization = emergence of an operator, in the form of a Two
 - i) Dual direction
 - (1) Toward the intervention
 - (2) Toward the situation
 - ii) A "special count"
 - (1) Counting faithful connection to name of event
 - (2) Distinct from both
 - (a) Count-as-one of the situation
 - (b) Recount of the state
 - iii) Subsumption under "proper name's absence of signification"
 - iv) That through which a truth is possible
- 3) Chance, from which any truth is woven, is the matter of the subject
 - a) Procedure is ruled in its effects, but aleatory in its trajectory
 - b) Truths are infinite; subjects are finite, yet truths proceed only via subjects
 - c) Knowledge never encounters anything; it only recognizes / classifies
 - d) Subject is dependent on aleatory encounters; it is "separated from knowledge by chance"
- 4) Subject and truth: Indiscernibility and nomination

- a) Truths are indiscernible in language of situation; only predicate of generic set is belonging
 - b) Truth is indiscernible to the subject; must abandon any definition of subject as knowing
 - c) Confidence: subject “believes” that there is a truth; this belief is a form of knowledge
 - i) Discernment of connection / disconnection with name of event
 - ii) An “approximative truth”
 - iii) Belief is “what is to come” under the name of the event
 - d) The future anterior: Every subject generates “nominations” referring to terms
 - i) That do not have a referent in the current situation
 - ii) But will have been terms in new situation (that to which generic extension is added)
 - e) Future anterior reference is invisible to an “external witness,” who is correct in one sense
 - f) Impossibility of anticipating or representing a truth
 - i) Because it is manifested solely via chancy encounters / enquiries
 - ii) The subject is making hypotheses using names, not calculations
 - (1) In so doing it is also making hypotheses about itself, qua local configuration of truth
 - (2) Language is way a finite subject can relate to an infinite truth
 - g) Via its use of names, a subject is
 - i) The real of the procedure (the actual work of making the enquiries)
 - ii) The hypothesis that the unfinishable result of procedure will produce novelty
- 5) Veracity and truth from the standpoint of the faithful procedure: Forcing
- a) Meaning of subject-language
 - i) Nonsensical to the external witness
 - ii) “Under condition” = posed in future anterior = relative to future situation
 - b) Fundamental law of the subject / law of the future anterior
 - i) Can know, in truth-developing situation, if a statement can be veridical in future situation
 - ii) To do so, you verify existence of a term linked to that statement by a discernible relation
 - c) Ontological version of this law in Med 36 on Cohen
 - d) First example: “caricatured” example of Newtonian astronomy and hypothesis of a new planet
 - e) Two features of fundamental law of subject
 - i) It’s possible no term validates the knowable relation btw a term and statement of subject
 - ii) Also possible that such a term exists but has not yet been investigated, so one doesn’t know if it belongs to indiscernible part or not
 - (1) This is “suspended” veracity; it depends on chance encounters
 - (2) You can know that
 - (a) IF the term is encountered AND it is connected to name of event
 - (b) THEN the statement will have been veridical in the future situation
 - f) Terminology: “forcing” = relation implied in fundamental law of subject
 - i) Veracity of statement in situation to come = belonging of term to indiscernible part
 - ii) This term has been positively investigated in re connection to name of event
 - g) Three possibilities for statements with suspended referents
 - i) Statement cannot be forced; there is no possibility of it being veridical
 - ii) Statement can be universally forced
 - iii) Statement can be forced for certain terms; neither factually nor in principle guaranteed
 - h) Further examples
 - i) Mallarmé:
 - (1) “poetic act is seeing an idea fragment into motifs equal in value, and grouping them”
 - (2) Med 19 demonstrates a forcing of M’s statement as veridical in new poetic situation
 - ii) Marxist-Leninist politics:
 - (1) “the factory is a political site”

- (2) Veracity is suspended; the procedure must continue
- iii) Neo-classical music between WWI and WWII
 - (1) After Schoenberg, no term can force veracity of statement “music is essentially tonal”
 - (2) Neo-classical procedure is not generic, but constructivist (Med 29)
- 6) Subjective production: Decision of an undecidable, disqualification, principle of inexistents
 - a) Forcing allows measurement of newness of situation to come
 - b) Examples of this capacity and its limits: three “operations” of the subject
 - i) When we know that a statement is undecidable in the original situation
 - (1) Three possible results for statements relative to new situation
 - (a) Will have been veridical (positive connection for forced affirmation)
 - (b) Will have been erroneous (positive connection for forced negation)
 - (c) Will have remained undecidable (unconnected for both)
 - (2) The subject is that which takes measure of decision (for first two cases)
 - (3) Thus, subject = “that which decides undecidable from standpoint of indiscernible”
 - ii) When a multiple disappears after change of situation
 - (1) Disappearance of multiples happen via rules of old situation, not the new
 - (2) IOW, destruction is not a condition of novelty
 - (3) But, a term can be disqualified in the change from old to new situation
 - (a) This is because the encyclopedia of knowledge is not invariable
 - (b) Thus a hierarchical / artificial distinction can become disqualified
 - (4) Subject = that which measures the possible disqualification of a presented multiple
 - iii) When a new situation presents something as inexistent
 - (1) Truth of new situation might declare “nothing can surpass X” or “X is singular”
 - (2) If that’s so, this singularity must have been already revealed in first situation
 - (3) Thus a subject can disqualify something, but it can’t “de-singularize” something
 - c) By these three operations of subjects, “the event comes into being” [*l’événement vient à l’être*]

MEDITATION 36: FORCING: FROM THE INDISCERNIBLE TO THE UNDECIDABLE

[I’m going to skip this meditation this time through. The treatments by Hallward, Norris, and Gillespie are more than adequate and in fact much better than what I can manage in this state of fatigue at this stage of the semester.]

MEDITATION 37: DESCARTES / LACAN

[Here as well I’m going to beg off. Basically, Badiou distinguishes his treatment of the subject from that of Lacan by distinguishing Lacan’s reliance on language from Badiou’s reliance on mathematics. Because of this, Lacan sees the subject as a structural necessity, while Badiou insists on the rareness of subjects. It’s not the truth which “causes” subjective anxiety, but the event. So Badiou invokes an “inversion of categories,” with the subject on the side of the ultra-one [and the event, intervention, nomination, inquiry, etc], the void on the side of being, and the truth on the side of the indiscernible.]