

*I call fidelity the set of procedures which discern, within a situation, those multiples whose existence depends upon the introduction into circulation (under the supernumerary name conferred by an intervention) of an eventual multiple. In sum, a fidelity is the apparatus which separates out, within the set of presented multiples, those which depend upon an event. To be faithful is to gather together and distinguish the becoming legal of a chance*

*The word 'fidelity' refers directly to the amorous relationship, but I would rather say that it is the amorous relationship which refers, at the most sensitive point of individual experience, to the dialectic of being and event, the dialectic whose temporal ordination is proposed by fidelity...How, from the standpoint of the event-love, can one separate out, under the law of time, what organizes—beyond its simple occurrence—the world of love? (EE 232)*

The explication of one of the truly fascinating concepts in *Being and Event* occurs in Meditation 23. Fidelity, as we shall see, leads also to the introduction of the subject—something that occurs last in this work, after all the order of reasons that serve as a foundation for Badiou's set theory edifice. Though Badiou is quick to point out the resonance of fidelity to the amorous condition of philosophy, one should also point out the resonance of fidelity with notions of faithfulness and allegiance, like an oath sworn to a lord. In the short space that I have, I will set out to explicate the two dimensions of fidelity as a concept and its relationship to the subject.

Before we begin, I would like to arouse some intrigue into Badiou's innovative theory of the subject. In Meditation 35, Badiou says that "the subject is chance" (396), and so we should juxtapose this to another quote that ends the first paragraph of Meditation 23: "To be faithful is to gather together and distinguish the becoming legal of a chance" (232). Having convoked these two statements together, what is fascinating is the fact that, from the point of view of the situation, the event is not counted as such—it is up to the subject to wager on its inclusion and to follow out the implications of this wager, implications that, in the current state of affairs, can only be described as *that which will have taken place in the situation*. This inclusion of the event entails the becoming legal of the logic of the event as chance, but it also indicates that the subject (retroactively?) becomes legal. Therefore, we must conclude that the subject is initially illegal.

Before flattering ourselves about this connection, we should define fidelity. It would be simple to introduce fidelity as the process that separates multiples in the situation in accordance to their (non)-connection to the event. More helpful for our topic, though, would be to point out some delimitations. First, fidelity is not linked to a "general faithful disposition;" instead, it relies on an event and so is always particular (233). Second, fidelity is not a multiple—strictly speaking, it *is not*. A fidelity acts as a different count, one not necessarily opposed to the state's count, but one that enquires into the situation and marks the multiples that depend on the event. Therefore, as Badiou makes explicit more than once, fidelity is a concept related to the state. Third, when a faithful procedure is successful and it marks multiples as depending on the event, these multiples consequently are included in the situation. The fidelity is thus triply bound in its structure: it is defined by its situation, the event to which it corresponds, and the rule of connection that binds multiples as depending on the event.

However, we must remember that onto-mathematicians like Badiou wager that the being of situations is infinite. This assumption about the infinity of situations forces us to consider fidelity in its dual temporal aspect: it is “both the one-finite of an effective representation, and the infinity of a virtual presentation” (236). This means that fidelity’s goal—to count-as-one multiples marked by their dependence on the event and thus to present these marked multiples as a one—is never coextensive with the situation. The faithful count always lags behind the infinity of presentation: fidelity is a process that forever perpetuates its consistency by a further need to enquire into the connectivity of multiples to the event—the still-more of the faithful.

Before concluding our analysis of fidelity, we have to radically assert the deinstitutionalization of fidelity in order to truly capture its innovative essence. Opposed to a statist or spontaneist fidelity (the event only belongs to those who intervene) and a dogmatic fidelity (all multiples depend on the event), Badiou proposes the concept of a generic fidelity, that “which is *unassignable* to a defined function of the state...[and] from the standpoint of the state, [results in] a particularly nonsensical part” (237). This is because a generic fidelity allows the organization of another legitimacy of inclusions within the situation (238). For a fidelity to be generic it must be removed from the proximity of the state, the further the better. This argument makes Badiou assert a radical hypothesis: what if there is no relation between the two aspects of fidelity, namely the intervention and the operator of connection? This would mean that the operator acts as a second event in itself. Provocatively, the more it appears as a second event because of its subtraction from the proximity of the state, the more *real* the fidelity is for Badiou.

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