

23rd Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 23rd July 2013

ON LACAN & OTHERS

Marcus Steinweg

1. Philosophical life is not a life of knowledge because it remains related to truth rather than knowledge. It is not a matter of knowing but of experiencing the limits of what can be known. This experience demands and implies knowledge but it is not exhausted in any security of knowledge.
2. An experience of truth breaks with the securities of models of certainty. As a subject of truth, the subject inhabits the zone of contact between knowledge and truth.
3. Whereas knowledge can be described as its possession, truth is by definition incapable of being possessed. To possess what cannot be possessed is what I call the touching of truth as a form of life.
4. It is the experience of a perfect lack of property. In going through this experience, the subject does not even possess itself. It comports itself like something alien and stands in for itself as if for something that is elementarily unfamiliar.
5. The subject of truth is neither a subject of certainty nor of knowledge. It is a subject of the limits and is itself a limit by touching the limits of the universe of facts.
6. Touching this limit cannot be called *epistemological* because it is the experience of the limits of theoretical knowledge.
7. Philosophy is not epistemology; philosophy is a form of life which describes the limits to the possibilities of knowledge without being secured in a kind of higher knowledge. Philosophy reaches beyond the knowable and is therefore more than merely establishing a capacity for knowing.
8. Philosophy is not *anamnesis*; it begins with the experience of the onset of memory. The subject of a philosophy may be a seeking subject, but it does not know what it is looking for. Searching is not the truth of philosophy because touching truth means ceasing to search.
9. Ceasing to search means not enclosing oneself in a certainty. It means gaining insight into the senselessness of such an attempt to enclose oneself.
10. This insight, however, cannot be described as knowledge or as a fact. It becomes the subject of an assertion that hovers above the grounds of facts. A philosophy of assertion includes this hovering. The subject of assertion hovers between the spheres of ground and abyss; it maintains contact with the naturalness of naked facts and also with the super-naturalness of mere ideas; it inhabits a third dimension. This is the dimension of the limit, of the indistinguishability of the limit from its beyond, zone of indeterminacy, of terror, of hope, of becoming, of sadness and of happiness. Heavens of ideas can be

inhabited like spaces of facts, but the world of indeterminacy is uninhabitable because it is not even a *world*.

11. At the limit of the world, at this *edge of the world*, the subject experiences itself as a limit. The limit is a possible name for its subjectivity. For this reason it can be called a subject without subjectivity, because the limit continually closes the substantial concept of subjectivity for the singular subject.
12. A subject is what opens itself to this closure. It is the ek-static subject of a primordial openness, subject of this ontological nakedness and poverty, nothing but a subject of emptiness, of indeterminacy and lack of essence.
13. This subject cropped up in the thinking of the twentieth century as the subject of *unhousedness* (Heidegger), as the subject of the *unspeakable* and the *miracle* (Wittgenstein), as a subject of the *exterior* (Blanchot), as the subject of *freedom* or *nothingness* (Sartre), as the subject of *ontological lack* or the *real* (Lacan), as the subject of *chaos* and *becoming* (Deleuze/Guattari), as the subject of *desubjectivization* and *care of the self* (Foucault), as the subject of the *other* (Levinas), as the subject of *différance* (Derrida) and as the subject of the *universal* or *truth* (Badiou).
14. It is a subject whose subjectivity seems to coincide with the dimension of non-subjectivity: a subject without subjectivity.