

66th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 4th September 2013

FORMALISM OF FREEDOM

Marcus Steinweg

1. I define philosophy as the courage not to evade the call of the great concepts: What is freedom, what is truth, what is justice, what is love, what is the human being? And how do these questions stand in relation to art and philosophy?
2. I think that art and philosophy share this courage.
3. Art is an assertion of form in the opening toward formlessness; philosophy is the assertion of truth within the intransparency of instituted realities.
4. Art's assertion of form, philosophy's assertion of truth demand a confrontation with these realities without bending to them.
5. Art and philosophy exist only in autonomy and resistance to what is established.
6. The autonomy and resistance of art and philosophy cannot be scientifically proven; they must be asserted through works eluding the dictates of provability whilst constituting the autonomy of the artwork.
7. That work is autonomous which maintains a resistant autonomy vis-à-vis the imperatives of the Zeitgeist: the freedom of its form.
8. The formalism of freedom which art releases the work from its history, from the domain of its real cultural as well as technical, historical, informational and economic determination.
9. The work relates to its determinants without conceding them a final authority over it, because it implies an assertion which ties it to the impossible, to its truth which does not belong to this domain (or only as its absolute limit).
10. Autonomy is the name for the work's irreducibility, for the opposition of an assertion which overflies, surpasses its own conditions.
11. Through its autonomy, the work maintains its relation to the infinite.
12. The infinite is yet another name for the incommensurable.
13. In contact with it, there can be a certain autonomy for the artwork which liberates it from the clutches of its determinants.