

24th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 24th July 2013

THE SYMBOLIC & THE IMAGINARY

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*I began with the Imaginary,
I then had to chew on the story of the Symbolic...
and I finished by putting out for you this famous Real.*
JACQUES LACAN

1. The concept of the human being remains inadequately grasped as long as it only delimits what is graspable in human being — reason, morality —, instead of taking account of its ungraspability, it is an opening toward a lack of focus which carries thinking to the limit of what is thinkable.
2. The *subject* describes a void which is the abyss of this lack of focus.
3. What "we call human," says Lacan in the *Ethics Seminar* would be, "that which suffers under the significant from the real".
4. What is human is not covered by the order of the significant, by the logic of reason. It resists its disappearance in symbolic space and the imaginary.
5. Instead of assimilating itself to the patterns of the humanisms of facts, the humanity of the human being persists outside the human being as a social, political, cultural figure.
6. I call all humanisms of facts anthropo-ontologies which define the concept of human being by excluding the dimension of the 'non-human' and the 'inhuman'.
7. This dimension outlines the limit of the space of facts including its entire definitional practices of reducing the human being to its 'self' (its 'humanity', its 'idea') which tried to adapt the human being without resistance to this space.
8. The human being becomes a fact in the world of facts instead of denoting its limit and perforation, its *excess*.
9. Truth is the name for breaking into the systems, institutions and archives of truth which look after the administration of factual truths, of *knowledge*.
10. Truth is an excess.
11. It surpasses and transgresses naked knowledge and marks the point of the most extreme restlessness.
12. The touching of truth performed by the desire for truth on the part of art and the philosophy is the restless encroaching upon what cannot be encroached upon.
13. Philosophy and art exist only as this encroachment.
14. This encroachment demands of the subject of art or the subject of philosophy that it traverse the space of the symbolic and the imaginary which is the space of doxa, of mere opinion and of the factual certainties established by it, and for the moment in which the work is posited — the art work or the philosophical assertion — that it suspend this space.