

35th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 4th August 2013

HYPERBOLIC AFFIRMATION

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1. To open up to the future means rather to affirm oneself as the subject of the future's necessarily hyperbolic affirmation.
2. One affirms what one does not know; otherwise one does not affirm.
3. The affirmation of the known would be nothing other than its confirmation; it would be the legitimation or ratification of what exists, an act of conservation.
4. The progressivism of thinking lies here: in the refusal to refuse a blind affirmation which keeps the subject of affirmation open toward the future which is the space of the unknown or of contingency.
5. This is perhaps the meaning of the *grand politics* belonging to Nietzsche's problematic legacy: that there can be no politics that is nothing other than the politics of the possible, that the politics of the possible includes its self-extension to the impossible for it not to be *dead*, for it not to be diffused in the space of mere options, instead of dynamizing these options for a demand that transgresses and surpasses them.
6. The difference between these two politics, the politics of the possible, which could be called *small politics*, and the politics of the impossible, which is *grand politics*, mirrors the older metaphysical conflict between reality and ideality in order to show us that, precisely speaking, it has long since traversed the concept of philosophy, that there is no philosophy and (this is my assertion) no politics which did not already participate in this conflict, that therefore philosophy is neither realism nor idealism, and politics is neither small nor grand politics, but already both in one.
7. The fissure between the possible and the impossible runs through the concept of both philosophy and politics.
8. Philosophy and politics are akin in carrying out this immanent conflict in the form of a never-ending affirmation of conflict which makes of the subject of philosophy as well as the subject of politics the arena for a kind of ontological fever that is perhaps nothing other than the liveliness preserving the subject against philosophical and political death.
9. Probably we must insist that these two kinds of death are identical.
10. They concern the subject as such.
11. Politically dead, the subject is no longer a subject; to be politically dead means to leave the political order as a subject in order then to be the object of these orders, their laws, imperatives and decrees.

12. The philosophical death of the subject is the death of a subject robbed of its subject-status that has lost the capacity to think, to extend itself into its impossible.
13. To renounce being a subject and to agree to this renunciation, what does this mean other than to privilege the path of self-passivization which has as its most extreme point of flight the objectification, passivization and neutralization of the subject as against the problematic, because wholly non-guaranteed, self-assertion as subject?
14. That is the further meaning of affirmation from which Blanchot's thinking (as already Nietzsche's, and also Deleuze's and Derrida's and Badiou's thinking, despite striking differences in their positions) draws its elementary restlessness.
15. In a sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit Spinozan gesture, the affirmation defies death insofar as it negates the possibility of affirmation itself.
16. Both political and philosophical death mark the limit of the category of the subject as such as long as to be a subject means to be something other than merely an object, the object of this hetero-affective structure and this anonymous web which I call the texture of facts, reality.