

52nd Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 21th August 2013

THE TRUTH OF ART

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1. **Art and philosophy share a kind of geometrization of the incommensurable.**
2. **The assertion of form by art gives contour to formlessness.**
3. **The ghostliness of the work implies that its consistency is indebted to inconsistency.**
4. **To make chaos precise means to tear the consistency of the work from its invisibility and dissolution, to produce a visibility lacking any self-evidence and to defend it.**
5. **Therefore the appearance of the work is a continual surprise because its evidence is of the order of the non-evident.**
6. **Art exists at the moment when this appearance tears a hole in the web of facts in order to darken the evidence of instituted realities, not through obscurantism, but through clarity, through an excessive measure of evidence which blinds understanding and the senses.**
7. **The moment of this blinding which demands categories or concepts which do not lie to hand is the moment of appearance in which the work's necessity comes to shine while the subject seeks its motives.**
8. **The artwork comprises this power to disturb through clarity, to suspend the subject's certainties, "to abolish the real".¹**
9. **There has never been an art which enters a coalition with reality.**
10. **Art is resistance against that which is, not in the name of what ought to be, but in the name of the portion of established reality that has remained nameless.**

11. **Of this portion one can say that it denotes the truth of a real texture.**
12. **In the artwork, recognized realities communicate with this resistance which denotes nothing other than its ontological fleetingness: the formlessness that resists formalization.**
13. **The work is the locus of this necessarily failed communication.**
14. **Instead of giving room to dialectical reconciliation, it is the crossing-point of that which cannot be mediated.**
15. **It outlines this space of conflict which can be called the place of diaphora, zone of restlessness which develops its own rigour and precision.**
16. **The artwork marks this crossing of form and formlessness as it asserts a form which recognizes chaos.**
17. **But this recognition itself cannot be chaotic.**
18. **This precise indebtedness belongs to the precision of the work.**
19. **It takes up a problematic loan from chaos and what it expresses is nothing but this debt.**
20. **The artwork's autonomy is indebted to its heteronomy.**
21. **The recognition of heteronomy is autonomy, just as there is no sovereignty that is complete domination, but only in relation to everything which disputes and relativizes sovereign autonomy.**

22. **That is the sense of the *assertion ex nihilo*: the artwork does not appear from nothingness because it is without conditions, but because it articulates the infinitesimal distance from its factual conditions.²**

23. **The suspension of its reality and the transcendence of its conditionality presupposes a relation of the work to reality as the field of objective conditions.**

24. **This relation can be described as affirmative destruction.**

25. **An artwork relates to its objective reality in a necessarily destructive way.**

26. **It destroys the space of its reality because it lends consistency to an inconsistency which demonstrates the arbitrariness of recognized realities.**

1 Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted", in: *SubStance*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Issue 78 (1995), pp. 3-28 (5).

2 This distance makes of artistic creation an *act* in the Lacanian sense, a neither legitimate nor illegitimate, abysmal deed without reason and without justification. The act as a *creatio ex nihilo* essentially includes that it remains related to the "abyss in reality", the hole in being, i.e. to nothingness. Cf. Jacques Lacan, *Die Ethik der Psychoanalyse, Das Seminar Buch VII*, Weinheim / Berlin 1996, p. 143. Cited: Lacan, *Die Objektbeziehung, Das Seminar Buch IV*, Vienna 2003, p. 23. The "hole of being" is Sartre's formula for "nothingness". Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, London 2006, p. 103. On the relationship Sartre / Lacan cf. Andreas Cremonini, *Die Durchquerung des Cogito. Lacan contra Sartre*, Munich 2003.