

50th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 19th August 2013
A NOTE ON BLINDNESS
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1. We expect thinking to lead from darkness into light.
2. That is the self-conception of the enlightenment.
3. Whether in philosophy, in art, or in the sciences: the twentieth century has begun to complicate this imperialism of light (one name for this complication is *deconstruction*).
4. Not in order to slide into the esoteric and irrational but in order to initiate a thinking that accounts for the blindness of the subject with a more precise conception of enlightenment, subjectivity, and reason.
5. "If enlightenment does occur, it does so not through the establishment of a dictatorship of lucidity [...]," Peter Sloterdijk writes.¹
6. Neither of lucidity nor of opacity, since all knowledge remains after all dependent on ignorance as lucidity is dependent on opacity and meaning on its absence.
7. "It is not enough," Friedrich Nietzsche says in a fragment unpublished during his lifetime, "that you understand in what ignorance humans as well as animals live; you must also have and acquire the *will* to ignorance.
8. You need to grasp that without this kind of ignorance life itself would be impossible, that it is a condition under which alone the living thing can preserve itself and prosper: a great, firm dome of ignorance must encompass you."²
9. The philosopher of active forgetting turns out to be an apologist of active ignorance, which we must not rashly confuse with a reactive irrationalism.

10. Nietzsche seeks to contain the naïve traits of the religious belief in reason and knowledge; he insists that knowledge is not everything, that ignorance is not in opposition to it, that the subject must muster the willingness to integrate its blind components into an enlarged conception of itself.

11. An enlargement that conciliates it with its inconsistencies, with its ignorance as well as the limitations of its consciousness, with itself as a subject of blindness, before psychoanalysis finally studies the conception of a subject complemented by its unconscious and the attempt to describe it in its openness toward an entity that speaks within it as it speaks and decides for it before it can appropriate its own decisions.

- 1 Peter Sloterdijk, *Thinker on Stage: Nietzsche's Materialism*, trans. Jamie Owen Daniel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), xxv–xxvi.
- 2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 609.