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HEIDEGGER WITH DELEUZE
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In *What Is Called Thinking?* (1951/52), Heidegger says of man that he points into the withdrawal in that what must be thought eludes him. That that is so means that the *event* (*Ereignis*; the belonging-together of *Being* and *beings*, or of *Beyng* and *beyngs*) shows itself at the current moment in the history of Being in its withdrawal-form, as *disown-event* (*Enteignis*), and as we know, Heidegger does not cease to insist that this is not a lamentable circumstance but historic necessity: “What must be thought about, turns away from man. It withdraws from him. But how can we have the least knowledge of something that withdraws from the beginning, how can we even give it a name? Whatever withdraws refuses arrival. But—withdrawing is not nothing. Withdrawal is an event. In fact, what withdraws may even concern and claim man more essentially than anything present that strikes and touches him. Being struck by actuality is what we like to regard as constitutive of the actuality of the actual. However, in being struck by what is actual, man may be debarred precisely from what concerns and touches him—touches him in the surely mysterious way of escaping him by its withdrawal. The event of withdrawal could be what is most present in all our present, and so infinitely exceed the actuality of everything actual.”¹ The “object” of thinking—the point toward which it remains directed even if that point withdraws from it—veils itself in obscurity. Once again it is necessary to insist that this obscurity is not simply the darkness of obscurantism. By no means does it equal the diffuseness that esoteric non-thinking conjures. It is what is most concrete; it is utterly present, presence *par excellence*. Its presence is a presence completed by its constitutive absence. The reality of the real is not itself real, just as the visibility of the visible is not visible. That is the great theme of the Platonic *idea tou agathou*, the idea of the good or the highest idea, of which the *Politeia* says that it is located beyond being, *epekeina tes ousias*.² Thinking remains directed toward this beyond, but in such a way as to acknowledge its non-integral immanence, its status as immanent transcendence. The concept of such an implicit *real* that indicates the bound of the field of immanence (of *reality*) represents the culmination of what we can call the Platonic Lacanianism of Alain Badiou. Badiou, as he is wont to, bases his argument on mathematics: “The most banal example is that the series that makes a finite whole number is not a finite whole number; indeed, it is an entity that is truly inaccessible. The immanent principle of that which is repeated or succeeded is neither repeated nor succeeded.”³ Is Heidegger saying anything else when he incessantly repeats that Being cannot itself be a being? Is not Heidegger’s Being in

precisely this sense beyond being (beyond “metaphysical” being)? Does not therein lie the meaning of the ontological difference, in the distinction between transcendent Being and immanent being, between the Real and reality? Everything, no doubt, revolves around the question of how these two dimensions are connected (their separation is phantasmatic!⁴). It is, “as always” when thinking touches upon the utmost, “about immanence and transcendence,”⁵ about their compossibility or, as Nancy writes, about the “‘outside the world’ in the very midst of the world,” a “transcendence *of* immanence.”⁶ Perhaps we should speak not of a transcendence *of* immanence but rather of a transcendence *in* immanence.⁷ Everything would henceforth depend on defining this *in*, which—in analogy to the analyses in Heidegger’s *Being and Time* that distinguish the *being-in* of *being* from mere insiderness (the way, for instance, the water is inside the glass)—evokes a fundamental ontological trait of *reality* (of the world as immanence-space): that it is *real* in the Lacanian sense, i.e., ontologically inconsistent!

It is part of thinking to turn to the unthought, for it has long participated in it. The unthought is the unthinkable because its withdrawal is part of it. It is what cannot appear in the space of manifest appearances, or appears only as non-appearance, represented by something it is not. That is perhaps the true meaning of what Heidegger calls *thinking that is thinking-of* [*andenkendes Denken*]: that this thinking-of, as it moves toward presences, must content itself with being able to think nothing but presences, whereas the presence of these presences appears to it only as absence, and not even that. The absence as absence does not exist. It exists only as mediated or represented by figures of presence that are inadequate substitutes for it. Another name for this namelessness would be the “abyss” on which Hölderlin has man (the “mortals”) border. It is the nothingness being held into which is barely the subject’s privilege. And yet to be a subject means barely more than to affirm oneself as a placeholder of nothingness that indicates a fundamental ontological inconsistency.

What Deleuze calls the insertion of a plane of consistency implies the acknowledgment of what in it retains an inconsistency, what is incommensurable in reality. Art and philosophy remain related to this incommensurability as they allow the subject to have experiences that it cannot integrate, wholly or once and for all, into its model of itself and its reality, and that have yet have long been part of that reality.

But how are we to imagine such an experience of the unexperienceable? What does it mean to touch upon chaos? It need not be the “encounter with the face of the Gorgon,”⁸ the pathos of elemental terror, of absolute discontinuity and the “revolutionary rupture” Rancière, taking a critical view, associates with Lacan, Deleuze, and Badiou, the encounter with the incommensurable *real/ chaos/ event*, with what cannot be directly confronted: the Kantian *noumenon*, the Platonic *idea of the good*, the *fatal sun* Icarus veers too close to. *Gorgós* is the ancient Greek word for dreadful. He who beholds a Gorgon is said to turn to stone. There are things—the thing itself, the *thing in itself*—we better avoid, things we can approach only through indirections and not without protection. Although they constitute the edge or the impossibility of what can be addressed, of visibility and tactility, of experience or representation, of what the subject can be expected to bear, the subject is drawn to this unbearable. A certain eroticism of terror, of dread and the intolerable seems to be constitutive of occidental culture, whence *beauty* is—according to Rilke’s First Duino Elegy—“nothing else/ but the beginning of terror, which we are just able to bear” and admire “because it so serenely disdains/ to destroy us.”⁹ The fact that the encounter with the Gorgon—the snake-headed monster—cannot be immediate if it is to remain the encounter of a subject with the incommensurable means that an infinitesimal quantum of familiarity with this monstrous entity is the condition of the possibility of its experience, which need not be shock-like, since it is at work, though often unnoticed, in all experience, presenting itself as the very inconspicuous, as the invisible presence of the incommensurable in all of the subject’s impulses.

- 1 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 9.
- 2 Plato, *Politeia*, 509b.
- 3 Badiou, *Pocket Pantheon*, 110.
- 4 Cf. Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, 6–7.
- 5 Badiou, *Pocket Pantheon*, 109–10.
- 6 Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, 177 (n. 15).
- 7 For the “immanence of the event” and the persistent metamorphosis of the one substance (including Spinozistic echoes) see Boyan Manchev, “Sujet événementiel et événement-sujet. Les défis d’une politique de la métamorphose,” *Rue Descartes* 67 (2010), 32–42, and Manchev, *La métamorphose et l’instant. Désorganisation de la vie* (Paris: La Phocide, 2010).
- 8 Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009), 87.
- 9 Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. Leslie P. Gartner (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2008), 1.