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ON DERRIDA

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Deconstruction — the procedure to which Derrida has given this name, which is irreducible to a law, a principle or a method and is therefore always a singular procedure — has always appeared as self-deconstruction, as deconstruction of the selfness of the self and the same by this self. From the outset it is the name of a self-complication that describes the movement of self-development and self-distancing in one. Therefore, the self-deconstruction of a self through itself is the moment of a certain madness, of a terrifying and uncanny aporia. It is the ghostly moment of a suicidal resurrection, the moment of a self-surviving of a self that experiences itself as the witness and object of its de-selfing, as the object of a desubjectivization. The self-deconstruction of the subject is perhaps nothing other than the subjectivity of this subject. It abandons the subject to the *perhaps as such* (if one can say such a thing), a transcendental or quasi-transcendental *perhaps* about which Derrida says in his *Politiques de l'amitié* that it belongs to a "vocabulary that must remain essentially alien to philosophy, to philosophy, that is, to certainty, to truth, indeed to veracity".¹ The *perhaps* allows philosophy to step outside the domain of traditional concepts of certainty and truth and abandons it to the frenzy of undecidability. It demands of the subject of philosophy that it traverses, transgresses and surpasses itself, its own, in order, in the act of this traversal and transgression, to persist as the 'subject' of the experience of a certain self-dissolution. The experience of the *perhaps* would be even more than the experience of the loss of self-certainty, the experience of the persistence of what dissolves and vanishes. In the *perhaps*, a non-substantial, non-Cartesian, non-cogitating subject of self-transgression or self-surpassing is announced which has broken with the modern idea of consciousness. The *perhaps* destabilizes and unsettles philosophy, causing it to become divided within itself. It puts philosophy into a commotion by marking the event of a sustained disturbance. It inscribes a radical incongruity into the idea of a philosophy which followed a more or less consistent Plato-Aristoteleanism of the one, the true and the good in order finally to recognize this following as its history. It thus inscribes a radical incongruity into philosophy itself.

Now it is important to know that this incongruity, which is another name for the self-inequality or the abyss of negativity, originally belongs to philosophy or metaphysics as such, sometimes as something which has remained unknown to it, sometimes as a part of it which is denied, contested and fought against. It seems that this *perhaps* indicates the taboo law at the heart of the logos. 'Law' *before* the law that is condemned to renouncing by definition the name, 'law', because it itself is the name of that which precedes the logic of naming, the logic of name-giving and the name itself, the sameness of the name and everything named as its *opening up*. "No response and responsibility will ever be able to abolish this *perhaps*, [...] this *perhaps*, which can no longer be determined as a doubting or sceptical perhaps, the perhaps of that which remains to be thought, done, lived (in extremis). This *perhaps* does not only come *before* the question (the investigation, the research, knowledge, theory, philosophy); it would even precede that originary assent by virtue of which, in anticipation, the question has already been assented and committed to the other."² Obviously, from its origin, philosophy is given over to the dimension of this *perhaps*, to the logic of an otherness that precedes the concept of the other, the self-identity of the other with itself. No matter how much it remains embedded in the history of knowledge in general, in the historicity of the true and the asserting of truth, in the presence of its phenomenal manifestations, the primordially of the *perhaps* seems to wrench it from time as such. The *perhaps* would correspond, even more than to the beginning of time (and to the recollection and multiplication of this beginning as *history*) to an unrest transgressing space-time and any time-space — to a 'time' that does not cease to resist its elimination in concepts, spatializations and temporalizations. The *perhaps* therefore does not outline any beyond (of time or of space); rather, it is the rule of an otherness without contour that refuses the logic of the other, of its identifying fixation in dialectical contradiction. It refers to a beyond without beyond, to a heterogeneity dedicated to the *here-and-now*.

This heterogeneity can be given the name of *inequality*. Inequality is the element of philosophy. Because inequality exists there is something to be thought. Because the world — the spectrum of

1 Jacques Derrida *Politik der Freundschaft* Frankfurt/M. 2000, p. 56 note.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

institutionalized realities — is a world of unequals (not only of unequal subjects), it is not only a living space but a space of thinking opening up the possibility of holding up one reality against another in order to hand over the subject to the manifold of unequals, in order to expose it to the chaos of irreducible multiplicities which is the subject's proper living space. Any promise of coherence, any hope of identification and non-ambiguity, of equality and self-equality, of sameness, remains open to the *chaos of unequals* that grinds up the logic of a lack of contradiction. And yet, no thinking can rely on chaos by making itself into chaos, by articulating itself as chaotic thinking. Thinking that gathers courage to traverse the desert of unequals includes a minimum of orientation in hypothetical, if not axiomatic, consistencies. It is indebted to a minimal consistency that preserves it from being shot through by the incommensurable, thus becoming impossible. Before the incommensurable takes possession of thinking, the thinking subject has inscribed a commensurable resistance into the incommensurable, thus a resistance which, from the side of the incommensurable, itself seems incommensurable. Thinking is not only a confrontation with the incommensurable, the *desert of inequality*; it is an affront to it insofar as it presents itself as resistant against destruction. Deleuze & Guattari have said the same thing about the chaos which philosophy, art and science (the *chaoids*) confront by simultaneously withdrawing from it.³ The double movement of opening and closing in relation to chaos is the movement of a thinking that attributes to the *world* (to the totality of being) a higher complexity than do obscurantism and scientism. The thinking of inequality reveals itself to be a thinking that asserts minimal inequalities, infinitesimal consistencies over the abyss of the incommensurable. Thinking includes this assertion of resistance that makes of its subject a subject of assertion that withdraws from the power of the incommensurable and the violence of opinions in order to rely on nothing but this minimal consistency which makes of it a thinking, this almost-nothing of identifiability, this nameless quantum of energy. It makes sense to call this almost-nothing *equality*, an equality that interrupts the incommensurable by inscribing in it a measure that makes it itself identifiable ex negativo. In the negative light of minimal consistencies, the incommensurable gains a forbidden legibility which it will not cease to contradict because the incommensurable is the name of that which must remain illegible and indecipherable in order to be *itself* the principle of an impossible sameness, equality and identity. Obviously, in order to be thinking at all, thinking must resist these two conformisms that threaten to assimilate it to the space of established philosophemes: 1. The conformism of equality that withdraws from being locked out by ontological inequality or incommensurability instead of confronting it. 2. The conformism of an inequality whose purified shape raises it to the phantasm of difference that is without any connection with reality, without any exchange with the world as it is known to us, without reference within the domain of familiarities of the always shared and communicated contact zone called *reality*.

Both conformisms suppress the complexity of a thinking that keeps itself up to the mark of the irreducible conflict between the knowable and the unknowable, the measurable and the incommensurable, the equal and the unequal. There is no thinking at all that could bend to the temptation of such simplifications. The rigour of any thinking lies in the refusal of all simplifications that stop it before it begins to rise, for the beginning of thinking will not have been concord or consensus. Simplification, however, works toward the consensual levelling of differences which are the lasting tinder for thinking. Thinking includes the moment that it refuses, on the one hand, the option to become assimilated to a quietist conformism of a conjuring of reality (of the obscurantism of facts), and on the other hand, the adoration of impossibility which is the monumentalization and sacralization of an absolute difference in order to articulate itself along the separating line between the two alternatives as a decisive affirmation of their compossibility. There is no thinking that could be anything other than a *thinking of the possible* or *of the impossible*. Any thinking deserving the name derives its tension from the conflict in these constructions while it affirms this conflict as incommensurability proper, as the difference of identity and difference.