

# LITERATURE AS ENCOUNTER: THE DOWNPOUR OF ACCIDENTS<sup>1</sup>

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62 In one of his strangest texts, “Le courant souterrain du matérialisme de la rencontre” (1982), Louis Althusser attempts to retrace a clandestine philosophical tradition dating back to Epicurus’s rain (*pluie*) of atoms—and Lucretius’s reading of Epicurus in his *De rerum natura*—a tradition he claims to observe in the works of other philosophers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Heidegger, and Marx. While Althusser’s depiction of this illicit tradition is specifically anchored in philosophy, what he proposes here is extremely fruitful in rethinking the knot of the literary phenomenon. Considering literature as rain, as a downpour, that is to say, as something that falls, not unlike Epicurus’s atoms raining in parallel to each other and from time to time accidentally encountering each other, allows us to see literature not as an object or as a tool for interpretation, but as a manifestation of encounters, operating an important shift in any form of hermeneutics. The aim of this article is to propose a rethinking of the literary phenomenon derived from Althusser’s conception of the encounter.

Althusser’s text begins as follows:

Il pleut. Que ce livre soit donc d’abord un livre sur la simple pluie. Malebranche se demandait “pourquoi il pleut sur la mer, les grands chemins et les sablons,” puisque cette eau du ciel qui ailleurs arrose les cultures (et c’est fort bien) n’ajoute rien à l’eau de la mer ou se perd dans les routes et les plages. Il ne s’agira pas de cette pluie-là, providentielle ou contre-providentielle. Ce livre porte tout au contraire sur une autre pluie, sur un thème profond qui court à travers toute l’histoire de la philosophie, et qui y a été aussitôt combattu et refoulé qu’il y a été énoncé: la “pluie” (Lucrece) des atomes d’Épicure qui tombent parallèlement dans le vide, la “pluie” du parallélisme des attributs infinis chez Spinoza, et bien d’autres encore, Machiavel, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, Heidegger aussi et Derrida. Tel est le premier point que, découvrant d’emblée ma thèse essentielle, je voudrais mettre en évidence: *l’existence d’une tradition matérialiste presque complètement*

*méconnue* dans l'histoire de la philosophie (il faut bien un mot pour la démarquer en sa tendance) *de la pluie, de la déviation, de la rencontre et de la prise.* (*Écrits philosophiques* 553-54; emphasis in original)

"It's raining": Fine, but why rain, that is, why use the image of rain to get to the idea of encounter? This is not Malebranche's "why is it raining," since the "why is it raining" is basically the "why is there something and not nothing," a question aiming to point out the cause, or the origin, of the "there is something," of the "it is raining." No, Althusser says, it is not that kind of rain he is talking about, but simply "la pluie." Here, with regard to rain in various ways, in order to fully grasp how it allows us to articulate the encounter, we must consider it in a very concrete way, or imagine it in its concreteness. *It is raining*: this simply means *Let us note that it is raining*, but nothing more. There is no need to look for the reason why it is raining, but only to observe the presence of the rain. I look and I see that it is raining. Here is the rain falling. I can see it falling, and when I observe it falling, I see the raindrops falling, falling from the sky to the ground parallel to each other; the photographs of the rain speak for themselves. When I look at the photographs, I can see the lines that the rain forms, the lines of the fall that seem to be straight and with drops separated from each other and following the same parallel movement. I do not look up to the sky from where the rain is falling, so I do not raise my head to the sky in hope of observing the verticality of the rain, which would alert me to the questions "why is it raining" or "from where is it raining?" I look at the rain at eye level, and I see the rain drops falling in parallel; that is all.

The encounter, says Althusser, occurs when there is a deviation of these drops in parallel, causing one raindrop to meet another. The important question to ask, then, is what causes such a deviation to occur? That is, however, where Althusser stops, writing "on ne sait ni où ni quand, ni comment." Why is there suddenly a change in the movement so that the parallelism of the raindrops gives way to a conjunction? When the rain falls, it deviates from its parallel fall when it encounters an obstacle, so that one imagines the rain falling on a tree and on the leaves of the tree, for example. Flowing on the leaves, it seems to turn into a small stream, where the drops that have fallen there then meet. If I go outside, if I go out into the rain, I can cause the same phenomenon. The rain falls on my body, which then makes the drops meet and thus deviate from their parallelism. It must be understood that here Althusser begins an important episode that allows us to begin to reflect on the encounter as it concerns the very structure of thought, but it is at this point that we must continue. It is important to see that the image of Althusser's rain, which allows him to think about the encounter, can also allow us to reflect on the encounter as a node of thought itself. The deviation does not occur by itself in thought. It is not simply a matter of noting that at that moment there is a deviation. It is necessary to contemplate the rain that falls, the drops that fall individually, as concepts, words, and images falling upon us, and the mind grasps them, acts, and ensures that the encounter takes place. It is the act of the mind that seizes the encounter, which allows the last words of the last

sentence in the passage quoted above to make sense: “*de la pluie, de la déviation, de la rencontre et de la prise*” (554).

Thus, in this late text Althusser touches on a problem characteristic of the history of thought, which is exemplified and dramatized in the context of an encounter between two opposites, during which fluidity is established between them. This problem, which is in fact a *topos*, a motif, concerns the passage from the particular to the general, or from the general to the particular, or even from the universal to the singular—although they are often confused—in all that these terms can cover. It is indeed about the possibility of linking antagonistic contrasts between them. According to the various ways in which it presents itself, this problem at the heart of thought can be expressed by the passage from the smallest to the greatest, from the abstract to the concrete, from the finite to the infinite, from immanence to transcendence, from the original to the copy, from the heavenly to the earthly, from God to the Son, from the flesh to the spirit, from subjectivity to objectivity, from national literature to world literature, from “l’être” to “l’étant,” from micro to macro, from tradition to the present, from the immediate to the mediating—each of these passages can be considered inversely—and so on. This constituent paradox of thought never ceases to haunt it, to betray its presence, regardless of the modalities under which it is presented, since it concerns the very structure of thought. Thus, we can try to enter into the theoretical details of all its manifestations, but the fact remains that in each of them, the way in which it is possible to think or to articulate a thought is always at stake. In other words, and quite simply, how is it possible to conceive of a link, or links, between two opposites?

Within this profoundly hermeneutical question,<sup>2</sup> literature also becomes agitated and unfolds itself, often as the object of reading, the object of interpretation, or the object of mediation. It is always interpretation, as Pierre Klossowski describes it in “La décadence du nu”: “Ce n’est jamais la réalité que l’on appréhende, mais une vue de l’esprit. Le naturalisme en peinture comme en littérature n’est qu’une forme de lyrisme” (70). Apprehending a “vue de l’esprit” is the act by which, following the impression, or the fall of an image in the mind, the mind grasps it, and in this grasping, opens the door and unleashes a series of repercussions that the image itself did not necessarily contain, but which said grasping triggers as effects, as an encounter. This also means that the image that surreptitiously grasps the thought triggers passions, hence “une forme de lyrisme,” in a movement where the mind itself interprets the passions to which it is prey through the image. Here, of course, is a meeting between what philosophy since Plato—if not since Parmenides—calls appearance and being, the visible and the invisible: it comes down to saying that I see the rain falling; perhaps I am lucky enough to observe the drops that come together, but I can never observe what this confluence generates if I do not invest it with thought. It is necessary, however, to contemplate the rain in such a way as to see the deviation and to grasp it, to interpret it, to read it:

Épicure nous explique qu'avant la formation du monde, une infinité d'atomes tombaient, parallèlement, dans le vide. Ils tombent toujours. Ce qui implique qu'avant le monde il n'y eût rien, et même temps que tous les éléments du monde existassent de toute éternité avant qu'aucun monde ne fût. Ce qui implique aussi qu'avant la formation du monde, *aucun Sens* n'existait, ni Cause, ni Fin, ni Raison ni déraison. La non-antériorité du sens est une thèse fondamentale d'Épicure, en quoi il s'oppose aussi bien à Platon qu'à Aristote. Survient le *clinamen* [...] Le *clinamen*, c'est une déviation infinitésimale, "aussi petite que possible," qui a lieu "on ne sait où ni quand, ni comment," et qui fait qu'un atome "dévie" de sa chute à pic dans le vide, et, rompant de manière quasi nulle le parallélisme sur un point, provoque une rencontre avec l'atome voisin et de rencontre en rencontre un carambolage, et la naissance d'un monde, c'est-à-dire de l'agrégat d'atomes que provoquent en chaîne la première déviation et la première rencontre. (Althusser, *Écrits philosophiques* 555; emphasis in original)

The rain of Epicurean atoms never answers the "how" of the *clinamen*, since it consists rather in noting that there is *clinamen*, and that it is entirely within this "there is" that the horizon of the world is situated, and the horizon of the gaze on the world. It is in this very sense that Althusser considers the thought of Epicurus as a philosophical tradition hidden by the idealistic tradition that has its roots in Plato. If there is a philosophical tradition of the encounter, the point here is to show how the epistemological power of the literary is precisely that of the encounter.<sup>3</sup> And perhaps it is specifically because of this epistemological power that Plato expelled the poets from the Philosophical City, not only by refusing what poetry or literature could then have done to philosophy, but also, perhaps, by not fully understanding the knowledge proper of the literary, knowledge that is not that of reason as what sorts and classifies.

It should also be understood that "encounter" is an umbrella term; in other words, the encounter as the foundation of the action of thought is a vast phenomenon, which the term "encounter" is used here to denominate, to try to grasp. This phenomenon, however, covers a multitude of other terms, such as *crossroads*, *crossing*, *passage*, *link*, *bridge*, *metaphor*, *metaxu*, and many others, which can be used to refer to a variety of other terms. Yet the Greek *metaxu*, which means *bridge*, is a crucial one. The notion of *metaxu* is taken up by Simone Weil in *La pesanteur et la grâce*:

Ce monde est la porte fermée. C'est une barrière. Et, en même temps, c'est le passage. Deux prisonniers, dans des cachots voisins, qui communiquent par des coups frappés contre le mur. Le mur est ce qui les sépare, mais aussi ce qui leur permet de communiquer. Ainsi nous et Dieu. Toute séparation est un lien [...] Les choses créées ont pour essence d'être des intermédiaires. Elles sont des intermédiaires les unes vers les autres, et cela n'a pas de fin [...] Les ponts des Grecs.—Nous en avons hérité. Mais nous n'en connaissons plus l'usage. Nous avons cru que c'était fait pour y bâtir des maisons. Nous y avons élevé des gratte-ciels où sans cesse nous ajoutons des étages. Nous ne savons plus que ce sont des ponts, des choses faites pour qu'on y passe, et que par là on va à Dieu. (*La pesanteur* 228-29)

Weil's revival of *metaxu* is anchored in her reading of Plato, situating him in a direct filiation with Christianity. But what is relevant here is how she points out that if the bridges of the Greeks have been handed down to us, they are, nevertheless, misun-

derstood today. That is to say that we no longer understand that they are crossings, temporary spaces, which have been invested as though they were permanent places. We need to understand that literary thought seems to have grasped that bridges are only passages that can never be taken for granted, that may not be permanent, but only guarantee the possibility of an encounter taking place.

Literature, in which the *topos*, or motif, of the passage from the general to the particular is constantly tied together, allows for a hermeneutic that is not of the order of the discovery of truth,<sup>4</sup> but rather a hermeneutic of the encounter. It is then no longer a question of reading in the hope of necessarily interpreting the meaning of the text, but rather of reading in such a way as to note the encounter produced by the literary, the random roll of the dice that suddenly joins, at the heart of the literary, a non-necessary instant where opposites coincide, where opposites converge, an instant that each time generates its own multiplication:

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Et dans ces interprétations triomphe une certaine conception de l'histoire de la philosophie qu'on peut, avec Heidegger, qualifier d'occidentale, car elle domine depuis les Grecs notre destin, et de logocentrique car elle identifie la philosophie avec une fonction du logos chargé de penser l'antécédence du Sens sur la réalité. (Weil, *La pesanteur* 554)

The possibility of grasping the encounter through a gesture that is also hermeneutic stands, resistant and furtive, parallel to a hermeneutic gesture seeking to articulate the meaning of the text. This parallelism between a hermeneutic gesture of meaning and a hermeneutic gesture of encounter is itself important, since in it rests the possibility of their collision. It is therefore not a question either of maintaining that the encounter is opposed to meaning, but rather that the meaning it can bring about is itself contingent and therefore not, as Althusser indicates, antecedent to the encounter. It is in this sense that the encounter is the *topos* of literature, of a literature that is not only the object of philosophy or the object of knowledge. That is to say, it is the *topos* of literature in so far as it falls, as it tumbles down and as it constantly produces the encounter. In this scenario, literature is encounter, a knowledge of encounters, and a view of encounters—where literature, as interpretation and therefore always as a “vue de l'esprit” (“view of the mind”), constantly brings us back to the observation of the clashes it spreads, “lire, c'est aller à la rencontre d'une chose qui va exister mais dont personne ne sait encore ce qu'elle sera” (Calvino 86). I argue that the literary phenomenon is a reading of encounters:

Mais il y a chez lui toute une série de développements autour de l'expression “*es gibt*,” “il y a,” “c'est donné ainsi” qui rejoignent l'inspiration d'Épicure. “*Il y a* du monde, de la matière, des hommes...” Une philosophie du “*es gibt*,” du “c'est donné ainsi,” règle leur compte à toutes les questions classiques d'Origine, etc. Et elle “ouvre” sur une vue qui restaure une sorte de contingence transcendante du monde, dans lequel nous sommes “jetés,” et du sens du monde, lequel renvoie à l'ouverture de l'Être, à la pulsion originelle de l'Être, à son “envoi” au-delà de quoi il n'y a rien ni à chercher ni à penser. (Althusser, *Écrits philosophiques* 556-57; emphasis in original)

Literature proceeds through the articulation of knots between the general and the

particular, even more so between the singular and the universal, simply, and in part, in the astonishing capacity of the text to be always in movement between its immanent appearance and its singular crossing of history in which it can resurface at any moment, always in a vertical, that is to say transcendental, manner.

Something rhizomatic happens in literature. In the staging that literature allows, opposites cross and encounter each other without a radical break or distinction between the two, that is, without any effective categorization. It is in this sense that we can say that literature is not on the side of the general and the particular, but on the side of the universal and the singular. Gilles Deleuze's articulation, in *Différence et répétition* (1969), of this important distinction between the general-particular and universal-singular couples, when he poses the repetition on the singular and universal sides, is most relevant here, since it insists that the general-particular couple is on the side of rules, sorting, and watchwords, whereas the universal-singular couple does not pose any order or rules to be respected, and notes the importance of not confusing their functioning and their epistemological role. For instance, the universal would be what says "all human beings contain within them the possibility of crying, the possibility of tears" and the singular presents itself, repeats itself in a manner that is always and precisely singular, each time tears occur, while the general would be what says "all human beings cry in such and such circumstances" and the particular occurs at the advent of tears according to the circumstances prescribed by the general.

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Literature says that the universal-singular couple unite much more than the general-particular do. One undergoes the effects of the encounter, the surpluses created by the collisions, without one of the two opposites it joins ending up being the appendage of the other, nor without these effects ever being necessary: "C'est-à-dire qu'au lieu de penser la contingence comme modalité ou exception de la nécessité, il faut penser la nécessité comme le devenir-nécessaire de la rencontre de contingents" (581). Literature stages images, fantasized or not, the "vues de l'esprit" (Klossowski 110), introducing them in a radically transcendental way.

What also needs to be understood is that these encounters are not always successful, nor are they passive or non-aggressive. The encounter at the core of literature is always somewhat imbued with an excess and a fury because it is always accidental and hazardous, that is to say, risky. The bridge that forms from one encounter can as easily burn as it can stay in place; yet, even if it stays in place, this does not mean any form of necessity for the bridge. It simply means that for a little while longer, we might cross it, or that it might burn while we are crossing it. Yet, the fire that sets it ablaze opens the door for the possibility of other encounters, of atoms crashing into each other and producing something that always exceeds them, new constellations of excess of singularity.

The mere fact that Althusser conceived this tradition of "matérialisme souterrain de la rencontre" from Epicurus and Lucretius indicates its links with literary thought: if Epicurus is always considered as a philosopher, Lucretius is a poet-philos-

opher, and we know that the *De rerum natura*, dating from the first century BC, is a poem in verse based on the atomistic thought of Epicurus. It is from Lucretius, and Althusser himself specifies this in his text, that the use of the term *clinamen* originates, as does the image of atoms as rain. The power of the encounter and its intimate links with literary thought, with the “mise en image” and the “mise en scène” of the thought, which constitutes literature, resounds in this single passing from Epicurus to Lucretius, and in some respects from philosophy to poetry.

The encounter as I depict it here derived from Althusser must also be understood as a node of the literary phenomenon, as a way of reading the texts, as a method of reading that consists of reading the singularities produced by the encounters. This is an aspect of the literary encounter that distinguishes it from philosophy and prevents us from making the literary a simple object of reflection for the latter, but rather conceives it as a singular phenomenon with its own relation to knowledge, its own reading. But of which reading is it a question? I could repeat here that it is about a reading of the encounters, and this is indeed the case; however, the fact remains that there is not a precise word, insofar as the encounter is a chapeau term, to describe it. It is necessary for me to paraphrase in order to speak of this reading, which has no choice but to be slow, to be attentive to details, to lose itself in the texts compulsively, to return to them unceasingly. It is a reading that digs, that excavates the texts, in a gesture of constant unfolding, a *patientia* reading, in what the Latin term covers of endurance, of suffering, of the body bearing the suffering, that is, the acceptance of the risk incurred in each reading—which is not merely a danger to the individual reader, but a risk proper to the act of reading itself—an act of reading that John Hamilton scrupulously describes in his *Philology of the Flesh*:

Reading can be exhausting. The multiple and complex efforts expended to scan page after page, gathering the many visual marks and understanding their significance, require considerable amounts of mental and physical energy. However habituated, the manner by which a reader produces meaning is a laborious process. Every letter calls for attentiveness, even if only not at a subconscious level, as the syllables come to form each word and as the words compose broader syntactic units. The reader then proceeds from the order of the sentence all the way to the work as a whole—that is, to the reconstruction of a verbal corpus that ultimately relates to other, similarly reconstructed works. These textual bodies, the personal libraries stored in the mind of each individual reader, result from years of continuous diligence and the cultivation of memory. One must become ever more deeply familiar with language and languages, including the infinite variations and refinements in meaning, historical, cultural, social, and individual. Such industry cannot be performed without extensive strain on the reader’s stamina: the strain on the eyes, the discomfort of remaining still, the struggle to keep distraction at bay. (4)

If Hamilton associates this form of reading with what he calls a “philology of the body,” on the other side of which stands a “philology of the flesh,” it is exactly because this way of reading texts is inextricably linked to the history of hermeneutics, or rather, to a certain vision of the hermeneutic, which says that to read is to go in search of the sense of the text. This way of reading relies on the quest of an *a priori* sense, on

the use of a reading “which features methods of dematerialization and decarnalization [...] methods that are committed to the immaterial idea and therefore strive to free meaning from base mediation” (6). However, what Hamilton calls “philology of the flesh” refuses this overcoming of the book object: “On the other hand, then, in contrast to the philology of the body, there is a philology of the flesh. Whereas the former attends to the book’s instrumental capacity, the philology of the flesh exhibits a love that never wants to part with the word’s manifestation” (7). Where, then, is a hermeneutic gesture consisting in a reading of encounters?

A reading of encounters would be, in a certain way, to seek the transitions between a philology of the body and a philology of the flesh, not to part with either of them but rather to see in what way their collision manifests itself. The reading of the encounters does not entirely get rid of the meaning, nor of the material aspect of the book, but it supposes that the meaning is only ever given by the activity of reading, which comes after the text and never before.

In this very sense, a hermeneutic gesture aiming at reading the encounters within the literary in order to demonstrate that it is in them that the singularity of the phenomenon resides must be patient. The encounter is given only to a mind capable of contemplating texts and works of art for a long time, to a mind ready to catch its breath, to be attentive, close to the description of attention that Weil provides in *Attente de Dieu*:

L’attention consiste à suspendre sa pensée, à la laisser disponible, vide et pénétrable à l’objet, à maintenir en soi-même à proximité de la pensée, mais à un niveau inférieur et sans contact avec elle, les diverses connaissances acquises qu’on est forcé d’utiliser. La pensée doit être, à toutes les pensées particulières déjà formées, comme un homme sur une montagne qui, regardant devant lui, aperçoit en même temps sous lui, mais sans les regarder, beaucoup de forêts et de plaines. Et surtout la pensée doit être vide, en attente, ne rien chercher, mais être prête à recevoir dans sa vérité nue l’objet qui va y pénétrer. (*Attente* 102)

An empty spirit (*esprit*), or one capable of emptying itself of its “acquired knowledge,” is a mind capable of discarding its presuppositions, of opening its eyes a little, of devoting itself to the observation of the clinamen in Althusser’s terms. It is there that the possibility of contemplating from the perspective of the encounter, of perceiving the singularity, opens up. Where language is the seat of a transcendental chance, at the same time as a manifestation, as a profoundly immanent inscription—such is, in a way, the encounter. In itself, the encounter is not new; but perhaps it has simply never been both the object and the form of the contemplation, or the perspective from which the questioning is posed. The detours, if not the digressions, that its contemplation requires respond to a difficulty, to a problem inherent in its own conceptualization, because the encounter is eminently literary. It is neither a system, nor a dogma, nor a doctrine, nor a structure, nor a concept.

It is the necessary interaction founded by an attentive reading in the heart and at the crossroads of the singularity of all literary phenomena, the point where the oppo-

sitions which marked the history of the thought converge. The meeting is a crossing between symbolic forces imagined by the mind, between the virtual and the material, between two staging of the world that, rather than opposing each other, confront and embrace each other by caressing the braziers of the mind, even if it means that only ashes and a few embers remain. These embers are literary. One could as well say that each of the opposites constitutes an individual and singular atom, and their deviation, their “clinamina,” is observed within the literary, which is the space of the encounters, the space where it is possible to read the encounters, the space of the figures as bearers and mourners of the encounters.

## NOTES

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1. This article is informed by sections of the first part of my doctoral dissertation, which aims to articulate a conception of the literary as an encounter that refuses to be confined to simple duality. It proposes an epistemological reflection on the literary phenomenon and on the exemplarity of Klossowski’s figure in such a context. This article focuses on the hermeneutic proposition of the dissertation and on its proposal of a new method of reading. My original translation and development of relevant sections were first realized in the context of CCLA’s 2020 conference, which allowed some feedback on the then-unfinished dissertation, and has, in turn, informed my forthcoming book *Pierre Klossowski: Expériences sensibles et suprasensibles à travers Le bain de Diane*.
  2. Since it also always has to do with how we can interpret the links that unite such opposites—whether it is simply the art of interpreting sacred or profane texts, or the art of interpreting the world more broadly, as proposed by modern hermeneutics: “Appelons herméneutique l’ensemble des connaissances et des techniques qui permettent de faire parler les signes et de découvrir leur sens” (Foucault, *Les Mots* 44). The history of hermeneutics also crosses the history of thought, mainly from Aristotle to the Fathers of the Church up to modern hermeneutics, from Schleiermacher to Dilthey and then declining within phenomenology, from the ontological thought of Heidegger to Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, passing by Charles Taylor, to Ricœur and Foucault in whom the hermeneutic, differently of course, is articulated mainly via a thought of the self, notably in *L’herméneutique du sujet* (1981-82) of Foucault who is interested in the Greek “concern for oneself” as the horizon of “know thyself.”
  3. It is precisely, in the philosophical tradition, this “how” that Althusser examines. The examination of the “how” is also what is at stake in a literature as encounter, that is, of an interpretation that swerves from the question “what does it represent?” or “what is it?” but rather “how does it represent?” It is by imagining, by imaging, concretely, Althusser’s rain, and thus, by passing through the concreteness of the image, by imagining the raindrops falling on a tree that the richness of the hermeneutic project proposed in this article appears even more strongly: a hermeneutic of the encounter as a hermeneutic of the “how” and not of the “what” or of the “what is it?” Such a hermeneutic allows us to think at the same time with, outside, and against the categories quite radically.
  4. Literature understood as encounters reopens questions related to hermeneutics as either totalizing, its function in this case being the establishment of a single authoritative meaning; or as pluralizing, thus allowing for multiple and perhaps contradictory meanings. The use of truth here refers to hermeneutics as totalizing, that is, as a general truth that legitimates and closes the possibilities of interpretation. The form of truth that is rendered possible by a hermeneutics of the encounter is much more akin to a form of perspectivism, a philosophy which, not surprisingly, can be traced in Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Leibniz, and which Deleuze summarizes in his lecture on Leibniz and the fold of December 16, 1986: “Si bien que la théorie du point de vue introduit en philosophie ce qu’il faut bien appeler un perspectivisme. Lorsque Nietzsche, c’est précisément au nom d’un tel perspectivisme, et chez Nietzsche comme chez Leibniz, le perspectivisme ne signifiera pas à chacun

sa vérité, mais il signifiera le point de vue comme condition de la manifestation du vrai” (Deleuze, *Sur Leibniz*; emphasis mine), and in his book *Le Pli*: “Le perspectivisme chez Leibniz, et aussi chez Nietzsche, chez Williams et chez Henry James, chez Whitehead, est bien un relativisme, mais ce n’est pas le relativisme qu’on croit. Ce n’est pas une variation de la vérité d’après le sujet, mais la condition sous laquelle apparaît au sujet la vérité d’une variation. C’est l’idée même de la perspective baroque” (Deleuze, *Le Pli* 27).

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