

## THE THINKING OF THE OPACITY OF THE WORLD

*Édouard Glissant*

*The thinking of the opacity* of the world, at another end of this unravelling, opacity that can be neither defined nor commented upon.

To acclaim the right to opacity, to turn opacity into another humanism, is nonetheless to renounce reducing the truth of the expanse down to the measure of one sole transparency, which would be mine, which I would impose. It is to establish that the inextricable, planted in the obscure, also drives clarities that are not imperative.

The portion of opacity arranged between the Other and myself, and mutually agreed upon (this is not an apartheid), expands the other's freedom and also confirms my free choice in a relationship of pure sharing, in which exchange and discovery and respect are infinite, *that goes without saying*.

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Because you have the right to be obscure, first to yourself.

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Opacity is not derangement, it has its own transparency, not imposed, which one must know how to deserve to feel. A shifting play of archipelagos, where each relation, *in the first place*, expands and becomes clear. Opacity welcomes and collects the mystery and

the obvious of all poetics, that is to say all details of the places of the world, without ever offending them and without trying to reduce them one at a time. Opacity does not favour any essence, which would be withdrawn into self-satisfaction. It speaks in accessible probabilities the thick dimensions of beings-as-Being, it is a flash of lightning that hesitates and overwhelms: poetry. The thick dimension is not an impassable obscurity, and the philosophies of the Relation distinguish themselves first by their multiplicity, which is why we can talk about one philosophy as easily as the philosophies of the Relation. Opacity is an attribute of beings-as-Being which philosophy takes account of without clarifying.

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There is no landscape that is not obscure, underneath its pleasing transparencies, if you speak to it endlessly.

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I touched this traveller's tree, which I transplanted into the other season of Lent. Its branches swept away by Hurricane Dean. I speak to it softly. In the flash of a week, it grew new leaves, pale green. I do not command it, it borrows and gives to me. It is in front of Rocher du Diamant.

*Translated from the French by Franck Loric*

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