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From Enlightenment  
to the Divine Darkness:  
The Apophatic Return

**Introduction:  
From Serial-Produced Realities  
to the Horror of the Real**

Two years ago I was surprised to note that my reading of Deleuze had acquired a Byzantine context. A “Byzantine” Deleuze had begun to exist alongside Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory Palamas, and John Climacus. How did this intertwining happen? Where was the point of contact? One might view this as a symptom and engage in self-analysis. One can likewise examine the congruencies among various types of thought. On the one hand, Deleuze’s reevaluation of empiricism had been provoked, in my opinion, by Lacanian psychoanalysis, which in turn has parallels with the monastic practice of introspection. On the other hand, Deleuze’s constant refrain—Whatever is said, there is only one signified: the oneness of being—situates him in the tradition of Parmenides and the Areopagite. In what follows, I will discuss the intersection of these two concepts—*empiricism*, which generated schizoanalysis, and *the One*. The second question I attempt to answer in this essay is how the texture of Deleuze’s thought made my reading of Palamas, the Areopagite, and John Climacus practically possible.

That the real is absent is an opinion I’ve heard for a long time and from a number of sources.<sup>1</sup> We should understand this to mean that an opinion of the real has vanished, or that the single form of reality has disappeared. Realities are serial-produced. The individual claims its own reality, and each individual state

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<sup>1</sup> This essay was inspired by discussions in the Philosophy Cafe of the GEZ-21 Gallery of Experimental Sound (Saint Petersburg). Our polemics returned again and again to the question of where the subjective and ontological foundations of a critical attitude to the world arise, and whether they can be overcome. I wish to thank my opponents in these discussions: Ovsei, Anatoly, and Mikhail. I would also like to thank Ilya Kliger (Yale University) and Sumanth Gopinath (University of Minnesota) for their timely assistance in tracking down quotations and references in English-language publications.