

bility of their common transformations, of their birth one from another and of their ceaseless becoming.

That the history of our tonalities itself has its own possibility, identical to the possibility of each of these tonalities, identical to the absolute, therefore that this history is that of the absolute, willed and prescribed by it, the becoming and the explanation of that which it is and of its history, all of this escapes a sort of existence, this sort of existence which understands itself and what actually happens to itself in the form of pains and joys as a haphazard succession of opaque feelings, as a chaotic parade whose astonished witness it remains.³ This is why life for the majority of men, the passage in them of feelings one after the other is most often no more than a non-understood eternal passage, the eternal return of the similar and the comparable, and the boredom over that which has always been known. What these feelings are is what escapes them; the interior revelation of the absolute in its concrete modes, like the exterior revelation of which Kierkegaard speaks, is for them no more than [838] an envelope which they send on without knowing its contents; and philosophy has merely systematized this spontaneous existential understanding of itself and made it into a concept when, since Aristotle's time, to the essence it opposes accidents and the contingency of what is historical as well as the irrationality of becoming, when, moreover, it interprets this kingdom of contingency, in its opposition to the world of pure possibilities and their eidetic structures, as the kingdom of effectiveness.

However, here we must understand what it means for history, for the history of existence and its tonalities, to be situated in the essence and to belong to it, to be situated in the possibility of the absolute. Just as the fundamental tonalities inscribed in the structure of Being as pure possibilities and belonging to it do not thereby constitute simple possibilities, so likewise the history stemming from them and finding its own possibility in Being itself does not present itself as the simple possibility of a history which must seek elsewhere the condition of its effectiveness and content. Once a man is alive, he experiences feelings, and this not by reason of circumstances in which he might be placed,⁴ not by reason

³ "Old joys, old sorrows, like geese in single file," Paul Verlaine, *Sagesse*, I, vi, in *Œuvres complètes*, I. (Paris: Messein, 1953) 195. [My translation]

⁴ This puts an end to the Freudian theory of affectivity which looks for the origin of our affective life and its developments in anxiety or more precisely in the conditions which produce anxiety and in the traumatism of birth.

of his psycho-physical, characterological or hereditary structure, not by reason of everything which apparently constitutes the particularity of his life, but upon the foundation of the essence of life in him, of this essence which makes his life singular and at the same time effective, and makes this life become reality in determined tonalities. Like these tonalities and for the same reason, the passage which leads from one to the other, the history in which they are taken up is itself determined. In Being, in the suffering of suffering and its enjoyment, are found the slumbering, and yet effective, possibilities of all our feelings. [839] That which 'slumbers' in them is likewise effective, namely the consubstantial passage to their essence, willed by each of them, from one to the other. The essence of life, as Nietzsche recognized, though in the assertoric mode and hence as an ontic characteristic and not as an ontological property of life which is identical to its essence, is an original power of oscillating between suffering and joy, a power anterior to these feelings as their source, as that from which they necessarily flow, viz. a power which becomes reality in them.

Take suffering, for example; let us consider it as a simple tonality, as one determination of existence among others. However, it is not merely this, it is not merely this determined tonality which presents itself for what it is, as suffering. In it resides and takes place the interior task which makes it to be, its Being-given-to-itself in the self-experiencing of self which constitutes it. The essence of affectivity, the original essence of revelation and of Being, this is what is present in it and determines it. The essence present in suffering and which determines it, however, is not present in it as an unperceived structure and one which analysis would discover later on; it is the self-experiencing of self and its effectiveness, it is that which reveals itself originally to itself, it is life. It is precisely because the essence present in suffering is the self-experiencing of self and its effectiveness and that which reveals itself originally to itself, that suffering itself reveals itself to itself, that it is what it is, i.e. suffering and a mode of life. *In suffering is revealed that which reveals suffering, viz. the absolute.* Suffering cannot first reveal itself in order to reveal to us later the absolute through suffering; rather the absolute is that which first reveals itself, the original revelation and its effectiveness. The original and effective revelation of the absolute does not itself precede suffering; it arises at the same time as suffering; it is its arising, the Being-given-to-itself of suffering, the self-experiencing of self in and through which suffering 'arrives' and realizes itself. It is in this sense that [840] suffering reveals the absolute, viz. in the sense that its revelation

unfolding and development of concrete pathetic intersubjectivity and not the laws of the pathos of these subjectivities in their internal co-belonging at the basis of life. For Husserl, the principle and model of our access to being, whether it is a question of our own ego or that of the other, is not the laws of desire and accomplishment, of suffering and enjoyment, of feeling and resentment, of love and hate, but once again, the laws of perception. In what is its ownmost (and, I would add, its most horrendous), it is a phenomenology of perception applied to the other.

What, then, could one say about an experience of the other in which perception would play no role at all? As an example, let us consider a concrete community, the one formed by the admirers of Kandinsky. Let us suppose that the members of this community never met and do not know one another. This may either be due to their small number or the free fantasy through which the eidetic analysis is developed. One will say that if these egos are together, although they have never been objects of perception for one another, there is nonetheless something objective that unites them, namely, the work that they admire. But for Kandinsky, the site of the work of art is not objective. The universe of painting is not the universe of the visible, if the being of each color is only in reality its im-pression in us and if the being of each plastic form is the invisible force that it traces, namely, the radically subjective and radically immanent "I can" of the original body, which is this impression and this pure force. Where the ego stands, there too stands its being with the other. What is shared in common, outside of representation and time and so permitting a community outside of representation and time, is the pathos of the work. This is at the same time the pathos of Kandinsky who creates it and of all those who "admire" it, which is to say those who have become this pathos.

Let us consider another community that is vaster and thus judged to be more significant: the community with the dead. To say that this community carries within itself the traces, in memory, of its absent perceptual support would apply only to the dead whom we have known but not to all of the others who are the humanity in us. As for the dead whom we have known, if perception constituted the key element of our common being with them, would this common being not disappear with perception itself or at least only remain as an object of representation, memory, and not as this pathos within us that is concealed from our acts of thought and secretly determines them?

But this becomes more and more troubling. If we reflect on this, the dead in our life cannot be identified with those who have departed from this world. Many still live whom we could revisit and thus see again, so

that this visit would change nothing in us about their death, except to make it more apparent. Thus one must say that the life and death of the other, being in common or its interruption, in no way belongs to perception, neither to its factual possibility or impossibility. One might even think that the impossibility to perceive would be the condition for being in common. Kierkegaard goes so far as to say that being in common with Christ—what he calls "contemporaneity"—is more difficult for those who would see Christ than those who do not. That is one feature of what he calls "the strange acoustics of the spiritual world," which holds that the laws of being in common are not in fact those belonging to things and the laws of perception. Here (*hic*) and there (*illuc*) with respect to my relation to the other in the originally pathetic intersubjectivity in which I am with the other have nothing to do with the *hic* and *illuc* spoken about in the fifth Cartesian meditation, where they refer to the *hic* and *illuc* of bodies perceived in the primordial sphere of ownness.

This spiritual acoustics, which defies the laws of perception, defines our concrete relation to the other. The work of Kafka, for example, rests on this, as does Rilke's observation that it is among wives of alcoholics that one stands furthest from one another. If the modern world eliminates every form of community with the dead as much as it can—this community that played such a large role in past societies—if it detests even the idea of this, to the point of wanting, according to Nadezhda Mandelstam, to even suppress the mere mention of it, if it throws itself into what is there right before it at each instant, is this not because—as a world of science, technology and the media—it has pushed objectivity to the point of madness? Is it not also because being in common with the dead resides in this radically immanent, nonworldly, and pathetic subjectivity that we are?

This does not only pertain to the obscure and problematic concept of being in common with the dead or a god, but also to every possible being in common. It is always first and foremost carried out in us as an immediate modification of absolute subjectivity, as an actual and concrete being in common: the mother with the infant, the hypnotist with the hypnotized, the lover with the beloved, the analyst with the patient, and so on. Before intentionally grasping the other as other and before the perception of the other's body, every experience of the other in the sense of a real being with the other occurs in us as an affect. It is not a noematic or noetic mode of presentation that founds the access to the other; instead, it is a givenness consisting of transcendental affectivity and thus of life itself. The universal *a priori* of the experience of the other in its original modalities is located in the essence of life, not in intentionality and constitution. When perception enters into this experience and seems to play the