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## TEMPORALITY

Le temps est le *sens* de la vie (*sens*: comme on dit le sens d'un cours d'eau, le sens d'une phrase, le sens d'une étoffe, le sens de l'odorat).

Claudiel, *Art Poétique*.

Der Sinn des Daseins ist die Zeitlichkeit.

Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 331.

In so far as, in the preceding pages, we have already met time on our way to subjectivity, this is primarily because all our experiences, inasmuch as they are ours, arrange themselves in terms of before and after, because temporality, in Kantian language, is the form taken by our inner sense, and because it is the most general characteristic of 'psychic facts'. But in reality, and without prejudging what the analysis of time will disclose, we have already discovered, between time and subjectivity, a much more intimate relationship. We have just seen that the subject, who cannot be a series of psychic events, nevertheless cannot be eternal either. It remains for him to be temporal not by reason of some vagary of the human make-up, but by virtue of an inner necessity. We are called upon to conceive the subject and time as communicating from within. We can now say of temporality what we said earlier about

sexuality and spatiality, for example: existence can have no external or contingent attribute. It cannot be anything—spatial, sexual, temporal—without being so in its entirety, without taking up and carrying forward its ‘attributes’ and making them into so many dimensions of its being, with the result that an analysis of any one of them that is at all searching really touches upon subjectivity itself. There are no principal and subordinate problems: all problems are concentric. To analyse time is not to follow out the consequences of a pre-established conception of subjectivity, it is to gain access, through time, to its concrete structure. If we succeed in understanding the subject, it will not be in its pure form, but by seeking it at the intersection of its dimensions. We need, therefore, to consider time itself, and it is by following through its internal dialectic that we shall be led to revise our idea of the subject.

We say that time passes or flows by. We speak of the course of time. The water that I see rolling by was made ready a few days ago in the mountains, with the melting of the glacier; it is now in front of me and makes its way towards the sea into which it will finally discharge itself. If time is similar to a river, it flows from the past towards the present and the future. The present is the consequence of the past, and the future of the present. But this often repeated metaphor is in reality extremely confused. For, *looking at the things themselves*, the melting of the snows and what results from this are not successive events, or rather the very notion of event has no place in the objective world. When I say that the day before yesterday the glacier produced the water which is passing at this moment, I am tacitly assuming the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the world, and I am comparing his successive views: he was there when the snows melted and followed the water down, or else, from the edge of the river and having waited two days, he sees the pieces of wood that he threw into the water at its source. The ‘events’ are shapes cut out by a finite observer from the spatio-temporal totality of the objective world. But on the other hand, if I consider the world itself, there is simply one indivisible and changeless being in it. Change presupposes a certain position which I take up and from which I see things in procession before me: there are no events without someone to whom they happen and whose finite perspective is the basis of their individuality. Time presupposes a view of time. It is, therefore, not like a river, not a flowing substance. The fact that the

metaphor based on this comparison has persisted from the time of Heraclitus to our own day is explained by our surreptitiously putting into the river a witness of its course. We do this already when we say that the stream discharges itself, for this amounts to conceiving, where there is merely a thing entirely external to itself, an individuality or interior of the stream which manifests itself outside. Now, no sooner have I introduced an observer, whether he follows the river or whether he stands on the bank and observes its flow, than temporal relationships are reversed. In the latter case, the volume of water already carried by is not moving towards the future, but sinking into the past; what is to come is on the side of the source, for time does not come from the past. It is not the past that pushes the present, nor the present that pushes the future, into being; the future is not prepared behind the observer, it is a brooding presence moving to meet him, like a storm on the horizon. If the observer sits in a boat and is carried by the current, we may say that he is moving downstream towards his future, but the future lies in the new landscapes which await him at the estuary, and the course of time is no longer the stream itself: it is the landscape as it rolls by for the moving observer. Time is, therefore, not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to record. It arises from my relation to things. Within things themselves, the future and the past are in a kind of eternal state of pre-existence and survival; the water which will flow by tomorrow is at this moment at its source, the water which has just passed is now a little further downstream in the valley. What is past or future for me is present in the world. It is often said that, within things themselves, the future is not yet, the past is no longer, while the present, strictly speaking, is infinitesimal, so that time collapses. That is why Leibnitz was able to define the objective world as *mens momentanea*, and why Saint Augustine, in order to constitute time, required, besides the presence of the present, a presence of the past and of the future. But let us be clear about what they mean. If the objective world is incapable of sustaining time, it is not because it is in some way too narrow, and that we need to add to it a bit of past and a bit of future. Past and future exist only too unmistakably in the world, they exist in the present, and what being itself lacks in order to be of the temporal order, is the not-being of elsewhere, formerly and tomorrow. The objective world is too much of a plenum for there to be time. Past

and future withdraw of their own accord from being and move over into subjectivity in search, not of some real support, but, on the contrary, of a possibility of not-being which accords with their nature. If we separate the objective world from the finite perspectives which open upon it, and posit it in itself, we find everywhere in it only so many instances of 'now'. These instances of 'now', moreover, not being present to anybody, have no temporal character and could not occur in sequence. The definition of time which is implicit in the comparisons undertaken by common sense, and which might be formulated as 'a succession of instances of now'<sup>1</sup> has not even the disadvantage of treating past and future as presents: it is inconsistent, since it destroys the very notion of 'now', and that of succession.

We should, then, gain nothing by transferring into ourselves the time that belongs to things, if we repeated 'in consciousness' the mistake of defining it as a succession of instances of now. Yet this is what psychologists do when they try to 'explain' consciousness of the past in terms of memories, and consciousness of the future in terms of the projection of these memories ahead of us. The refutation of 'physiological theories' of memory, in Bergson for example, is undertaken in the domain of causal explanation; it consists in showing that paths in the brain and other bodily expedients are not adequate causes of the phenomena of memory; that, for example, nothing can be found in the body to account for the order of disappearance of memories in cases of progressive aphasia. The discussion conducted on these lines certainly discredits the idea of a bodily storage of the past: the body is no longer a receptacle of engrams, but an organ of mimicry with the function of ensuring the intuitive realization of the 'intentions'<sup>2</sup> of consciousness. But these intentions cling on to memories preserved 'in the unconscious', and the presence of the past in consciousness remains a simple factual presence; it has passed unnoticed that our best reason for rejecting the physiological preservation of the past is equally a reason for rejecting its 'psychological preservation', and that reason is that no preservation, no physiological or psychic 'trace' of the past can make consciousness of the past understandable. This table bears traces of my

<sup>1</sup> 'Nacheinander der Jetztpunkte,' Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, for example p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, p. 137, note 1, p. 139.

past life, for I have carved my initials on it and spilt ink on it. But these traces in themselves do not refer to the past: they are present; and, in so far as I find in them signs of some 'previous' event, it is because I derive my sense of the past from elsewhere, because I carry this particular significance within myself. If my brain stores up traces of the bodily process which accompanied one of my perceptions, and if the appropriate nervous influx passes once more through these already fretted channels, my perception will reappear, but it will be a fresh perception, weakened and unreal perhaps, but in no case will this perception, which is present, be capable of pointing to a past event, unless I have some other viewpoint on my past enabling me to recognize it as memory, which runs counter to the hypothesis. If we now go on to substitute 'psychic traces' for physiological ones, and if our perceptions are preserved in an unconscious, the difficulty will be the same as before: a preserved perception is a perception, it continues to exist, it persists in the present, and it does not open behind us that dimension of escape and absence that we call the past. A preserved fragment of the lived-through past can be at the most no more than an occasion for thinking of the past, but it is not the past which is compelling recognition; recognition, when we try to derive it from any content whatever, always precedes itself. Reproduction presupposes recognition, and cannot be understood as such unless I have in the first place a sort of direct contact with the past in its own domain. Nor can one, *a fortiori*, construct the future out of contents of consciousness: no actual content can be taken, even equivocally, as evidence concerning the future, since the future has not even been in existence and cannot, like the past, set its mark upon us. The only conceivable way, therefore, of trying to explain the relation of future to present would be by putting it on the same footing as that between present and past. When I consider the long procession of my past states, I see that my present is always passing, and I can steal this passage, treat my immediate past as a remote one, and my actual present as past: ahead of it is then a vacuum, and this is the future. Looking ahead would seem in reality to be retrospection, and the future a projection of the past. But even if, *per impossible*, I could construct consciousness of the past with transferred presents, they certainly could not open a future for me. Even if, in fact, we form an idea of the future with the help of what we have seen, the

fact remains that, in order to project it ahead of us, we need in the first place a sense of the future. If prospection is retrospection, it is in any case an anticipatory retrospection, and how could one anticipate if one had no sense of the future? It is said that we guess 'by analogy' that this inimitable present will, like all the others, pass away. But for there to be an analogy between presents that have elapsed and the actual present, the latter must be given not only as present, it must already announce itself as what will soon be past, we must feel the pressure upon it of a future intent on dispossessing it; in short the course of time must be primarily not only the passing of present to past, but also that of the future to the present. If it can be said that all prospection is anticipatory retrospection, it can equally well be said that all retrospection is prospection in reverse: I know that I was in Corsica before the war, because I know that the war was on the horizon of my trip there. The past and the future cannot be mere concepts abstracted by us from our perceptions and recollections, mere denominations for the actual series of 'psychic facts'. Time is thought of by us before its parts, and temporal relations make possible the events in time. Correspondingly, therefore, the subject must not be himself situated in it, in order to be able to be present in intention to the past as to the future. Let us no longer say that time is a 'datum of consciousness'; let us be more precise and say that consciousness deploys or constitutes time. Through the ideal nature of time, it ceases to be imprisoned in the present.

But does it enjoy an opening on to a past and a future? It is no longer beset by the present and by 'contents' it travels freely from a past and a future which are not far removed from it, since it constitutes them as past and future, and since they are its immanent objects, to a present which is not near to it, since it is present only in virtue of the relations which consciousness establishes between past, present and future. But then has not a consciousness thus freed lost all notion of what future, past and even present can possibly be? Is not the time that it constitutes similar in every detail to the real time the impossibility of which we have demonstrated; is it not a series of instances of 'now', which are presented to nobody, since nobody is involved in them? Are we not still just as far away from understanding what the future, the past and the present, and the passage between them, can possibly be? Time as the immanent object of a consciousness is time brought down to one

uniform level, in other words it is no longer time at all. There can be time only if it is not completely deployed, only provided that past, present and future do not all three have their being in the same sense. It is of the essence of time to be in process of self-production, and not to be; never, that is, to be completely constituted. Constituted time, the series of possible relations in terms of before and after, is not time itself, but the ultimate recording of time, the result of its *passage*, which objective thinking always presupposes yet never manages to fasten on to. It is spatial, since its moments co-exist spread out before thought<sup>3</sup>; it is a present, because consciousness is contemporary with all times. It is a setting distinct from me and unchanging, in which nothing either elapses or happens. There must be another true time, in which I learn the nature of flux and transience itself. It is indeed true that I should be incapable of perceiving any point in time without a before and an after, and that, in order to be aware of the relationship between the three terms, I must not be absorbed into any one of them: that time, in short, needs a synthesis. But it is equally true that this synthesis must always be undertaken afresh, and that any supposition that it can be anywhere brought to completion involves the negation of time. It is indeed the dream of philosophers to be able to conceive an 'eternity of life', lying beyond permanence and change, in which time's productivity is pre-eminently contained, and yet a thetic consciousness of time which stands above it and embraces it merely destroys the phenomenon of time. If we are in fact destined to make contact with a sort of eternity, it will be at the core of our experience of time, and not in some non-temporal subject whose function it is to conceive and posit it. The problem is how to make time explicit as it comes into being and makes

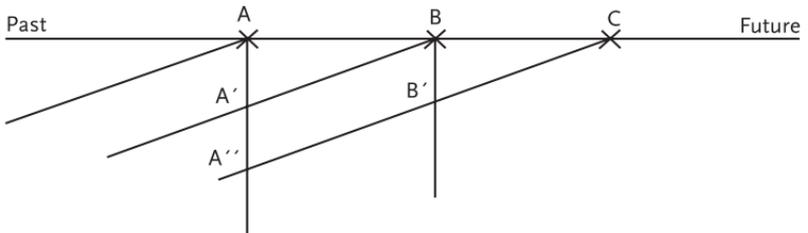
<sup>3</sup> In order to arrive at authentic time, it is neither necessary nor sufficient to condemn the spatialization of time as does Bergson. It is not necessary, since time is exclusive of space only if we consider space as objectified in advance, and ignore that primordial spatiality which we have tried to describe, and which is the abstract form of our presence in the world. It is not sufficient since, even when the systematic translation of time into spatial terms has been duly stigmatized, we may still fall very far short of an authentic intuition of time. This is what happened to Bergson. When he says that duration 'snowballs upon itself', and when he postulates memories in themselves accumulating in the unconscious, he makes time out of a preserved present, and evolution out of what is evolved.

itself evident, time at all times underlying the notion of time, not as an object of our knowledge, but as a dimension of our being.

It is in my 'field of presence' in the widest sense—this moment that that I spend working, with, behind it, the horizon of the day that has elapsed, and, in front of it, the evening and night—that I make contact with time, and learn to know its course. The remote past has also its temporal order, and its position in time in relation to my present, but it has these in so far as it has been present itself, that it has been 'in its time' traversed by my life, and carried forward to this moment. When I call up a remote past, I reopen time, and carry myself back to a moment in which it still had before it a future horizon now closed, and a horizon of the immediate past which is today remote. Everything, therefore, causes me to revert to the field of presence as the primary experience in which time and its dimensions make their appearance unalloyed, with no intervening distance and with absolute self-evidence. It is here that we see a future sliding into the present and on into the past. Nor are these three dimensions given to us through discrete acts: I do not form a mental picture of my day, it weighs upon me with all its weight, it is still there, and though I may not recall any detail of it, I have the impending power to do so, I still 'have it in hand'.<sup>4</sup> In the same way, I do not think of the evening to come and its consequences, and yet it 'is there', like the back of a house of which I can see only the façade, or like the background beneath a figure. Our future is not made up exclusively of guesswork and daydreams. Ahead of what I see and perceive, there is, it is true, nothing more actually visible, but my world is carried forward by lines of intentionality which trace out in advance at least the style of what is to come (although we are always on the watch, perhaps to the day of our death, for the appearance of something else). The present itself, in the narrow sense, is not posited. The paper, my fountain-pen, are indeed there for me, but I do not explicitly perceive them. I do not so much perceive objects as reckon with an environment; I seek support in my tools, and am at my task rather than confronting it. Husserl uses the terms *protections* and *retentions* for the intentionalities which anchor me to an

<sup>4</sup> 'Noch im Griff behalte', Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, pp. 390 and ff.

environment. They do not run from a central I, but from my perceptual field itself, so to speak, which draws along in its wake its own horizon of retentions, and bites into the future with its protections. I do not pass through a series of instances of now, the images of which I preserve and which, placed end to end, make a line. With the arrival of every moment, its predecessor undergoes a change: I still have it in hand and it is still there, but already it is sinking away below the level of presents; in order to retain it, I need to reach through a thin layer of time. It is still the preceding moment, and I have the power to rejoin it as it was just now; I am not cut off from it, but still it would not belong to the past unless something had altered, unless it were beginning to outline itself against, or project itself upon, my present, whereas a moment ago it *was* my present. When a third moment arrives, the second undergoes a new modification; from being a retention it becomes the retention of a retention, and the layer of time between it and me thickens. One can, as Husserl does, represent this phenomenon diagrammatically. In order to make it complete, the symmetrical perspective of protections would have to be added. Time is not a line, but a network of intentionalities.



From Husserl (*Zeitbewusstsein*, p. 22). Horizontal line: series of 'present moments'. Oblique lines: *Abschattungen* of the same 'present moments' seen from an ulterior 'present moment'. Vertical lines: Successive *Abschattungen* of one and the same 'present moment'.

It will doubtless be maintained that this description and this diagram do not bring us one step nearer to a solution. When we pass from A to B, and then on to C, A is projected or outlined as A' and then as A''. For A' to be recognized as a retention or *Abschattung* of A, and A'' of A', and

even for the transformation of A into A' to be experienced as such, is there not needed an identifying synthesis linking A, A', A'' and all other possible *Abschattungen*, and does this not amount to making A into an ideal unity as Kant requires? And yet we know that with this intellectual synthesis there will cease to be any time at all. A and all previous moments of time will indeed be identifiable by me, and I shall be in a way rescued from time which runs them into one another and blurs their identity. But at the same time I shall have lost all sense of before and after which is provided by this flux, and nothing will any longer serve to distinguish the temporal sequence from spatial multiplicity. Husserl introduced the notion of retention, and held that I still have the immediate past in hand, precisely for the purpose of conveying that I do not posit the past, or construct it from an *Abschattung* really distinct from it and by means of an express act; but that I reach it in its recent, yet already elapsed, thisness. What is given to me is not in the first place A', A'', or A''', nor do I go back from these 'outlines' to their original A, as one goes back from the sign to its significance. What is given to me is A transparently visible through A', then the two through A'', and so on, as I see a pebble through the mass of water which moves over it. There are certainly identifying syntheses, but only in the express memory and voluntary recollection of the remote past, that is, in those modes derived from consciousness of the past. For example, I may be uncertain about the date of a memory: I have before me a certain scene, let us suppose, and I do not know to what point of time to assign it, the memory has lost its anchorage, and I may then arrive at an intellectual identification based on the causal order of events, for example, I had this suit made before the armistice, since no more English cloth has been available since then. But in this case it is not the past itself that I reach. On the contrary, for when I rediscover the concrete origin of the memory, it is because it falls naturally into a certain current of fear and hope running from Munich to the outbreak of war; it is, therefore, because I recapture time that is lost; because, from the moment in question to my present, the chain of retentions and the overlapping horizons coming one after the other ensure an unbroken continuity. The objective landmarks in relation to which I assign a place to my recollection in the mediatory identification, and the intellectual synthesis generally, have themselves a temporal significance only because

gradually, step by step, the synthesis of apprehension links me to my whole actual past. There can, therefore, be no question of assimilating the latter to the former. The fact that the *Abschattungen* A' and A'' appear to me as *Abschattungen* of A, is not to be explained by the fact that they all participate in an ideal unity A which is their common ground. It is because through them I obtain the point A itself, in its unchallengeable individuality, which is for ever established by its passage into the present, and because I see springing from it the *Abschattungen* A', A'' . . . In Husserl's language, beneath the 'intentionality of the act', which is thethetic consciousness of an object, and which, in intellectual memory for example, converts 'this' into an idea, we must recognize an 'operative' intentionality (*fungierende Intentionalität*)<sup>5</sup> which makes the former possible, and which is what Heidegger terms transcendence. My present outruns itself in the direction of an immediate future and an immediate past and impinges upon them where they actually are, namely in the past and in the future themselves. If the past were available to us only in the form of express recollections, we should be continually tempted to recall it in order to verify its existence, and thus resemble the patient mentioned by Scheler, who was constantly turning round in order to reassure himself that things were really there—whereas in fact we feel it behind us as an incontestable acquisition. In order to have a past or a future we do not have to bring together, by means of an intellectual act, a series of *Abschattungen*, for they possess a natural and primordial unity, and what is announced through them is the past or the future itself. Such is the paradox of what might be termed, with Husserl, the 'passive synthesis' of time<sup>6</sup>—and of a term which is clearly not a solution, but merely a pointer to the problem.

Light begins to be shed on the problem if we remember that our diagram represents an instantaneous cross-section of time. What there really is, is not a past, present and future, not discrete instants A, B and C, nor really distinct *Abschattungen* A', A'', B', nor finally a host of retentions on the one hand and protections on the other. The upsurge of a

<sup>5</sup> Husserl, *Zeitbewusstsein*, p. 430. *Formale und transzendente Logik*, p. 208. See Fink, *Das Problem der Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls*, p. 286.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, *Formale und Transzendente Logik*, pp. 256–7.

fresh present does not *cause* a heaping up of the past and a tremor of the future; the fresh present is the passage of future to present, and of former present to past, and when time begins to move, it moves throughout its whole length. The 'instants' A, B and C are not successively in *being*, but *differentiate* themselves from each other, and correspondingly A passes into A' and thence into A". In short, the system of retentions collects into itself at each instant what was, an instant earlier, the system of protentions. There is, then, not a multiplicity of linked phenomena, but one single phenomenon of running-off. Time is the one single movement appropriate to itself in all its parts, as a gesture includes all the muscular contractions necessary for its execution. When we pass from B to C, there is, as it were, a bursting, or a disintegration of B into B', of A' into A", and C itself which, while it was on the way, announced its coming by a continuous emission of *Abschattungen*, has no sooner come into existence than it already begins to lose its substance. 'Time is the means offered to all that is destined to be, to come into existence in order that it may no longer be.'<sup>7</sup> It is nothing but a general flight out of the *Itself*, the one law governing these centrifugal movements, or again, as Heidegger says, an *ek-stase*. While B becomes C, it becomes also B'; and simultaneously A which, while becoming B, had also become A', lapses into A". A, A' and A" on the one hand, and B and B' on the other, are bound together, not by any identifying synthesis, which would fix them at a point in time, but by a transition-synthesis (*Übergangssynthese*), in so far as they issue one from the other, and each of these projections is merely one aspect of the total bursting forth or dehiscence. Hence time, in our primordial experience of it, is not for us a system of objective positions, through which we pass, but a mobile setting which moves away from us, like the landscape seen through a railway carriage window. Yet we do not really believe that the landscape is moving; the gate-keeper at the level crossing is whisked by, but the hill over there scarcely moves at all, and in the same way, though the opening of my day is already receding, the beginning of my week is a fixed point; an objective time is taking shape on the horizon, and should therefore show up in my immediate past. How is this possible? How is it that the temporal *ek-stase* is not an

<sup>7</sup> Claudel, *Art poétique*, p. 57.

absolute disintegration in which the individuality of the moments disappears? It is because the disintegration undoes what the passage from future to present had achieved: C is the culmination of a long concentration which has brought it to maturity; as it was being built up, it made its approach known by progressively fewer *Abschattungen*, for it was approaching *bodily*. When it came into the present it brought with it its genesis, of which it was merely the ultimate expression, and the impending presence of what was to come after it. So that, when D comes into being and pushes C into the past, C is not suddenly bereft of its being; its disintegration is forever the inverse or the consequence of its coming to maturity. In short, since in time being and passing are synonymous, by becoming past, the event does not cease to be. The origin of objective time, with its fixed positions lying beneath our gaze, is not to be sought in any eternal synthesis, but in the mutual harmonizing and overlapping of past and future through the present, and in the very passing of time. Time maintains what it has caused to be, at the very time it expels it from being, because the new being was announced by its predecessor as destined to be, and because, for the latter, to become present was the same thing as being destined to pass away. 'Temporalization is not a succession (*Nacheinander*) of ecstasies. The future is not posterior to the past, or the past anterior to the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as future-which-lapses-into-the-past-by-coming-into-the-present.'<sup>8</sup> Bergson was wrong in explaining the unity of time in terms of its continuity, since that amounts to confusing past, present and future on the excuse that we pass from one to the other by imperceptible transitions; in short, it amounts to denying time altogether. But he was right to stick to the continuity of time as an essential phenomenon. It is simply a matter of elucidating this. Instant C and instant D, however near they are together, are not indistinguishable, for if they were there would be no time; what happens is that they run into each other and C becomes D because C has never been anything but the anticipation of D as present, and of its own lapse into the past. This amounts to saying that each present reasserts the presence of the whole past which it supplants, and anticipates that of all that is to come, and that by definition the present is not shut up

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 350.

within itself, but transcends itself towards a future and a past. What there is, is not a present, then another present which takes its place in being, and not even a present with its vistas of past and future followed by another present in which those vistas are disrupted, so that one and the same spectator is needed to effect the synthesis of successive perspectives: there is one single time which is self-confirmatory, which can bring nothing into existence unless it has already laid that thing's foundations as present and eventual past, and which establishes itself at a stroke.

The past, therefore, is not past, nor the future future. It exists only when a subjectivity is there to disrupt the plenitude of being in itself, to adumbrate a perspective, and introduce non-being into it. A past and a future spring forth when I reach out towards them. I am not, for myself, at this very moment, I am also at this morning or at the night which will soon be here, and though my present is, if we wish so to consider it, this instant, it is equally this day, this year or my whole life. There is no need for a synthesis externally binding together the *tempora* into one single time, because each one of the *tempora* was already inclusive, beyond itself, of the whole open series of other *tempora*, being in internal communication with them, and because the 'cohesion of a life'<sup>9</sup> is given with its *ek-stase*. The passage of one present to the next is not a thing which I conceive, nor do I see it as an onlooker, I effect it; I am already at the impending present as my gesture is already at its goal, I am myself time, a time which 'abides' and does not 'flow' or 'change', which is what Kant says in various places.<sup>10</sup> This idea of a time which anticipates itself is perceived by common sense in its way. Everyone talks about Time, not as the zoologist talks about the dog or the horse, using these as collective nouns, but using it as a proper noun. Sometimes it is even personified. Everyone thinks that there is here a single, concrete being, wholly present in each of its manifestations, as is a man in each of his spoken words. We say that there is time as we say that there is a fountain: the water changes while the fountain remains because its form is preserved; the form is preserved because each successive wave takes over the functions of its predecessor: from being the

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 373.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, pp. 183–4.

thrusting wave in relation to the one in front of it, it becomes, in its turn and in relation to another, the wave that is pushed; and this is attributable to the fact that, from the source to the fountain jet, the waves are not separate; there is only one thrust, and a single air-lock in the flow would be enough to break up the jet. Hence the justification for the metaphor of the river, not in so far as the river flows, but in so far as it is one with itself. This intuition of time's permanence, however, is jeopardized by the action of common sense, which thematizes or objectifies it, which is the surest way of losing sight of it. There is more truth in mythical personifications of time than in the notion of time considered, in the scientific manner, as a variable of nature in itself, or, in the Kantian manner, as a form ideally separable from its matter. There is a temporal style of the world, and time remains the same because the past is a former future and a recent present, the present an impending past and a recent future, the future a present and even a past to come; because, that is, each dimension of time is treated or aimed at as something other than itself and because, finally, there is at the core of time a gaze, or, as Heidegger puts it, an *Augen-blick*, someone through whom the word *as* can have a meaning. We are not saying that time is for someone, which would once more be a case of arraying it out, and immobilizing it. We are saying that time is someone, or that temporal dimensions, in so far as they perpetually overlap, bear each other out and ever confine themselves to making explicit what was implied in each, being collectively expressive of that one single explosion or thrust which is subjectivity itself. We must understand time as the subject and the subject as time. What is perfectly clear, is that this primordial temporality is not a juxtaposition of external events, since it is the power which holds them together while keeping them apart. Ultimate subjectivity is not temporal in the empirical sense of the term: if consciousness of time were made up of successive states of consciousness, there would be needed a new consciousness to be conscious of that succession and so on to infinity. We are forced to recognize the existence of 'a consciousness having behind it no consciousness to be conscious of it'<sup>11</sup> which consequently, is not arrayed

<sup>11</sup> Husserl, *Zeitbewusstsein*, p. 442; 'primäres Bewusstsein . . . das hinter sich kein Bewusstsein mehr hat in dem es bewusst wäre . . .'

out in time, and in which 'being coincides with being for itself'.<sup>12</sup> We may say that ultimate consciousness is 'timeless' (*zeitlose*) in the sense that it is not intratemporal.<sup>13</sup> 'In' my present, if I grasp it while it is still living and with all that it implies, there is an *ek-stase* towards the future and towards the past which reveals the dimensions of time not as conflicting, but as inseparable: to be now is to be from always and for ever. Subjectivity is not in time, because it takes up or lives time, and merges with the cohesion of a life.

Are we coming back in this way to a kind of eternity? I belong to my past and, through the constant interlocking of retentions, I preserve my oldest experiences, which means not some duplicate or image of them, but the experiences themselves, exactly as they were. But the unbroken chain of the fields of presence, by which I am guaranteed access to the past itself, has the essential characteristic of being formed only gradually and one step at a time; each present, in virtue of its very essence as a present, rules out the juxtaposition of other presents and, even in the context of a time long past, I can take in a certain period of my past life only by unfolding it anew according to its own *tempo*. The temporal perspective with its confusion of what is far removed in time, and that sort of 'shrinkage' of the past with oblivion as its ultimate limit, are not accidents of memory, and do not express the debasement into empirical existence of a consciousness of time theoretically all-embracing, but its initial ambiguity: to retain is to hold, but at a distance. Once again, time's 'synthesis' is a transition-synthesis, the action of a life which unfolds, and there is no way of bringing it about other than by living that life, there is no seat of time; time bears itself on and launches itself afresh. Time as an indivisible thrust and transition can alone make possible time as successive multiplicity, and what we place at the origin of intratemporality is a constituting time. When we were engaged above in describing the overlapping of time by itself, we were able to treat the future as a past only by qualifying it as a past to come, and the past as a future only by calling it a future which has occurred; this means that when we came to put all time on the same footing, we had to reassert the originality of each perspective, and derive this

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 471: 'fällt ja Sein und Innerlich-bewusstsein zusammen.'

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 464.

quasi-eternity from the event. What does not pass in time is the passing of time itself. Time restarts itself: the rhythmic cycle and constant form of yesterday, today and tomorrow may well create the illusion that we possess it immediately, in its entirety, as the fountain creates in us a feeling of eternity. But the generality of time is no more than one of its secondary attributes and provides only an inauthentic view of it, since we cannot get as far as conceiving a cycle without drawing a distinction, in terms of time, between the point of arrival and the point of departure. The feeling for eternity is a hypocritical one, for eternity feeds on time. The fountain retains its identity only because of the continuous pressure of water. Eternity is the time that belongs to dreaming, and the dream refers back to waking life, from which it borrows all its structures. Of what nature, then, is that waking time in which eternity takes root? It is the field of presence in the wide sense, with its double horizon or primary past and future, and the infinite openness of those fields of presence that have slid by, or are still possible. Time exists for me only because I am situated in it, that is, because I become aware of myself as already committed to it, because the whole of being is not given to me incarnate, and finally because one sector of being is so close to me that it does not even make up a picture before me—I cannot see it, just as I cannot see my face. Time exists for me because I have a present. It is by coming into the present that a moment of time acquires that indestructible individuality, that ‘once and for all’ quality, which subsequently enables it to make its way through time and produce in us the illusion of eternity. No one of time’s dimensions can be deduced from the rest. But the present (in the wide sense, along with its horizons of primary past and future), nevertheless enjoys a privilege because it is the zone in which being and consciousness coincide. When I recall an earlier perception, or when I imagine a visit to my friend Paul who is in Brazil, my aim, it is true, is the past itself in its true place, or Paul himself in the world, and not some interposed mental object. Nevertheless my act of representation, unlike the experiences represented, is actually present to me; the former is perceived, the latter are merely represented. A former experience, a coming experience, in order that they may appear to me, need to be borne into being by a primary consciousness, which in this case is my inner perception of recollection or imagination. We said above

that we need to arrive at a consciousness with no other behind it, which grasps its own being, and in which, in short, being and being conscious are one and the same thing. This ultimate consciousness is not an eternal subject perceiving itself in absolute transparency, for any such subject would be utterly incapable of making its descent into time, and would, therefore have nothing in common with our experience: it is the consciousness of the present. In the present and in perception, my being and my consciousness are at one, not that my being is reducible to the knowledge I have of it or that it is clearly set out before me—on the contrary perception is opaque, for it brings into play, beneath what I know, my sensory fields which are my primitive alliance with the world—but because ‘to be conscious’ is here nothing but ‘to-be-at . . .’ (*‘être à . . .’*), and because my consciousness of existing merges into the actual gesture of ‘*ex-sistence*’.<sup>14</sup> It is by communicating with the world that we communicate beyond all doubt with ourselves. We hold time in its entirety, and we are present to ourselves because we are present to the world.

That being the case, and since consciousness takes root in being and time by taking up a situation, how are we then to describe it? It must be a comprehensive project, or a view of time and the world which, in order to be apparent to itself, and in order to become explicitly what it is implicitly, that is, consciousness, needs to unfold itself into multiplicity. We must avoid conceiving as real and distinct entities either the indivisible power, or its distinct manifestations; consciousness is neither, it is both; it is the very action of temporalization\*—of ‘flux’, as Husserl has it—a self-anticipatory movement, a flow which never leaves itself. Let us try to give a better description with the help of an example. The novelist or psychologist who fails to go back to ultimate origins and accepts temporalization as something ready made, sees consciousness as a multiplicity of psychic facts among which he tries to establish causal relations. For example,<sup>15</sup> Proust shows how Swann’s love for Odette causes the jealousy which, in turn, *modifies* his love, since Swann, always anxious to win her from any possible rival, has no time

\* Cf. ‘Zeitigung’ (Translator’s note).

<sup>14</sup> We borrow this expression from H. Corbin, *Qu’est-ce que la Métaphysique?*, p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> The example is J. P. Sartre’s in *L’Être et le Néant*, p. 216.

really to look at Odette. In reality, Swann's consciousness is not a lifeless setting in which psychic facts are produced from outside. What we have is not jealousy aroused by love and exerting its own counter-influence, but a certain way of loving in which the whole destiny of that love can be discerned at a glance. Swann has a liking for Odette's person, for that 'spectacle' that she is, for her way of looking, of modulating her voice, and for the way a smile comes to her lips. But what is having a liking for someone? Proust tells us when speaking of another love: it is the feeling of being shut out of the life of the beloved, and of wanting to force one's way in and take complete possession of it. Swann's love does not cause him to feel jealousy. It is jealousy already, and has been from the start. Jealousy does not produce a change in the quality of love: Swann's feeling of pleasure in looking at Odette bore its degeneration within itself, since it was the pleasure of being the only one to do so. The set of psychic facts and casual relationships merely translates in an external fashion a certain view that Swann takes of Odette, a certain way of belonging to another. Swann's jealous love ought, moreover, to be related to the rest of his behaviour, in which case it might well appear as itself a manifestation of an even more general existential structure, which would be Swann's whole personality. Conversely all consciousness as a comprehensive project is outlined or made manifest to itself in those acts, experiences and 'psychic facts' in which it is recognized. Here is where temporality throws light on subjectivity. We shall never manage to understand how a thinking or constituting subject is able to posit or become aware of itself in time. If the *I* is indeed the transcendental Ego of Kant, we shall never understand how it can in any instance merge with its wake in the inner sense, or how the empirical self still remains a self. If, however, the subject is identified with temporality, then self-positing ceases to be a contradiction, because it exactly expresses the essence of living time. Time is 'the affecting of self by self';<sup>16</sup> what exerts the effect is time as a thrust and a passing towards a future: what is affected is time as an unfolded series of presents: the affecting agent and affected recipient are one, because

<sup>16</sup> The expression is applied by Kant to the *Gemüt*. Heidegger transfers it to time: 'Die Zeit is ihrem Wesen nach reine Affektion ihrer selbst.' *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, pp. 180–1.

the thrust of time is nothing but the transition from one present to another. This *ek-stase*, this projection of an indivisible power into an outcome which is already present to it, is subjectivity. The primary flow, says Husserl, does not confine itself to being; it must necessarily provide itself with a 'manifestation of itself' (*Selbsterscheinung*), without our needing to place behind it a second flow which is conscious of it. It 'constitutes itself as a phenomenon within itself'.<sup>17</sup> It is of the essence of time to be not only actual time, or time which flows, but also time which is aware of itself, for the explosion or dehiscence of the present towards a future is the archetype of the relationship of self to self, and it traces out an inferiority or ipseity.<sup>18</sup> Here a light bursts forth,<sup>19</sup> for here we are no longer concerned with a being which reposes within itself, but with a being the whole essence of which, like that of light, is to make visible. It is through temporality that there can be, without contradiction, ipseity, significance and reason. That is seen even in the commonly held notion of time. We mark out the phases or stages of our life: for example, we consider everything that bears a significant relationship to our concerns at the moment as part of our present, thus recognizing implicitly that time and significance are but one thing. Subjectivity is not motionless identity with itself; as with time, it is of its essence, in order to be genuine subjectivity, to open itself to an Other and to go forth from itself. We must not envisage the subject as constituting, and the multiplicity of its experiences or *Erlebnisse* as constituted: we must not treat the transcendental Ego as the true subject and the empirical self as its shadow or its wake. If that were their relationship to each other, we could withdraw into the constituting agency, and such reflection would destroy time, which would be left without date or place. The fact that even our purest reflection appears to us as retrospective in time, and that our reflection on the flux is actually inserted into the flux,<sup>20</sup> shows that the most precise consciousness of which we are capable is always, as it were, affected by itself or

<sup>17</sup> Husserl, *Zeitbewusstsein*, p. 436.

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, op. cit., p. 181: 'Als reine Selbstaffektion bildet (die Zeit) ursprünglich die endliche Selbstheit dergestalt dass das Selbst so etwas wie Selbstbewusstsein kann.'

<sup>19</sup> Heidegger refers somewhere to the 'Gelichtetheit' of the *Dasein*.

<sup>20</sup> What Husserl, in his unpublished writings, terms: *Einströmen*.

given to itself, and that the word consciousness has no meaning independently of this duality.

Nothing said of the subject is false: it is true that the subject as an absolute presence to itself is rigorously indeclinable, and that nothing could happen to it of which it did not bear within itself the lineaments. It is also true that it provides itself with symbols of itself in both succession and multiplicity, and that these symbols are it, since without them it would, like an inarticulate cry, fail to achieve selfconsciousness. It is here that what we provisionally termed the passive synthesis becomes clarified. A passive synthesis is a contradiction in terms if the synthesis is a process of composition, and if the passivity consists in being the recipient of multiplicity instead of its composer. What we meant by passive synthesis was that we make our way into multiplicity, but that we do not synthesize it. Now temporalization satisfies by its very nature these two conditions: it is indeed clear that I am not the creator of time any more than of my heart-beats. I am not the initiator of the process of temporalization; I did not choose to come into the world, yet once I am born, time flows through me, whatever I do. Nevertheless this ceaseless welling up of time is not a simple fact to which I am passively subjected, for I can find a remedy against it in itself, as happens in a decision which binds me or in the act of establishing a concept. It withholds me from what I was about to become, and at the same time provides me with the means of grasping myself at a distance and establishing my own reality as myself. What is called passivity is not the acceptance by us of an alien reality, or a causal action exerted upon us from outside: it is being encompassed, being in a situation—prior to which we do not exist—which we are perpetually resuming and which is constitute of us. A spontaneity ‘acquired’ once and for all, and one which ‘perpetuates itself in being in virtue of its being acquired’<sup>21</sup> is precisely time and subjectivity. It is time, since a time without its roots in a present and thence a past would no longer be time, but eternity. Heidegger’s historical time, which flows from the future and which, thanks to its resolute decision, has its future in advance and rescues itself once and for all from disintegration, is

<sup>21</sup> J. P. Sartre, *L’Être et le Néant*, p. 195. The author mentions this monster only to banish the very idea of it.

impossible within the context of Heidegger's thought itself: for, if time is an *ek-stase*, if present and past are two results of this *ek-stase*, how could we ever cease completely to see time from the point of view of the present, and how could we completely escape from the inauthentic? It is always in the present that we are centered, and our decision starts from there; they can therefore always be brought into relationship with our past, and are never motiveless, and, though they may open up a cycle in our life which is entirely new, they still have to be subsequently carried forward, and afford only a temporary reprieve from dispersion. There can therefore be no question of deriving time from spontaneity. We are not temporal beings *because* we are spontaneous and because, as consciousnesses, we tear ourselves away from ourselves. On the contrary, time is the foundation and measure of our spontaneity, and the power of out-running and of 'nihilitating' ('néantiser') which dwells within us and is ourselves, is itself given to us with temporality and life. Our birth, or, as Husserl has it in his unpublished writings, our 'generativity', is the basis both of our activity or individuality, and our passivity or generality—that inner weakness which prevents us from ever achieving the density of an absolute individual. We are not in some incomprehensible way an activity joined to a passivity, an automatism surmounted by a will, a perception surmounted by a judgement, but wholly active and wholly passive, because we are the upsurge of time.

We were once concerned<sup>22</sup> with gaining an understanding of the relationships between consciousness and nature, between the inner and the outer. Or again, the problem was to link the idealist perspective, according to which nothing exists except as an object for consciousness, and the realist perspective, according to which consciousnesses are introduced into the stuff of the objective world and of events in themselves. Or finally, we were concerned with finding out how the world and man are accessible to two kinds of investigation, in the first case explanatory and in the second reflective. We have already, in another work, set out these traditional problems in another language which strips away all inessentials: the whole question is ultimately one of understanding what, in ourselves and in the world, is the relation

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *La Structure du Comportement*, Introd.

between *meaning* and *absence of meaning*. Is the element of meaning which is evident in the world produced and carried forward by the assemblage or convergence of independent facts or, on the other hand, is it merely the expression of an absolute reason? We say that events have a meaning when they appear as the achievement or the expression of a single aim. There is significance for us when one of our intentions is fulfilled, or conversely when a number of facts or signs lend themselves to our taking them up and grasping them inclusively, or, at all events, when one or more terms exist as . . . representative or expressive of something other than themselves. It is characteristic of idealism to grant that all significance is centrifugal, being an act of significance or *Sinn-gebung*,<sup>23</sup> and that there are no natural signs. To understand is ultimately always to construct, to constitute, to bring about here and now the synthesis of the object. Our analysis of one's own body and of perception has revealed to us a relation to the object, i.e. a significance deeper than this. The thing is nothing but a significance, the significance 'thing'. Very well. But when I understand a thing, a picture for example. I do not here and now effect its synthesis, I come to it bringing my sensory fields and my perceptual field with me, and in the last resort I bring a schema of all possible being, a universal setting in relation to the world. At the heart of the subject himself we discovered, then, the presence of the world, so that the subject was no longer to be understood as a synthetic activity, but as *ek-stase*, and that every active process of signification or *Sinn-gebung* appeared as derivative and secondary in relation to that pregnancy of meaning within signs which could serve to define the world. We found beneath the intentionality of acts, or *thetic* intentionality, another kind which is the condition of the former's possibility: namely an operative intentionality already at work before any positing or any judgement, a 'Logos of the aesthetic world',<sup>24</sup> an 'art hidden in the depths of the human soul', one which, like any art, is known only in its results. From this point onwards the distinction made by us elsewhere between structure and signification<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The expression is again often used by Husserl, for example *Ideen*, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, p. 257. 'Aesthetic' is, naturally, taken in the wide sense of 'transcendental aesthetic'.

<sup>25</sup> *La Structure du Comportement*, p. 302.

began to be clarified: what constitutes the difference between the Gestalt of the circle and the signification 'circle', is that the latter is recognized by an understanding which engenders it as the place of points equidistant from a centre, the former by a subject familiar with his world and able to seize it as a modulation of that world, as a circular physiognomy. We have no way of knowing what a picture or a thing is other than by looking at them, and their *significance* is revealed only if we look at them from a certain point of view, from a certain distance and in a certain direction,\* in short only if we place, at the service of the spectacle, our collusion with the world. The phrase 'direction of a stream' is meaningless unless I suppose a subject looking from one place towards another. In the world in itself, all directions and all movement are relative, which amounts to saying that there are none at all. There would in fact be no movement, and I should have no notion of it, if, in perception, I did not leave the earth, as my 'ground'<sup>26</sup> of all rest and motion, on the hither side of rest and motion, because I *inhabit* it, and similarly there would be no direction without a being who inhabits the world and who, through the medium of his gaze, marks out the first direction as a basis for all others. In the same way, the face or back of a piece of material is intelligible only for a subject who can approach the object from one side or another, so that it is through my upsurge into the world that the material has a face or back. Similarly again, the meaning of a sentence is its import or intention, which once more presupposes a departure and arrival point, an aim and a point of view. And finally the sense of sight is a certain preparation for the logic, and for the world, of colours. In all uses of the word *sens*, we find the same fundamental notion of a being orientated or polarized in the direction of what he is not, and thus we are always brought back to a conception of the subject as *ek-stase*, and to a relationship of active transcendence between the subject and the world. The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but

\* The argument is here, and in the following sentences, conducted by exploiting different meanings of the French word *sens* (meaning, direction, sense, way, manner) which are not covered by one single word in English (Translator's note).

<sup>26</sup> 'Boden', Husserl, *Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre* (unpublished).

from a world which the subject itself projects. The subject is a being-in-the-world and the world remains 'subjective'<sup>27</sup> since its texture and articulations are traced out by the subject's movement of transcendence. Hence we discovered, with the world as cradle of meanings, direction of all directions (*sens de tous les sens*), and ground of all thinking, how to leave behind the dilemma of realism and idealism, contingency and absolute reason, non-sense and sense. The world as we have tried to show it, as standing on the horizon of our life as the primordial unity of all our experiences, and one goal of all our projects, is no longer the visible unfolding of a constituting Thought, not a chance conglomeration of parts, nor, of course, the working of a controlling Thought on an indifferent matter, but the native abode of all rationality.

Our analysis of time has confirmed, initially, this new notion of meaning and understanding. Considering it in the same light as any other object, we shall be obliged to say of it what we have said of other objects; that it has meaning for us only because 'we are it'. We can designate something by this word only because we are at the past, present and future. It is literally the tenor\* of our life, and, like the world, is accessible only to the person who has his place within it, and who follows its direction. But the analysis of time has not merely provided an opportunity of reiterating what had been said about the world. It throws light on the preceding analysis because it discloses subject and object as two abstract 'moments' of a unique structure which is *presence*. It is through time that being is conceived, because it is through the relations of time-subject and time-object that we are able to understand those obtaining between subject and world. Let us apply to those problems we began with the idea of subjectivity as temporality. We wondered, for example, how to conceive the relations between the soul and the body, rejecting as hopeless any attempt to tie up the *for-itself* with a certain object in itself, to which it is supposed to stand in a

\* *sens* (Translator's note).

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 366: 'Wenn das "Subjekt" ontologisch als existierendes Dasein begriffen wird, deren Sein in der Zeitlichkeit gründet, dann muss gesagt werden: Welt ist "subjektiv", Diese "subjektive" Welt aber ist dann als Zeittranszendente "objektiver" als jedes mögliche "Objekt".'

relationship of causal dependence. But if the *for-itself*, the revelation of self to self, is merely the hollow in which time is formed, and if the world 'in itself' is simply the horizon of my present, then the problem is reduced to the form: How is it that a being which is still to come and has passed by, also has a present—which means that the problem is eliminated, since the future, the past and the present are linked together in the movement of temporalization. It is as much of my essence to have a body as it is the future's to be the future of a certain present. So that neither scientific thematization nor objective thought can discover a single bodily function strictly independent of existential structures,<sup>28</sup> or conversely a single 'spiritual' act which does not rest on a bodily infrastructure. Moreover, it is essential to me not only to have a body, but to have *this* body. It is not only the notion of the body which, through that of the present, is necessarily linked to that of the *for-itself*; the actual existence of my body is indispensable to that of my 'consciousness'. In the last analysis, in so far as I know that the *for-itself* is the culmination of a body, this can be only through the experience of my one body and one *for-itself*, or through the experience of my presence in the world. It will be objected that I might have nails, ears or lungs of some other kind which would involve no change in my existence. But then my nails, ears and lungs taken separately have no existence. It is science which has accustomed us to regard the body as a collection of parts, and also the experience of its disintegration at death. But the fact is that a decomposed body is no longer a body. When I restore my ears, nails and lungs to my living body, they no longer appear in the light of contingent details. They are not indifferent to the idea that others form of me, contributing as they do to my physiognomy or my general bearing, and it is not impossible that science may tomorrow express in the form of objective correlations precisely how necessary it was that I should have that kind of ears, nails and lungs, and whether, moreover, I was destined to be dexterous or clumsy, placid or highly strung, intelligent or stupid, if I was destined to be me. In other words, as we have shown elsewhere, the objective body is not the true version of the phenomenal body, that is, the true version of the body that we live by: it is indeed no more than the latter's impoverished image, so that the

<sup>28</sup> We demonstrated this at length in *La Structure du Comportement*.

problem of the relation of soul to body has nothing to do with the objective body, which exists only conceptually, but with the phenomenal body. What is true, however, is that our open and personal existence rests on an initial foundation of acquired and stabilized existence. But it could not be otherwise, if we are temporality, since the dialectic of acquisition and future is what constitutes time.

Our replies would be on the same lines to any questions that might be raised concerning the world before man's appearance on it. To our assertion above that there is no world without an Existence that sustains its structure, it might have been retorted that the world nevertheless preceded man, that the earth, to all appearances, is the only inhabited planet, and that philosophical views are thus shown to be incompatible with the most firmly established facts. But in fact, it is only intellectualist, abstract reflection which is incompatible with misconceived 'facts'. For what precisely is meant by saying that the world existed before any human consciousness? An example of what is meant is that the earth originally issued from a primitive nebula from which the combination of conditions necessary to life was absent. But every one of these words, like every equation in physics, presupposes our pre-scientific experience of the world, and this reference to the world in which we live goes to make up the proposition's valid meaning. Nothing will ever bring home to my comprehension what a nebula that no one sees could possibly be. Laplace's nebula is not behind us, at our remote beginnings, but in front of us in the cultural world. What, in fact, do we mean when we say that there is no world without a being in the world? Not indeed that the world is constituted by consciousness, but on the contrary that consciousness always finds itself already at work in the world. What is true, taking one thing with another, is that there is a nature, which is not that of the sciences, but that which perception presents to me, and that even the light of consciousness is, as Heidegger says, *lumen naturale*, given to itself.

At all events, the critic may continue, the world will outlast me, and other men will perceive it when I am no longer here. Now is it not impossible for me to conceive, either after me, or even during my lifetime, other men in the world, if indeed my presence in the world is the condition of the world's possibility? In the perspective of temporalization, light is thrown on the remarks made above about the

problem of the other. We said that in the perception of the other I cover in intention the infinite distance which always stands between my subjectivity and another, I overcome the impossibility of conceiving another for-himself for me, because I witness another behaviour, another presence in the world. Now that we have more effectively analysed the notion of presence, linked together presence to oneself and presence in the world, and identified the *cogito* with involvement in the world, we are in a better position to understand how we can find others at the intentional origin of their visible behaviour. It is true that the other will never exist for us as we exist ourselves; he is always a lesser figure, and we never feel in him as we do in ourselves the thrust of temporalization. But two temporalities are not mutually exclusive as are two consciousnesses, because each one knows itself only by projecting itself into the present where they can interweave. As my living present opens upon a past which I nevertheless am no longer living through, and on a future which I do not yet live, and perhaps never shall, it can also open on to temporalities outside my living experience and acquire a social horizon, with the result that my world is expanded to the dimensions of that collective history which my private existence takes up and carries forward. The solution of all problems of transcendence is to be sought in the thickness of the pre-objective present, in which we find our bodily being, our social being, and the pre-existence of the world, that is, the starting point of 'explanations', in so far as they are legitimate—and at the same time the basis of our freedom.

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## FREEDOM

Again, it is clear that no causal relationship is conceivable between the subject and his body, his world or his society. Only at the cost of losing the basis of all my certainties can I question what is conveyed to me by my presence to myself. Now the moment I turn to myself in order to describe myself, I have a glimpse of an anonymous flux,<sup>1</sup> a comprehensive project in which there are so far no 'states of consciousness', nor, *a fortiori*, characteristics of any sort. For myself I am neither 'jealous', nor 'inquisitive', nor 'hunchbacked', nor 'a civil servant'. It is often a matter of surprise that the cripple or the invalid can put up with himself. The reason is that such people are not for themselves deformed or at death's door. Until the final coma, the dying man is inhabited by a consciousness, he is all that he sees, and enjoys this much of an outlet. Consciousness can never objectify itself into invalid-consciousness or cripple-consciousness, and even if the old man complains of his age or the cripple of his deformity, they can do so only by comparing themselves with others, or seeing themselves through the eyes of others, that is, by taking a statistical and objective view of themselves, so that such complaints are never absolutely genuine: when he is back in the heart of his own consciousness, each one of us feels beyond his limitations

<sup>1</sup> In the sense in which, with Husserl, we have taken this word.