

light and shade, zones of indiscernibility, and processes of intensification that show the extent to which there is also experimentation in philosophy; whereas Newton constructed the function of independent variables or frequency. If philosophy has a fundamental need for the science that is contemporary with it, this is because science constantly intersects with the possibility of concepts and because concepts necessarily involve allusions to science that are neither examples nor applications, nor even reflections. Conversely, are there functions—properly scientific functions—of concepts? This amounts to asking whether science is, as we believe, equally and intensely in need of philosophy. But only scientists can answer that question.

## 7. Percept, Affect, and Concept

The young man will smile on the canvas for as long as the canvas lasts. Blood throbs under the skin of this woman's face, the wind shakes a branch, a group of men prepare to leave. In a novel or a film, the young man will stop smiling, but he will start to smile again when we turn to this page or that moment. Art preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved. It preserves and is preserved in itself (*quid juris?*), although actually it lasts no longer than its support and materials—stone, canvas, chemical color, and so on (*quid facti?*). The young girl maintains the pose that she has had for five thousand years, a gesture that no longer depends on whoever made it. The air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that day last year, and it no longer depends on who ever was breathing it that morning. If art preserves it does not do so like industry, by adding a substance to make the thing last. The thing became independent of its "model" from the start, but it is also independent of other possible perso-

nae who are themselves artists-things, personae of painting breathing this air of painting. And it is no less independent of the viewer or hearer, who only experience it after, if they have the strength for it. What about the creator? It is independent of the creator through the self-positioning of the created, which is preserved in itself. What is preserved—the thing or the work of art—is *a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*.

Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects. The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself.

Harmonies are affects. Consonance and dissonance, harmonies of tone or color, are affects of music or painting. Rameau emphasized the identity of harmony and affect. The artist creates blocs of percepts and affects, but the only law of creation is that the compound must stand up on its own. The artist's greatest difficulty is to make it *stand up on its own*. Sometimes this requires what is, from the viewpoint of an implicit model, from the viewpoint of lived perceptions and affections, great geometrical improbability, physical imperfection, and organic abnormality. But these sublime errors accede to the necessity of art if they are internal means of standing up (or sitting or lying). There is a pictorial possibility that has nothing to do with physical possibility and that endows the most acrobatic postures with the sense of balance. On the other hand, many works that claim to be art do not stand up for an instant. Standing up alone does not mean having a top and a bottom or being upright (for even houses are drunk and askew); it is only the act by which the compound of created sensations is preserved in itself—a monument, but one that

may be contained in a few marks or a few lines, like a poem by Emily Dickinson. Of the sketch of an old, worn-out ass, "How marvellous! It's done with two strokes, but set on immutable bases," where the sensation bears witness all the more to years of "persistent, tenacious, disdainful work."<sup>1</sup> In music, the minor mode is a test that is especially essential since it sets the musician the challenge of wresting it from its ephemeral combinations in order to make it solid and durable, self-preserving, even in acrobatic positions. The sound must be held no less in its extinction than in its production and development. Through his admiration of Pissarro and Monet, what Cézanne had against the Impressionists was that the optical mixture of colors was not enough to create a compound sufficiently "solid and lasting like the art of the museums," like "the perpetuity of blood" in Rubens.<sup>2</sup> This is a way of speaking, because Cézanne does not add something that would preserve Impressionism; he seeks instead a different solidity, other bases and other blocs.

The question of whether drugs help the artist to create these beings of sensation, whether they are part of art's internal means that really lead us to the "doors of perception" and reveal to us percepts and affects, is given a general answer inasmuch as drug-induced compounds are usually extraordinarily flaky, unable to preserve themselves, and break up as soon as they are made or looked at. We may also admire children's drawings, or rather be moved by them, but they rarely stand up and only resemble Klee or Miró if we do not look at them for long. The paintings of the mad, on the contrary, often hold up, but on condition of being crammed full, with no empty space remaining. However, blocs need pockets of air and emptiness, because even the void is sensation. All sensation is composed with the void in composing itself with itself, and everything holds together on earth and in the air, and preserves the void, is preserved in the void by preserving itself. A canvas may be completely full to the point that even the air no longer gets through, but it is only a work of art if, as the Chinese painter says, it nonetheless saves enough

empty space for horses to prance in (even if this is only through the variety of planes).<sup>3</sup>

We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations. We paint, sculpt, compose, and write sensations. As percepts, sensations are not perceptions referring to an object (reference): if they resemble something it is with a resemblance produced with their own methods; and the smile on the canvas is made solely with colors, lines, shadow, and light. If resemblance haunts the work of art, it is because sensation refers only to its material: it is the percept or affect of the material itself, the smile of oil, the gesture of fired clay, the thrust of metal, the crouch of Romanesque stone, and the ascent of Gothic stone. The material is so varied in each case (canvas support, paint-brush or equivalent agent, color in the tube) that it is difficult to say where in fact the material ends and sensation begins; preparation of the canvas, the track of the brush's hair, and many other things besides are obviously part of the sensation. How could the sensation be preserved without a material capable of lasting? And however short the time it lasts, this time is considered as a duration. We will see how the plane of the material ascends irresistibly and invades the plane of composition of the sensations themselves to the point of being part of them or indiscernible from them. It is in this sense that the painter is said to be a painter and nothing but a painter, "with color seized as if just pressed out of the tube, with the imprint of each hair of his brush," with this blue that is not a water blue "but a liquid paint blue." And yet, in principle at least, sensation is not the same thing as the material. What is preserved by right is not the material, which constitutes only the *de facto* condition, but, insofar as this condition is satisfied (that is, that canvas, color, or stone does not crumble into dust), it is the percept or affect that is preserved in itself. Even if the material lasts for only a few seconds it will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself *in the eternity that coexists with this short duration*. So long as the material lasts, the sensation enjoys an eternity in those very moments. Sensation is not

realized in the material without the material passing completely into the sensation, into the percept or affect. All the material becomes expressive. It is the affect that is metallic, crystalline, stony, and so on; and the sensation is not colored but, as Cézanne said, coloring. That is why those who are nothing but painters are also more than painters, because they "bring before us, in front of the fixed canvas," not the resemblance but the pure sensation "of a tortured flower, of a landscape slashed, pressed, and plowed," giving back "the water of the painting to nature."<sup>4</sup> One material is exchanged for another, like the violin for the piano, one kind of brush for another, oil for pastel, only inasmuch as the compound of sensations requires it. And, however strong an artist's interest in science, a compound of sensations will never be mistaken for the "mixtures" of material that science determines in states of affairs, as is clearly shown by the "optical mixture" of the impressionists.

By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations. A method is needed, and this varies with every artist and forms part of the work: we need only compare Proust and Pessoa, who invent different procedures in the search for the sensation as being.<sup>5</sup> In this respect the writer's position is no different from that of the painter, musician, or architect. The writer's specific materials are words and syntax, the created syntax that ascends irresistibly into his work and passes into sensation. Memory, which summons forth only old perceptions, is obviously not enough to get away from lived perceptions; neither is an involuntary memory that adds reminiscence as the present's preserving factor. Memory plays a small part in art (even and especially in Proust). It is true that every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound

that celebrates it. The monument's action is not memory but fabulation. We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present. Music is full of them. It is not memory that is needed but a complex material that is found not in memory but in words and sounds: "Memory, I hate you." We attain to the percept and the affect only as to autonomous and sufficient beings that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them: Combray like it never was, is, or will be lived; Combray as cathedral or monument.

If methods are very different, not only in the different arts but in different artists, we can nevertheless characterize some great monumental types, or "varieties," of compounds of sensations: *the vibration*, which characterizes the simple sensation (but it is already durable or compound, because it rises and falls, implies a constitutive difference of level, follows an invisible thread that is more nervous than cerebral); *the embrace or the clinch* (when two sensations resonate in each other by embracing each other so tightly in a clinch of what are no more than "energies"); *withdrawal, division, distension* (when, on the contrary, two sensations draw apart, release themselves, but so as now to be brought together by the light, the air, or the void that sinks between them or into them, like a wedge that is at once so dense and so light that it extends in every direction as the distance grows, and forms a bloc that no longer needs a support). Vibrating sensation—coupling sensation—opening or splitting, hollowing out sensation. These types are displayed almost in their pure state in sculpture, with its sensations of stone, marble, or metal, which vibrate according to the order of strong and weak beats, projections and hollows, its powerful clinches that intertwine them, its development of large spaces between groups or within a single group where we no longer know whether it is the light or the air that sculpts or is sculpted.

The novel has often risen to the percept—not perception of the moor in Hardy but the moor as percept; oceanic percepts in Melville;

urban percepts, or those of the mirror, in Virginia Woolf. The landscape sees. Generally speaking, what great writer has not been able to create these beings of sensation, which preserve in themselves the hour of a day, a moment's degree of warmth (Faulkner's hills, Tolstoy's or Chekhov's steppes)? The percept is the landscape before man, in the absence of man. But why do we say this, since in all these cases the landscape is not independent of the supposed perceptions of the characters and, through them, of the author's perceptions and memories? How could the town exist without or before man, or the mirror without the old woman it reflects, even if she does not look at herself in it? This is Cézanne's enigma, which has often been commented upon: "Man absent from but entirely within the landscape." Characters can only exist, and the author can only create them, because they do not perceive but have passed into the landscape and are themselves part of the compound of sensations. Ahab really does have perceptions of the sea, but only because he has entered into a relationship with Moby Dick that makes him a becoming-whale and forms a compound of sensations that no longer needs anyone: ocean. It is Mrs. Dalloway who perceives the town—but because she has passed into the town like "a knife through everything" and becomes imperceptible herself. *Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man*, just as percepts—including the town—are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*. Not a "minute of the world passes," says Cézanne, that we will preserve if we do not "become that minute."<sup>6</sup> We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming. We become univerves. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero. Kleist is no doubt the author who most wrote with affects, using them like stones or weapons, seizing them in becomings of sudden petrification or infinite acceleration, in the becoming-bitch of Penthesilea and her hallucinated percepts. This is true of all the arts: what strange becomings unleash music across its "melodic landscapes" and its "rhythmic characters," as Messiaen says, by combining the molecular

and the cosmic, stars, atoms, and birds in the same being of sensation? What terror haunts Van Gogh's head, caught in a becoming-sunflower? In each case style is needed—the writer's syntax, the musician's modes and rhythms, the painter's lines and colors—to raise lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect.

We dwell on the art of the novel because it is the source of a misunderstanding: many people think that novels can be created with our perceptions and affections, our memories and archives, our travels and fantasies, our children and parents, with the interesting characters we have met and, above all, the interesting character who is inevitably oneself (who isn't interesting?), and finally with our opinions holding it all together. If need be, we can invoke great authors who have done nothing but recount their lives—Thomas Wolfe or Henry Miller. Generally we get composite works in which we move about a great deal but in search of a father who is found only in ourself: the journalist's novel. We are not spared the least detail, in the absence of any really artistic work. The cruelty we may have seen and the despair we have experienced do not need to be transformed a great deal in order to produce yet again the opinion that generally emerges about the difficulties of communication. Rossellini saw this as a reason for giving up art: art was allowing itself to be invaded too much by infantilism and cruelty, both cruel and doleful, whining and satisfied at the same time, so that it was better to abandon it.<sup>7</sup> More interestingly, Rossellini saw the same thing taking place in painting. But it is literature primarily that has constantly maintained an equivocal relationship with the lived. We may well have great powers of observation and much imagination, but is it possible to write with perceptions, affections, and opinions? Even in the least autobiographical novels we see the confrontation and intersection of the opinions of a multitude of characters, all in accordance with the perceptions and affections of each character with his social situation and individual adventures, and all of it swept up in the vast current of the author's opinion, which, however, divides itself so as to rebound on

the characters, or which hides itself so that readers can form their own: this is indeed how Bakhtin's great theory of the novel begins (happily it does not end there; it is precisely the "parodic" basis of the novel).

Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory, however exaggerated, or with a fantasy. In fact, the artist, including the novelist, goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a become. How would he recount what happened to him, or what he imagines, since he is a shadow? He has seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable also, and the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it, so that the corner of nature or districts of the town that he sees, along with their characters, accede to a vision that, through them, composes the percepts of that life, of that moment, shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism, a sort of simultaneism, of harsh or crepuscular light, of purple or blue, which have no other object or subject than themselves. "What we call styles," said Giacomo, "are those visions fixed in time and space." It is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat. The death of the porcupine in Lawrence and the death of the mole in Kafka are almost unbearable acts of the novelist. Sometimes it is necessary to lie down on the earth, like the painter does also, in order to get to the "motif," that is to say, the percept. Percepts can be telescopic or microscopic, giving characters and landscapes giant dimensions as if they were swollen by a life that no lived perception can attain. Balzac's greatness. It is of little importance whether these characters are mediocre: they become giants, like Bouvard and Pecuchet, Bloom and Molly, Mercier and Camier, without ceasing to be what they are. It is by dint of mediocrity, even of stupidity or infamy, that they are able to become not simple (they are never simple) but gigantic. Even dwarves and cripples will do: all fabulation is the fabrication of giants.<sup>8</sup> Whether mediocre or grandiose, they are too alive to be livable or lived. Thomas Wolfe extracts a giant from his

father, and Henry Miller extracts a dark planet from the city. Wolle may describe the people of old Catawba through their stupid opinions and their mania for discussion, but what he does is set up the secret monument of their solitude, their desert, their eternal earth, and their forgotten, unnoticed lives. Faulkner may also cry out: oh, men of Yoknapatawpha. It is said that the monumental novelist is himself "inspired" by the lived, and this is true: M. de Charlus closely resembles Montesquieu, but between Montesquieu and M. de Charlus there is ultimately roughly the same relationship as between the barking animal-dog and the celestial constellation-Dog.

How can a moment of the world be rendered durable or made to exist by itself? Virginia Woolf provides an answer that is as valid for painting and music as it is for writing: "Saturate every atom," "eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity," everything that adheres to our current and lived perceptions, everything that nourishes the mediocre novelist; and keep only the saturation that gives us the percept. "It must include nonsense, fact, sordidity: *but made transparent*"; "I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate."<sup>9</sup> Through having reached the percept as "the sacred source," through having seen Life in the living or the Living in the lived, the novelist or painter returns breathless and with bloodshot eyes. They are athletes—not athletes who train their bodies and cultivate the lived, no matter how many writers have succumbed to the idea of sport as a way of heightening art and life, but bizarre athletes of the "fasting-artist" type, or the "great Swimmer" who does not know how to swim. It is not an organic or muscular athleticism but its inorganic double, "an affective Athleticism," an athleticism of becoming that reveals only forces that are not its own—"plastic specter."<sup>10</sup> In this respect artists are like philosophers. What little health they possess is often too fragile, not because of their illnesses or neuroses but because they have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves, and that has put on them the quiet mark of death. But this something is also the source or breath that supports them through

the illnesses of the lived (what Nietzsche called health). "Perhaps one day we will know that there wasn't any art but only medicine."<sup>11</sup>

The affect goes beyond affections no less than the percept goes beyond perceptions. The affect is not the passage from one lived state to another but man's nonhuman becoming. Ahab does not imitate Moby Dick, and Penthesilea does not "act" the bitch: becoming is neither an imitation nor an experienced sympathy, nor even an imaginary identification. It is not resemblance, although there is resemblance. But it is only a produced resemblance. Rather, becoming is an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. André Dhôtel knew how to place his characters in strange plant-becomings, becoming tree or aster: this is not the transformation of one into the other, he says, but something passing from one to the other.<sup>12</sup> This something can be specified only as sensation. It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons (Ahab and Moby Dick, Penthesilea and the bitch) endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an *affect*. In *Pierre*; or, *The Ambiguities*, Pierre reaches the zone in which he can no longer distinguish himself from his half-sister, Isabelle, and he becomes woman. Life alone creates such zones where living beings whirl around, and only art can reach and penetrate them in its enterprise of co-creation. This is because from the moment that the material passes into sensation, as in a Rodin sculpture, art itself lives on these zones of indetermination. They are blocs. Painting needs more than the skill of the draftsman who notes resemblances between human and animal forms and gets us to witness their transformation: on the contrary, it needs the power of a ground that can dissolve forms and impose the existence of a zone in which we no longer know which is animal and which human, because something like the triumph or monument of their nondistinction rises up—as in Goya or even Daumier or Redon. The artist must create the syntacti-

