

# THE SATURATED PHENOMENON

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What comes into the world without troubling  
merits neither consideration nor patience.

René Char

## I

The field of religion could simply be defined as what philosophy excludes or, in the best case, subjugates. Such a constant antagonism cannot be reduced to any given ideological opposition or any given anecdotal prejudice. In fact, it rests upon perfectly reasonable ground: the “philosophy of religion,” if there were one, would have to describe, produce, and constitute phenomena, it would then find itself confronted with a disastrous alternative: either it would be a question of phenomena that are objectively definable but lose their religious specificity, or it would be a question of phenomena that are specifically religious but cannot be described objectively. A phenomenon that is religious in the strict sense—belonging to the domain of a “philosophy of religion” distinct from the sociology, the history, and the psychology of religion—would have to render visible what nevertheless could not be objectified. The religious phenomenon thus amounts to an impossible phenomenon, or at least it marks the limit starting from which the phenomenon is in general no longer possible. Thus, the religious phenomenon poses the question of the general possibility of the phenomenon, more than of the possibility of religion.

Once this boundary is acknowledged, there nevertheless remain several ways of understanding it. Religion could not strike the possibility of the phenomenon in general with impossibility if the very possibility of the phenomenon were not defined: when does it become impossible to speak of a phenomenon, and according to what criteria of phenomenality? But the possibility of the phenomenon—and therefore the possi-

bility of declaring a phenomenon impossible, that is, invisible—could not in its turn be determined without also establishing the terms of possibility taken in itself. By subjecting the phenomenon to the jurisdiction of possibility, philosophy in fact brings fully to light its own definition of bare possibility. The question concerning the possibility of the phenomenon implies the question of the phenomenon of possibility. Or better, when the rational scope of a philosophy is measured according to the extent of what it renders possible, that scope will be measured also according to the extent of what it renders visible—according to the possibility of phenomenality in it. According to whether it is accepted or rejected, the religious phenomenon would thus become a privileged index of the possibility of phenomenality.

To start out, I will rely on Kant. In Kant, the metaphysical definition of possibility is stated as follows: “That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts, is possible [mit den formalen Bedingungen der Erfahrung . . . überkommt].” What is surprising here has to do with the intimate tie Kant establishes between possibility and phenomenality: possibility results explicitly from the conditions of experience; among those conditions is intuition, which indicates that experience takes the form of a phenomenality—that experience has a form (“formal conditions”) precisely because it experiences sensible forms of appearance. Here, therefore, possibility depends on phenomenality. Would it be necessary to conclude from this that the phenomenon imposes its possibility, instead of being subject to the conditions thereof? Not at all, because the possible does not agree with the object of experience but with its “formal conditions”: possibility does not follow from the phenomenon, but from the conditions set for any phenomenon. A formal

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requirement therefore is imposed on possibility, just as Kant indicates a little bit later: "The postulate of the possibility of things requires (*fordert*) that the concept of things should agree with the formal conditions of an experience in general." The access of the phenomenon to its own manifestation must submit to the requirement of possibility; but possibility itself depends on the "formal conditions of experience"; how then, in the last instance, are these "formal conditions" established that determine phenomenality and possibility together? Kant indicates this indirectly, but unambiguously, by underlining straightaway that "the categories of modality . . . express only the relation of the concept to the power of knowing."<sup>1</sup> The formal conditions of knowledge are directly joined here with the power of knowing. This means that intuition and the concept determine in advance the possibility of appearing for any phenomenon. The possibility—and therefore also and especially the impossibility—of a phenomenon is ordered to the measure of the "power of knowing," that is, concretely, the measure of the play of intuition and of the concept within a finite mind. Any phenomenon is possible that grants itself to the finitude of the power of knowing and its requirements.

In this way Kant merely confirms a decision already made by Leibniz. To be sure, the one thinks phenomenal possibility starting from a finite mind, while the other thinks it starting from an infinite (or indefinite) mind; but both lead to the same conditional possibility of the phenomenon. Indeed, metaphysics obeys the "Great Principle . . . which holds that nothing is done without sufficient reason, that is, that nothing happens without it being possible for the one who sufficiently knows things to give a Reason that suffices to determine why it is so and not otherwise."<sup>2</sup> Thus, nothing "is done," nothing "happens," in short, nothing appears, without the attestation that it is "possible"; this possibility, in turn, is equivalent to the possibility of knowing the sufficient reason for such an appearance. As for Kant, for Leibniz the right to appear—the possibility of a phenomenon—depends on the power of knowing that implements the suffi-

ciency of reason, which, whatever it might be, precedes what it renders possible. As the "power of knowing" will establish the conditions of possibility, sufficient reason already suffices to render possible that which, without it, would have remained impossible. This dependence is indicated with particular clarity in the case of the sensible. To be sure, "sensible things" appear and deserve the name of "phenomena," but they owe that name to another "reason," a reason that is different from their very appearance, and that alone suffices to qualify that appearance as a phenomenon: "The truth of sensible things consisted only in the relation of the phenomena, which had to have its reason."<sup>3</sup> When Leibniz opposes, among the beings that he recognizes as permanent (*creatura permanens absoluta*), full being (*unum per se, ens plenum; substantia; modificatio*) to the diminished being that he likens to the phenomenon (*unum per aggregationem; semiens, phaenomenon*), one should not commit the error of imagining that the phenomenon would be ranked as half a being or a half-being only because it would suffer from an insufficiency of reason. On the contrary, it is precisely because it enjoys a perfectly sufficient reason that the phenomenon regresses to the rank of half a being; it is precisely as "*phaenomena bene fundata*"<sup>4</sup> that the phenomena admit their being grounded, and therefore conditioned by a reason that alone is sufficient and that they themselves do not suffice to ensure. If reason can ground the phenomena, this is so first because it must save them; but reason would not have to do this if one did not first admit that, left to themselves, these phenomena would be lost. For appearance actually to appear does not suffice to justify its possibility; it must still resort to reason, which—while itself not having to appear—alone renders possible the brute actuality of the appearance, because it renders the possibility of that appearance intelligible. The phenomenon attests its lack of reason when and because it receives that reason; for it appears only under condition, as a conditional phenomenon—under the condition of what does not appear. In a metaphysical system, the possibility of appearing never belongs to what appears, nor phenomenality to the phenomenon.

## II

It is this aporia that phenomenology escapes all at once in opposing to the principle of sufficient reason, the “principle of all principles,” and thus in surpassing conditional phenomenality through a phenomenality without condition. The “principle of all principles” posits that “every originally giving intuition (*Anschauung*) is a source of right [*Rechtsquelle*] for cognition, that everything that offers itself to us originally in ‘intuition’ (*Intuition*) is to be taken quite simply as it gives itself out to be, but also only within the limits in which it is given there.”<sup>5</sup> There can be no question here of determining the decisive importance of this principle, nor its function within the whole of the other principles of phenomenology.<sup>6</sup> It will suffice here to underscore some of its essential traits.

According to the first essential trait, intuition no longer intervenes simply as a *de facto* source of the phenomenon, a source that ensures its brute actuality without yet grounding it in reason, but as a source of right, justificatory of itself. Intuition is itself attested through itself, without the background of a reason that is yet to be given. In this way the phenomenon, according to Husserl, corresponds in advance to the phenomenon according to Heidegger—that which shows itself on the basis of itself. To put it plainly: on the basis of itself as a pure and perfect appearance of itself, and not on the basis of another than itself that would not appear (a reason). Intuition is sufficient for the phenomenon to justify its right to appear, without any other reason: far from having to give a sufficient reason, it suffices for the phenomenon to give itself through intuition according to a principle of sufficient intuition. But intuition becomes sufficient only inasmuch as it operates without any background, originally, as Husserl says; now, it operates originally, without any presupposition, only inasmuch as it furnishes the ordinary data, inasmuch, therefore, as it gives itself originally. Intuition is justified by right on the basis of itself only by making a claim to an unconditioned origin. It cannot justify this claim without going so far as to mime the sufficient reason to be rendered (*reddendae rationis*), that is, by rendering itself, by giving itself in person.

Indeed, givenness alone indicates that the phenomenon ensures, in a single gesture, both its visibility and the full right of that visibility, both its appearance and the reason for that appearance. Nevertheless, it still remains to be verified whether the “principle of all principles” in point of fact ensures a right to appear for all phenomena, whether it indeed opens for them an absolutely unconditioned possibility—or whether it renders them possible still only under some condition. Now, it happens that the principle of giving intuition does not authorize the absolutely unconditioned appearance, and thus the freedom of the phenomenon that gives itself on the basis of itself. To be sure, this is not because intuition as such limits phenomenality, but because it remains framed, as intuition, by two conditions of possibility, conditions that themselves are not intuitive but are nevertheless assigned to every phenomenon. The second and third traits of the “principle of all principles” contradict the first one, as conditions and limits—as a condition and a limit—contradict the claim to absolute possibility opened by the giving intuition.

Let us first consider a second trait of the “principle”: it justifies every phenomenon, “but also only [*aber auch nur*] within the limits in which” that phenomenon is given. This restriction attests to a twofold finitude of the giving instance—of intuition. First, a factual restriction: intuition admits “limits” (*Schranken*). These limits, in whatever way one understands them (since Husserl hardly makes them clear here), indicate that not everything is capable of being given perfectly; right away, intuition is characterized by scarcity, obeys a logic of shortage, and is stigmatized by an indelible insufficiency; we will have to ask ourselves about the motivation, the status and the presuppositions of this factual shortcoming. But—secondly—this restriction can already be authorized by a *de jure* limitation: any intuition, in order to give within certain factual “limits,” must first be inscribed by right within the limits (*Grenze*) of a horizon; likewise, no intentional aim of an object, signification, or essence can operate outside of a horizon. Husserl indicates this point through an argument that is all the stronger insofar as it is paradoxical. Considering

what he nevertheless names “the limitlessness [*Grenzenlosigkeit*] that is presented by the immanent intuitions when going from an already fixed lived-experience to new lived-experiences that form its horizon, from the fixing of these lived-experiences to the fixing of their horizon; and so on,” he admits that any lived-experience is continually referred to new, as yet unknown lived-experiences, and therefore to a horizon of novelties that are irreducible because continually renewed. But precisely, this irrepressible novelty of the flux of consciousness remains, by right, always comprehended within a horizon, even if these new lived-experiences are not yet given: “a lived-experience that has become an Object of an Ego’s look and that therefore has the mode of being looked at, has for its horizon lived-experiences that are not looked at” (*Danach hat ein Erlebnis, das zum Objekt eines Ichblickes geworden ist, also den Modus des Erblickes hat, seinen Horizont nichterblickter Erlebnisse*).<sup>7</sup> The horizon, or, according to its etymology, delimitation, exerts itself over experience even where there are only lived-experiences that are not looked at, that is, where experience has not taken place. The outside of experience is not equivalent to the experience of the outside, because the horizon in advance seizes the outside, the non-experienced, the not looked at. One cannot escape here the feeling of a fundamental ambiguity. With this horizon, is it a question of what is not looked at as not looked at, a question of the simple recognition that all lived-experience is grasped in the flux of consciousness, and is therefore oriented in advance toward other lived-experiences that are yet to arise? Or is it not rather a question of the treatment, in advance, of the non-lived-experiences that are not looked at as the subjects of a horizon, and therefore a question of the inclusion within a limit—be it that of the flux of consciousness—of anything that is not looked at, a question of the a priori inscription of the possible within a horizon? Thus we must ask whether the “principle of all principles” does not presuppose at least one condition for givenness: the very horizon of any givenness. Does not the second trait of the “principle of all principles”—that of any horizon

at all—contradict the absoluteness of intuitive givenness?

The third trait of the “principle of all principles” has to do with the fact that intuition gives what appears only by giving it “to us.” There is nothing trivial or redundant about this expression; it betrays a classic ambiguity of the *Ideen*: the givenness of the phenomenon on the basis of itself to an “I” can at every instant veer toward a constitution of the phenomenon through and on the basis of the “I.” Even if one does not overestimate this constant threat, one must at least admit that givenness, precisely because it keeps its originary and justifying function, can give and justify nothing except before the tribunal of the “I”; transcendental or not, the phenomenological “I” remains the beneficiary, and therefore the witness and even the judge, of the given appearance; it falls to the “I” to measure what does and does not give itself intuitively, within what limits, according to what horizon, following what intention, essence and signification. Even if it shows itself on the basis of itself, the phenomenon can do so only by allowing itself to be lead back, and therefore reduced, to the “I.” Moreover, the originary primacy of the “I” maintains an essential relation with the placement of any phenomenon within the limits of a horizon. Indeed, “every now of a lived-experience has a horizon of lived-experiences—which also have precisely the originary form of the ‘now,’ and which as such produce an originary horizon [*Originaritätshorizont*] of the pure I, its total originary now of consciousness.”<sup>8</sup> In this way the “principle of all principles” still presupposes that all givenness must accept the “I” as its “now.” The requirement of a horizon is but one with that of the reduction: in each case it is a matter of leading phenomenological givenness back to the “I.” But, that being the case, if every phenomenon is defined by its very reducibility to the “I,” must we not exclude straightaway the general possibility of an absolute, autonomous—in short, irreducible—phenomenon? By the same token, is not all irreducible possibility decidedly jeopardized?

“The principle of all principles,” through originarily giving intuition, undoubtedly frees the phenomena from the duty of rendering a suffi-

cient reason for their appearance. But it thinks that givenness itself only on the basis of two determinations that threaten its ordinary character—the horizon and the reduction. Phenomenology would thus condemn itself to missing almost immediately what the giving intuition nevertheless indicates to it as its own goal: to free the possibility of appearing [*l'apparaître*] as such. We should stress that it is obviously not a question here of envisaging a phenomenology without any “I” or horizon, for clearly, it would then be phenomenology itself that would become impossible. On the contrary, it is a question of taking seriously the claim that, since the “principle of all principles,” “higher than actuality stands *possibility*,”<sup>9</sup> and of envisaging this possibility radically. Let us define it provisionally: what would occur, as concerns phenomenality, if an intuitive givenness were accomplished that was absolutely unconditioned (without the limits of a horizon) and absolutely irreducible (to a constituting “I”)? Can we not envisage a type of phenomenon that would reverse the condition of a horizon (by surpassing it, instead of being inscribed within it) and that would reverse the reduction (by leading the “I” back to itself, instead of being reduced to the “I”)? To declare this hypothesis impossible straightaway, without resorting to intuition, would immediately betray a phenomenological contradiction. Consequently, we will here assume the hypothesis of such a phenomenon, at least in the capacity of an imaginary variation allowing us to test a movement to the limit in the determination of any phenomenality and allowing us to experience anew what possibility means—or gives. Some limits remain, in principle, irrefutable and undoubtedly indispensable. But this does not mean that what contradicts them cannot for all that, paradoxically, be constituted as a phenomenon. Quite on the contrary, certain phenomena could—by playing on the limits of phenomenality—not only appear at those limits, but appear there all the more. Within this hypothesis, the question of a phenomenology of religion would no doubt be posed in new terms, as much for religion as for phenomenology.

### III

We are justified in evoking the possibility of an unconditioned and irreducible phenomenon, that is, a phenomenon par excellence, only inasmuch as such a possibility truly opens itself. We therefore have to establish that this possibility cannot be reduced to an illusion of possibility, through a movement to the limit that would exceed nothing other than the conditions of possibility of phenomenality in general. In short, we have to establish that an unconditioned and irreducible phenomenon, with neither delimiting horizon nor constituting “I,” offers a true possibility and does not amount to “telling stories.” To arrive at this guarantee, we will proceed first indirectly by examining the common definition of the phenomenon, since there is a definition as much in metaphysics according to Kant as in phenomenology according to Husserl; we will then attempt to specify whether that definition—which, moreover, subjects every phenomenon to a horizon of appearance and a constituting “I”—is justified by an opening of phenomenality, or whether it does not rather confirm its essential closure. In other words, it will be a matter of specifying the ground of the limitation that is brought upon the phenomenon by its common definition, in order to indicate exactly what possibility would, by contrast, remain open to an unconditional and irreducible acceptance of phenomenality.

All along the path of his thinking, Husserl will maintain a definition of the phenomenon that is determined by its fundamental duality: “The word ‘phenomenon’ is ambiguous [*doppelsinnig*] in virtue of the essential correlation between appearance and that which appears [*Erscheinen und Erscheinenden*].”<sup>10</sup> This correlation is organized according to several different but interlinked couples—intention/intuition, signification/fulfillment, noesis/noema, etc.—and thus only better establishes the phenomenon as what appears as a correlate of appearance [*apparition*]. This is indeed why the highest manifestation of any phenomenon whatever, that is, the highest phenomenality possible, is achieved with the perfect adequation between these two terms: the subjective appearing [*l'apparaître subjectif*] is equiva-

lent to that which objectively appears [*l'apparaissant objectif*]. "And so also, *eo ipso*, the ideal of every fulfillment, and therefore of a *significant* fulfillment, is sketched for us; the *intellectus* is in this case the thought-intention, the intention of meaning. And the *adaequatio* is realized when the object meant is in the strict sense given in our intuition, and given precisely as it is thought and named. No thought-intention could fail of its fulfillment, of its last fulfillment, in fact, in so far as the fulfilling medium of intuition has itself lost all implication of unsatisfied intention."<sup>11</sup> It is certainly important to stress the persistence here, in a territory that is nevertheless phenomenological, of the most metaphysical definition of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*. But it is even more important to stress the fact that adequation defines not only the truth, but above all "the ideal of ultimate fulfillment."<sup>12</sup> This limit case of perception is equivalent to what Husserl, in a Cartesian fashion, names evidence. More precisely, the objective truth is achieved subjectively through evidence, considered as the experience of the adequation made by consciousness. Now, this ideal of evidence, which is supposed to designate the maximum and the extreme of any ambition to truth, nevertheless claims, with a very strange modesty, only an "adequation," a simple equality. The paradigm of ideal equality weighs so heavily that Husserl does not hesitate to repeat it in no less than four figures: a) "the full agreement between the meant and the given as such [*Übereinstimmung zwischen Gemeintem und Gegebenem*];" b) "the idea of the absolute adequation [*Adäquation*]" between the ideal essence and the empirically contingent act of evidence; c) the "ideal fulfillment for an intention"; d) and finally "the truth as rightness [*Rechtigkeit*] of our intention."<sup>13</sup> What is surprising, however, resides not so much in this insistent repetition as in the fact that the adequation it so explicitly seeks remains nonetheless a pure and simple ideal: "The ideal of an ultimate fulfillment," "that ideally fulfilled perception," an "idea of absolute adequation as such."<sup>14</sup> Now, how can we not understand these two terms in a Kantian manner where the ideal is the object of the idea? Consequently, since the idea remains a concept of rea-

son such that its object can never be given through the senses, the ideal as such (as object of the idea) will never be given.<sup>15</sup> Thus, if adequation, which produces evidence subjectively, still constitutes an "ideal" for Husserl, we would have to conclude that it is never, or at least rarely, realized. And with it, truth is rarefied or made inaccessible. Why, therefore, does adequate evidence most often remain a limit case, or even an excluded case? Why does the equality between noesis and noema, essence and fulfillment, intention and intuition, seem inaccessible—or almost—at the very moment when it is invested with the dignity of truth? Why does Husserl compromise the return to the things themselves by modifying evidence and truth with ideality?

Answer: because the equality that Husserl maintains *de jure* between intuition and intention remains for him in fact untenable. Intention (almost) always (partially) lacks intuition, just as meaning [*signification*] almost always lacks fulfillment. In other words, intention and meaning surpass intuition and fulfillment. "A surplus in meaning [*ein Überschuss in der Bedeutung*] remains, a form that finds nothing in the phenomenon itself to confirm it," because in principle "the realm of meaning is much wider than that of intuition."<sup>16</sup> Intuition remains essentially lacking, impoverished, needy, indigent. The adequation between intention and intuition thus becomes a simple limit case, an ideal that is usually evoked by default. One could not argue against this by putting forward the fact that evidence is regularly achieved in mathematics and formal logic; for this fact, far from denying the failure of evidence, confirms it. Indeed, the ideal of adequation is realized precisely only in those domains where the intention of meaning, in order to be fulfilled in a phenomenon, requires only a pure or formal intuition (space in mathematics), or even no intuition (empty tautology in logic); mathematics and formal logic offer, precisely, only an ideal object—that is, strictly speaking, an object that does not have to give itself in order to appear; in short, a minute or zero-degree of phenomenality; evidence is adequately achieved because it requires only an impoverished or empty intuition. Adequation is realized so easily here

only because it is a matter of phenomena without any (or with weak) intuitive requirements.<sup>17</sup> There would be good reason, moreover, to wonder about the privilege that is so often granted by theories of knowledge (from Plato to Descartes, from Kant to Husserl) to logical and mathematical phenomena: they are erected as models of all the others, while they are distinguished therefrom by their shortage of intuition, the poverty of their givenness, even the unreality of their objects. It is not self-evident that this marginal poverty could serve as a paradigm for phenomenality as a whole, nor that the certitude it ensures would be worth the phenomenological price one pays for it. Whatever the case may be, if the ideal of evidence is realized only for intuitively impoverished phenomena, when it is, on the contrary, a matter of plenary phenomena, that is, of the appearance of the “things themselves” to be given intuitively, adequation becomes an ideal in the strict sense; that is, an event not (entirely) given, due to a (minimally, partial) failure of intuition. The equality required by right between intuition and intention is lacking—for lack of intuition. The senses deceive, not at all through a provisional or accidental deception, but through an inescapable weakness: even an indefinite sum of intuited outlines will never fill intention with the least real object. When it is a question of a thing, the intentional object always exceeds its intuitive givenness. Its presence remains to be completed by appresentation.<sup>18</sup> What keeps phenomenology from allowing phenomena to appear without reserve, therefore, is, to begin with, the fundamental deficit of intuition that it ascribes to them—with neither recourse nor appeal. But the phenomenological “breakthrough” postulates this shortage of intuition only as a result of metaphysical decisions—in short, Husserl here suffers the consequences of decisions made by Kant.

For it is Kant first who, always defining the truth by *adaequatio*,<sup>19</sup> inferred therefrom the parallel between intuition and the concept, which are supposed to play a tangentially equal role in the production of objectivity. “Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without

concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible (that is, to add the object to them in intuition), as to make our intuitions intelligible (that is, to bring them under concepts). These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing.”<sup>20</sup> In principle, the phenomenon, and therefore the real object, appears in the strict measure that the intuition and the concept not only are synthesized, but also are balanced in that synthesis. *Adaequatio*—and therefore the truth—would thus rest on the equality of the concept with the intuition. However, Kant himself does not hesitate to disqualify this parallelism; for, if the concept corresponds to the intuition, it nevertheless radically depends on it. Indeed, if the concept thinks, it limits itself in this way to rendering intelligible, after the fact and by derivation, what intuition for its part, principally and originarily, alone can give: “Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of the mind. . . . Through the first [receptivity] an object is given [*gegeben*] to us, through the second the object is thought”; “There are two conditions under which alone the knowledge of an object is possible, first, intuition, through which it is given, though only as phenomenon [*nur als Erscheinung gegeben wird*]; secondly, the concept, through which an object is thought corresponding to this intuition.”<sup>21</sup> To be sure, the intuition remains empty, but blindness is worth more here than vacuity: for even blinded, the intuition remains one that gives, whereas the concept, even if it alone can allow to be seen what would first be given to it, remains as such perfectly empty, and therefore just as well incapable of seeing anything at all. Intuition without the concept, even though still blind, nevertheless already gives matter to an object; whereas the concept without intuition, although not blind, nevertheless no longer sees anything, since nothing has yet been given to it to be seen. In the realm of the phenomenon, the concept is not king, but rather intuition: before an object is seen and in order to be seen, its appearance must be given; even if it does not see what it gives, intuition alone enjoys the privilege of giving: “the object cannot be given to a concept otherwise than in intuition

[*nicht anders gegeben werden, als in der Anschauung*]; for “the category is a simple function of thought, through which no object is given to me, and by which alone what can be given in intuition is thought [*nur was in der Anschauung gegeben werden mag*]”; —or again: “intuitions in general, through which objects can be given to us [*uns Gegenstände gegeben werden können*], constitute the field, the whole object, of possible experience.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, intuition does not offer a simple parallel or complement to the concept; it ensures the concept’s condition of possibility—its possibility itself: “intuitions in general, through which objects can be given to us [*gegeben werden können*], constitute the field or whole object of possible experience [*möglicher Erfahrung*].”<sup>22</sup> The phenomenon is thought through the concept; but in order to be thought, it must first be given; and it is given only through intuition. The intuitive *mise en scène* conditions conceptual objectivation. Inasmuch as alone and anteriorly giving, intuition breaks in its own favor its parallelism with the concept. Henceforth, the scope of intuition establishes that of phenomenal givenness. Phenomenality is indexed according to intuition.

Now, through a stunning tactical reversal, Kant stresses this privilege of intuition only in order better to stigmatize its weakness. For if intuition alone gives objects, there falls to human finitude only an intuition that is itself equally finite, in this case sensible. Consequently, all the eventual objects that would necessitate an intellectual intuition are excluded from the possibility of appearing. Phenomenality remains limited by the defect of what renders it partially possible—intuition. What gives (intuition inasmuch as sensible) is but of a piece with what is lacking (intuition inasmuch as intellectual). Intuition determines phenomenality as much by what it refuses to it as by what it gives to it. “Thought is the act which relates given intuition [*gegebene Anschauung*] to an object. If the mode of this intuition is not in any way given [*auf keinerlei Weise gegeben*], then the object is merely transcendental and the concept of understanding has only transcendental employment.”<sup>23</sup> To think is more than to know the objects given by (sensible)

intuition; it is to think all those objects that no (intellectual) intuition will ever give, to measure the immense cenotaph of phenomena that never appeared and never will appear, in short to presume intuition’s absence from possible phenomena. For intuition, which alone gives, essentially lacks. What gives is lacking. A paradox follows: henceforth, the more phenomena give themselves in sensibility, the more also grows the silent number of all the phenomena that cannot and need not claim to give themselves in sensibility. The more intuition gives according to the sensible, the more evident becomes its failure to let what is possibly phenomenal appear—a phenomenality that is henceforth held as impossible. The limitation of intuition to the sensible indirectly shows, as much as the directly given phenomena, the shadow of all those that it cannot let appear. The finitude of intuition is attested to with the permanence—which Kant admits is “necessary”—of the idea. The idea, even though, or rather because it is a “rational concept to which no corresponding object can be given in the senses [*in den Sinnen*],” remains nevertheless *visible*<sup>24</sup> if not visible in all the sensible appearances from which it is excluded. “Absent from every bouquet,” the flower of thought, according to the “glory of long desire,”<sup>25</sup> calls for sensible flowers and survives them; likewise the idea, in letting itself be aimed at *outside* the conditions established for phenomenality, marks that much more the limits thereof. In the quasi phantom-like mode of a non-object, the idea attests to the limits of an intuition that was not able to give the idea. It is therefore by not being sensible that the idea proves the failure of sensible intuition—in it and in general.

The phenomenon is characterized by its lack of intuition, which gives it only by limiting it. Kant confirms that intuition is operative only under the rule of limitation, of lack and of necessity, in short of nothingness [*néant*], by undertaking to define reciprocally the four senses of nothingness starting from intuition. Everything happens as if it were with intuition first, and with intuition considered as essentially lacking, failing, and limited, that nothingness in all its dimensions could be defined. The list of the four senses



of nothingness amounts in effect to a review of four modes of intuition's failure. 1) Nothingness can be taken as *ens rationis*. This is defined as "the object of a concept to which there corresponds no intuition that might be given [*keine anzugebende Anschauung*]." Intuition first produces nothingness in being unable to give any intuition corresponding to a being of reason; its limitation to the sensible finally induces a first nothingness. 2) Nothingness can be taken as *nihil privativum*. This is defined as "the concept of the lack of an object," that is, as a double lack of intuition; first as a concept, and therefore as what by definition lacks intuition; and then as the concept representing the very lack of intuition, which alone gives an object; a double lack of intuition produces a second nothingness. 3) Nothingness can be taken as *nihil imaginativum*. This sense is paradoxically significant: in principle, imagined nothingness would have to distance itself from nothingness, since here a minimum of intuition (precisely, the imagined) would have to give a minimum of being. But Kant does not grant even this positivity to the intuition, admitting only a "simple form of intuition" and reducing it to an "empty intuition." It should be noted that "empty" elsewhere returns to the concept, and that intuition does not even have any more right here to its "blind" solitude—since it is true that here the form of intuition is likened to the empty form of the concept. The form of intuition is reduced to a third nothingness. 4) Finally, nothingness can be taken as *nihil negativum*. As an "empty object without concept," it would seem to be defined by the failure in it of the concept and not of intuition; likewise, as "the object of a concept that contradicts itself," it would seem to admit of a purely logical explanation, and not an intuitive one. But, strangely, such is not the case, since Kant puts forward an example—a two-sided rectilinear figure—which can be conceived only in space, and therefore in intuition. Moreover, as he specified earlier, "there is no contradiction in the concept of a figure that is enclosed between two straight lines, since the concepts of two figures and of their meeting contain no negation of a figure; the impossibility does not arise from the concept in itself, but in connection with

its construction in space."<sup>26</sup> The concept is lacking because the object contradicts itself; but this contradiction is not logical; it results from the contradiction of the conditions of experience—here from the requirements of construction in space; it is therefore a matter of a contradiction according to intuition, and thus according to the finitude of that intuition.—Nothingness is expressed in many ways, as is Being elsewhere, but that polysemy is organized entirely on the basis of different absences of finite and sensible intuition. Intuition's failure characterizes it fairly essentially, so that nothingness might itself be inflected in its voids.

We were asking: how is the phenomenon defined when phenomenology and metaphysics delimit it within a horizon and according to an "I"? Its definition as conditioned and reducible is well accomplished through a *de-finition*: the phenomena are given by an intuition, but that intuition remains finite, either as sensible (Kant), or as most often lacking or ideal (Husserl). Phenomena suffer from a deficit of intuition, and thus from a shortage of givenness. This radical lack has nothing accidental about it, but results from a phenomenological necessity. In order that any phenomenon might be inscribed within a horizon (and there find its condition of possibility), it is necessary that that horizon be delimited (it is its definition), and therefore that the phenomenon remain finite. In order for a phenomenon to be reduced to an obviously finite "I" who constitutes it, the phenomenon must be reduced to the status of finite objectivity. In both cases, the finitude of the horizon and of the "I" is indicated by the finitude of the intuition itself. The phenomena are characterized by the finitude of givenness in them, so as to be able to enter into a constituting horizon and to be led back to an "I." But, conversely, one could also conclude from this equivalence of the determinations that unconditioned and irreducible phenomena would become possible only if a non-finite intuition ensured their givenness. But can a non-finite intuition even be envisaged?

#### IV

The impossibility of an unconditioned and irreducible phenomenon thus results directly

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from the determination of the phenomenon in general by the (at least potential) failure of intuition in it. Every phenomenon would appear as lacking intuition and as marked by this lack to the point of having to rely on the condition of a horizon and on the reduction towards an "I." There would be no phenomenon except that which is essentially impoverished in intuition, a phenomenon with a reduced givenness.

Having arrived at this point, we can pose the question of a strictly inverse hypothesis: in certain cases still to be defined, must we not oppose to the restricted possibility of phenomenality a phenomenality that is in the end absolutely possible? To the phenomenon that is supposed to be impoverished in intuition can we not oppose a phenomenon that is saturated with intuition? To the phenomenon that is most often characterized by a defect of intuition, and therefore by a deception of the intentional aim and, in particular instances, by the equality between intuition and intention, why would there not correspond the possibility of a phenomenon in which intuition would give *more, indeed immeasurably more*, than intention ever would have intended or foreseen?

This is not a matter of a gratuitous or arbitrary hypothesis. First, because in a certain way it falls to Kant—nevertheless the thinker of the intuitive shortage of the common phenomenon—to have envisaged and defined what we are calling a saturated phenomenon. There is nothing surprising in that. Indeed, if the "rational idea can never become a cognition because it contains a concept (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given"—a phenomenon that is not only impoverished in, but deprived of, intuition—it nevertheless offers only one of the two faces of the idea, which is defined in general as the representation of an object according to a principle, such that it nonetheless can never become the cognition thereof. Thus to the rational idea—a representation according to the understanding—there corresponds the "aesthetic idea"—a representation according to intuition—that itself can never become a cognition, but for an opposite reason: "because it is an intuition (of the imagination) for which no ade-

quate [*adäquat*] concept can ever be found."<sup>27</sup> Inadequacy always threatens phenomenality (or better, suspends it); but it is no longer a matter of the non-adequation of the (lacking) intuition that leaves a (given) concept empty; it is a matter, conversely, of a failure of the (lacking) concept that leaves the (overabundantly given) intuition blind. Henceforth, it is the concept that is lacking, no longer intuition. Kant stresses this unambiguously: in the case of the aesthetic idea, the "representation of the imagination furnishes much to think [*viel zu denken veranlasst*], but to which no determinate thought, or concept, can be adequate [*adäquat sein kann*]." The excess of intuition over any concept also prohibits "that any language ever reach it completely and render it intelligible,"<sup>28</sup> in short, allow an object to be seen in it. It is important to insist here particularly on this: this failure to produce the object does not result here from a shortage of givenness (as for the ideas of reason), but indeed from an excess of intuition, and thus from an excess of givenness that "furnishes much to think." There is an excess of givenness, and not simply of intuition, since, according to Kant (and, for the main part, Husserl), it is intuition that gives. Kant formulates this excess with a rare term: the aesthetic idea remains an "inexposable [*inexponibel*] representation of the imagination." We can understand this in the following way: because it gives "much," the aesthetic idea gives more than any concept can expose; to expose here amounts to arranging (ordering) the intuitive given according to rules; the impossibility of this conceptual arrangement issues from the fact that the intuitive overabundance is no longer exposed within rules, whatever they may be, but overwhelms them; intuition is no longer exposed within the concept, but saturates it and renders it overexposed—invisible, not by lack, but by excess of light. The fact that this very excess should prohibit the aesthetic idea from organizing its intuition within the limits of a concept, and therefore from giving a defined object to be seen, nevertheless does not disqualify it phenomenologically, since when recognized in this way for what it is, this "inexposable representation" operates according to its "free play."<sup>29</sup> The difficulty consists simply in

attempting to comprehend (and not only to repeat) what phenomenological possibility is put into operation when the excess of giving intuition thus begins to play freely.

The path to follow from here on now opens more clearly before us. We must develop as far as possible the uncommon phenomenological possibility glimpsed by Kant himself. In other words, we must attempt to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon that, contrary to most phenomena which are impoverished in intuition and defined by the ideal adequation of intuition to intention, would be characterized by an excess of intuition, and thus of givenness, over the intention, the concept and the aim. Such a phenomenon will doubtless no longer allow the constitution of an object, at least in the Kantian sense. But it is not self-evident that objectivity should have all the authority in fixing phenomenology's norm. The hypothesis of a phenomenon saturated with intuition can certainly be warranted by its outline in Kant, but above all it must command our attention because it designates a possibility of the phenomenon in general. And in phenomenology, the least possibility is binding.

## V

We will outline the description of the saturated phenomenon following the guiding thread of the categories of the understanding established by Kant. But, in order to do justice to the excess of intuition over the concept, we will use them in a negative mode. The saturated phenomenon in fact exceeds the categories and the principles of the understanding—it will therefore be *invisible* according to quantity, unbearable according to quality, absolute according to relation, and incapable of being looked at [*irregardable*] according to modality.

First, the saturated phenomenon cannot be aimed at. This impossibility stems from its essentially unforeseeable character. To be sure, its giving intuition ensures it a quantity, but such that it cannot be foreseen. This determination is better clarified by inverting the function of the axioms of intuition. According to Kant, quantity (the magnitudes of extension) is declined through a composition of the whole on the basis of its parts; this “successive synthesis” allows one to com-

pose the representation of the whole according to the representation of the sum of the parts; indeed, the magnitude of a quantum has the property of implying nothing more than the summation of the quanta that make it up through addition. From this homogeneity follows another property: a quantified phenomenon is “foreseen in advance [*schon . . . angeschaut*] as an aggregate (a sum of parts given in advance) [*vorher gegeben*].”<sup>30</sup> Such a phenomenon is literally foreseen on the basis of the finite number of its parts and of the magnitude of each one among them. Now, these are precisely the properties that become impossible when a saturated phenomenon is at issue. Indeed, since the intuition that gives it is not limited, its excess can be neither divided nor put together again by virtue of a homogenous magnitude and finite parts. It could not be measured on the basis of its parts, since the saturating intuition surpasses the sum of these parts by continually adding to it. Such a phenomenon, which is always exceeded by the intuition that saturates it, would rather have to be called incommensurable, not measurable (immense), unmeasured [*démesuré*]. This lack of measure [*démesure*], furthermore, does not always or initially operate through the enormity of an unlimited quantity. It is marked more often by the impossibility of applying a successive synthesis to it, a synthesis allowing one to foresee an aggregate on the basis of the sum of its parts. Since the saturated phenomenon exceeds any summation of its parts—which, moreover, often cannot be counted—we must forsake the successive synthesis in favor of what we will call an instantaneous synthesis, the representation of which precedes and goes beyond that of possible components, rather than resulting from them according to foresight.

We find a privileged example of this with *amazement*. According to Descartes, this passion strikes us even before we know the thing, or rather precisely because we know it only partially: “One can perceive of the object only the first side that has presented itself, and consequently one cannot acquire a more particular knowledge of it.”<sup>31</sup> The “object” delivers to us only a single “side” (we could also say *Ab-schatung*) and immediately imposes itself on us

with such a force that we are overwhelmed by what shows itself, eventually to the point of fascination. And yet the “successive synthesis” was suspended as early as its first term. This, then, is because another synthesis has been achieved, a synthesis that is instantaneous and irreducible to the sum of possible parts. Any phenomenon that produces amazement imposes itself upon the gaze in the very measure (or more precisely, in the very lack of measure) that it does not result from any foreseeable summation of partial quantities. Indeed, it amazes because it arises without any common measure with the phenomena that precede it, without announcing it or explaining it—for, according to Spinoza, “*nullam cum reliquis habet connexionem.*”<sup>32</sup> Thus, for at least two phenomenological reasons, the saturated phenomenon may not be foreseen on the basis of the parts that would compose it through summation. First, because intuition, which continually saturates the phenomenon, prohibits distinguishing and summing up a finite number of finite parts, thus annulling any possibility of foreseeing the phenomenon. Next, because the saturated phenomenon most often imposes itself thanks to amazement, where it is precisely the non-enumeration and the non-summation of the parts, and thus the unforeseeability, that accomplish all intuitive givenness.

Secondly, the saturated phenomenon cannot be borne. According to Kant, quality (intensive magnitude) allows intuition to give a degree of reality to the object by limiting it, eventually as far as negation: every phenomenon will have to admit a degree of intuition and that is what perception can anticipate. The foresight at work in extensive magnitude is found again in intensive magnitude. Nevertheless, an essential difference separates them: foresight no longer operates in a successive synthesis of the homogeneous, but in a perception of the heterogeneous—each degree is marked by a break with the preceding one, and therefore by an absolutely singular novelty. Since he privileges the case of the impoverished phenomenon, Kant analyses this heterogeneity only on the basis of the simplest cases—the first degrees starting from zero, imperceptible perceptions, etc. But in the case of a saturated phenome-

non, intuition gives reality without any limitation (or, to be sure, negation). It reaches an intensive magnitude without (common) measure, such that, starting from a certain degree, the intensity of the real intuition exceeds all the anticipations of perception. In face of that excess, perception not only can no longer anticipate what it is going to receive from intuition, but above all it can no longer bear the degree of intuition. For intuition, which is supposed to be “blind” in the realm of impoverished phenomena, proves to be, in a truly radical phenomenology, much rather blinding. The intensive magnitude of the intuition that gives the saturated phenomenon is unbearable for the gaze, just as this gaze could not foresee that intuition’s extensive magnitude.

Bedazzlement characterizes what the gaze cannot bear. Not bearing does not amount to not seeing; for one must first perceive, if not see, in order to experience this incapacity to bear. It is in fact a question of something visible that our gaze cannot bear; this visible something is experienced as unbearable to the gaze because it weighs too much upon that gaze; the glory of the visible weighs, and it weighs too much. What weighs here is not unhappiness, nor pain nor lack, but indeed glory, joy, excess: “Oh/ Triumph!/ What Glory! What human heart would be strong enough to bear/ That?”<sup>33</sup> Intuition gives too intensely for the gaze to be able truly to see what already it can no longer receive, nor even confront. This blinding indeed concerns the intensity of the intuition and it alone, as is indicated by cases of blinding in face of spectacles where the intuition remains quantitatively ordinary, even weak, but of an intensity that is out of the ordinary: Oedipus blinds himself for having seen his transgression, and therefore we have a quasi moral intensity of intuition; and He whom no one can see without dying blinds first by his holiness, even if his coming is announced in a simple breath of wind. Because the saturated phenomenon, due to the excess of intuition in it, cannot be borne by any gaze that would measure up to it (“objectively”), it is perceived (“subjectively”) by the gaze only in the negative mode of an impossible perception, the mode of bedazzlement.—Plato described this perfectly in connec-

tion with the prisoner of the Cave: “let one untie him and force him suddenly to turn around [ἀνίστασθαι] . . . and to lift his gaze toward the light [πρὸς τὸ φῶς αναβλέπειν], he would suffer in doing all that, and, because of the bedazzlements, he would not have the strength to see face on [δία τὰς μαρμαρυγὰς ἀδυνατοῖκαθορᾶν] that of which previously he saw the shadows.” It is indeed a question of “suffering” in seeing the full light, and of fleeing it by turning away toward “the things that one can look at [ἄδύναται καθορᾶν].” What keeps one from seeing are precisely the “eyes filled with splendor.”<sup>34</sup> Moreover, this bedazzlement is just as valid for intelligible intuition as it is for sensible intuition. First, because the myth of the Cave, in the final analysis, concerns the epistemological obstacles to intelligibility, of which the sensible montage explicitly offers one figure; next, because the idea of the Good also and above all offers itself as “difficult to see” (μόγισ ὁρασθαι), certainly not by defect, since it presents “the most visible of beings,” but indeed by excess—because “the soul is incapable of seeing anything . . . saturated by an extremely brilliant bedazzlement [ὑπὸ λαμπροτερον μαρμαρυγῆς ἐμπέπλησται]”<sup>35</sup> What in all these cases prohibits one from seeing is the sensible or intelligible light’s excess of intensity.

Bedazzlement thus becomes a characteristic—universalizable to any form of intuition—of an intuitive intensity that goes beyond the degree that a gaze can sustain. This is not a question of some exceptional case, which we would merely mention as a matter of interest along with the impoverished phenomenon, itself thought to be more frequent and thus more or less normative. On the contrary, it is a question of an essential determination of the phenomenon, which is rendered almost inevitable for two reasons. 1) The Kantian description of intensive magnitudes, in other respects so original and true, nevertheless maintains a resounding silence concerning the most characteristic notion of intensive magnitude—the maximum. For even if it can undoubtedly not be defined objectively, there is always a subjective maximum, the threshold of tolerance. Bedazzlement begins when perception passes beyond its subjective maximum. The de-

scription of intensive magnitudes would necessarily and with priority have to take into consideration their highest degrees, and therefore the subjective maximum (or maximums) that the bedazzlements signal. 2) As previously with unforeseeability, so bedazzlement designates a type of intuitive givenness that is not only less rare than it would seem to a hasty examination, but above all, that is decisive for a real recognition of finitude. Finitude is experienced (and proved)<sup>36</sup> not so much through the shortage of the given before our gaze, as above all because this gaze sometimes no longer measures the amplitude of the givenness. Or rather, measuring itself against that givenness, the gaze experiences it, sometimes in the suffering of an essential passivity, as having no measure with itself. Finitude is experienced as much through excess as through lack—indeed, more through excess than through lack.

## VI

Neither *visible* according to quantity, nor bearable according to quality, a saturated phenomenon would be absolute according to relation as well; that is, it would shy away from any analogy of experience.

Kant defines the principle of such analogies as follows: “Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of perceptions.” Now, simple apprehension by empirical intuition cannot ensure this necessary connection; on the contrary, the connection will have to produce itself at once through concepts and in time: “Since time cannot itself be perceived, the determination of the existence of objects in time can be made only through their connection in time in general, and therefore only through concepts that connect them in general.” This connection connects according to three operations: inherence of accident in substance, causality between effect and cause, community between several substances. But Kant establishes them only by bringing three presuppositions into play. It is thus the possible questioning of these that will again define the saturated phenomenon.

First presupposition: in all occurrences, a phenomenon can manifest itself only by respecting the unity of experience, that is, by taking place in the tightest possible network of ties of inherence,

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the tightest possible network of ties of inherence, causality and community, which assign to the phenomenon, in a hollow, so to speak, a site and a function. It is a matter here of a strict obligation: "This entire manifold must be unified [*vereinigt werden soll*]," "An analogy of experience is, therefore, only a rule according to which the unity of experience must arise from perceptions [*entspringen soll*]."<sup>37</sup> For Kant, a phenomenon appears, therefore, only in a site that is predefined by a system of coordinates, a system that is itself governed by the principle of the unity of experience. Now it is here that another question creeps in: must every phenomenon without exception respect the unity of experience? Can one legitimately rule out the possibility that a phenomenon might impose itself on perception without one, for all that, being able to assign to it either a substance in which to dwell as an accident, or a cause from which it results as an effect, or even less an interactive *commercium* in which to be relativized? Further, it is not self-evident that the phenomena that really arise—as opposed to the phenomena that are impoverished in intuition, or even deprived entirely of intuition—can right from the first and most often be perceived according to such analogies of perception; it could be, quite the reverse, that they occur without being inscribed, at least at first, in the relational network that ensures experience its unity, and that they matter precisely because one cannot assign them any substratum, any cause, or any communion. To be sure, after a bit of analysis, most can be led back, at least approximately, to the analogies of perception. But those, not at all so rare, that do not lend themselves to this henceforth assume the character and the dignity of an event—that is, an event or a phenomenon that is unforeseeable (on the basis of the past), not exhaustively comprehensible (on the basis of the present), nor reproducible (on the basis of the future); in short, absolute, unique, occurring. We will thus call it a pure event. We are here taking that which has the character of event [*l'événementiel*] in its individual dimension as much as its collective dimension. Consequently, the analogies of experience can concern only a fringe of phenomenality—the phenomenality typical of the objects constituted

by the sciences, a phenomenality that is impoverished in intuition, foreseeable, exhaustively knowable, reproducible—while other layers—and historical phenomena first of all—would be excepted.

The second presupposition concerns the very elaboration of the procedure that allows one to ensure the (at once temporal and conceptual) necessity and thus the unity of experience. Kant presupposes that this unity must always be achieved through recourse to an analogy. For "all the empirical determinations of time must [*müssen*] stand under the rules of the general determination of time, and the analogies of experience . . . must [*müssen*] be rules of this kind." In short, it is up to the analogies of experience and to them alone actually to exercise the regulation of experience by necessity, and thus to ensure its unity. Now, at the precise moment of defining these analogies, Kant himself recognizes the fragility of their phenomenological power: indeed, in mathematics, analogy remains quantitative, such that through calculation it gives itself the fourth term and truly constructs it; in this way the equality of the two relations of magnitude is "always constitutive" of the object and actually maintains it in a unified experience. But, Kant specifies, "in philosophy, on the contrary, analogy is not the equality of two *quantitative* relations but of two *qualitative* relations; and from three given members we can obtain *a priori* knowledge only of the relation to a fourth, not of the fourth member itself. . . . An analogy of experience therefore will be a rule according to which the unity of experience . . . must arise from [*entspringen soll*] perceptions, and it will be valid as the principle of objects (phenomena) in a manner that is not *constitutive* but only *regulative*."<sup>38</sup> To put it plainly, when it is a question of what we have called impoverished phenomena (here mathematical), intuition (here, the pure intuition of space) is not such that it could saturate the phenomenon and contradict in it the unity and the pre-established necessity of experience; in this case, the analogy remains quantitative and constitutive. In short, there is analogy of experience provided that the phenomenon remains impoverished. But as soon as the simple movement to

physics (not even to speak of a saturated phenomenon) occurs, analogy can no longer regulate anything, except qualitatively: if A is the cause of effect B, then D will be in the position (quality) of effect with respect to C, without it being possible to identify what D is or will be, and without it being possible to construct it (by lack of pure intuition) or to constitute it. Kant's predicament culminates with the strange employment, within the analytic of principles, of principles whose usage remains purely "regulative"—which can be understood in only one sense: the analogies of experience do not really constitute their objects, but express subjective needs of the understanding.

Let us suppose, for the moment, that the analogies of perception, thus reduced to a simple regulative usage, must treat a saturated phenomenon: the latter already exceeds the categories of quantity (unforeseeable) and quality (unbearable); it gives itself already as a pure event. Consequently, how could an analogy—especially one that is simply regulative—assign to the phenomenon—especially necessarily and a priori—a point whose coordinates would be established by the relations of inherence, causality, and community? This phenomenon would escape all relations because it would not maintain any common measure with these terms; it would be freed from them, as from any a priori determination of experience that would eventually claim to impose itself on the phenomenon. In this we will speak of an absolute phenomenon: untied from any analogy with any object of experience whatsoever.

This being the case, the third Kantian presupposition becomes questionable. The unity of experience is developed on the basis of time, since it is a matter of "the synthetic unity of all phenomena according to their relation in time."<sup>39</sup> Thus, Kant posits—the first to do so no doubt—not only time as the ultimate horizon of phenomena, but moreover that no appearance can dawn without a horizon that receives it and that it rejects at the same time. This signifies that before any phenomenal breakthrough toward visibility, the horizon first awaited in advance. And it signifies that every phenomenon, in appearing, is in fact limited to actualizing a portion of the horizon,

which otherwise would remain transparent. A current question concerns the identity of this horizon (time, Being, the good, etc.). This should not, however, mask another question that is simpler, albeit harder: could certain phenomena exceed every horizon? We should specify that it is not a matter of dispensing with a horizon in general—which would undoubtedly prohibit all manifestation—but of freeing oneself from the delimiting anteriority proper to every horizon, an anteriority that is such as to be unable not to enter into conflict with a phenomenon's claim to absoluteness. Let us assume a saturated phenomenon that has just gained its absolute character by freeing itself from the analogies with experience—what horizon can it recognize? On the one hand, the excess of intuition saturates this phenomenon so as to make it exceed the frame of ordinary experience. On the other hand, a horizon, by its very definition, defines and is defined; through its movement to the limit, the saturated phenomenon can manage to saturate its horizon. There is nothing strange about this hypothesis—even in strict philosophy where, with Spinoza, for example, the unique substance, absorbing all the determinations and all the individuals corresponding thereto, manages to overwhelm with its infinitely saturated presence (*in finitis attributis infinitis modis*) the horizon of Cartesian metaphysics, by leaving therein no more free space for the finite (absolute and universal necessity). Such saturation of a horizon by a single saturated phenomenon presents a danger that could not be overestimated, since it is born from the experience—and from the absolutely real, in no way illusory, experience—of totality, with neither door nor window, with neither other [*autre*] nor others [*autrui*]. But this danger results less from the saturated phenomenon itself than, strangely, from the misapprehension of it. Indeed, when it arises, it is most often treated as if it were only a common law phenomenon or a impoverished phenomenon. In fact, the saturated phenomenon maintains its absoluteness and, at the same time, dissolves its danger, when one recognizes it without confusing it with other phenomena, and therefore when one allows it to operate on several horizons at once. Since there are spaces

with  $n+1$  dimensions (whose properties saturate the imagination), there are phenomena with  $n+1$  horizons. One of the best examples of such an arrangement is furnished by the doctrine of the transcendentals: the irreducible plurality of *ens*, *verum*, *bonum*, and *pulchrum* allows one to decline the saturated phenomenon from the first Principle in perfectly autonomous registers, where it gives itself to be seen, each time, only according to one perspective, which is total as well as partial; their convertibility indicates that the saturation persists, but that it is distributed within several concurrent horizons. Or rather the saturation increases because each perspective, already saturated in itself, is blurred a second time by the interferences in it of other saturated perspectives.<sup>40</sup> The plurality of horizons therefore allows as much that one might respect the absoluteness of the saturated phenomenon (which no horizon could delimit or precede), as that one might render it tolerable through a multiplication of the dimensions of its reception.

There remains nevertheless one last thinkable, although extreme, relation between the saturated phenomenon and its horizon(s): that no horizon nor any combination of horizons tolerate the absoluteness of the phenomenon precisely because it gives itself as absolute; that is, as free from any analogy with common law phenomena and from any predetermination by a network of relations, with neither precedent nor antecedent within the already seen (the foreseen). In short, a phenomenon saturated to the point that the world could not accept it. Having come among its own, they did not recognize it—having come into phenomenality, the absolutely saturated phenomenon could find no room there for its display. But this opening denial, and thus this disfiguration, still remains a manifestation.

Thus, in giving itself absolutely, the saturated phenomenon gives itself also as absolute-free from any analogy with the experience that is already seen, objectivized, and comprehended. It frees itself therefrom because it depends on no horizon. On the contrary, the saturated phenomenon either simply saturates the horizon, or it multiplies the horizon in order to saturate it that much more, or it exceeds the horizon and finds

itself cast out from it. But this very disfiguration remains a manifestation. In every case, it does not depend on that condition of possibility par excellence—a horizon, whatever it may be. We will therefore call this phenomenon unconditioned.

## VII

Neither *visible* according to quantity, nor bearable according to quality, absolute according to relation—that is, unconditioned by the horizon—the saturated phenomenon finally gives itself as incapable of being looked at according to modality.

The categories of modality are distinguished from all the others, Kant insists, in that they determine neither the objects themselves, nor their mutual relations, but simply “their relation to thought in general,” in that they “express only the relation to the power of knowing,” “nothing other than the action of the power of knowing.”<sup>41</sup> In fact, between the objects of experience and the power of knowing, it is not only a question of a simple relation, but of the fact that they “agree.” This agreement determines the possibility of phenomena to be (and therefore also their actuality and necessity) in the measure of their suitability to the “I” for and through whom the experience takes place. “The postulate of the possibility of things requires [*fordert*] therefore that their concept agree [*zusammenstimme*] with the formal conditions of an experience in general.”<sup>42</sup> The phenomenon is possible in the strict measure that it agrees with the formal conditions of experience, thus with the power of knowing that fixes its attention on them, and therefore finally with the transcendental “I” itself. The possibility of the phenomenon depends on its reduction to the “I.”

This being the case, we can envisage a reversal of Kant’s assertion and ask: what would occur phenomenologically if a phenomenon did not “agree” with or “correspond” to the power of knowing of the “I”? The Kantian answer leaves hardly any doubt: this phenomenon quite simply would not appear; or better, there would not be any phenomenon at all, but an object-less perceptive aberration. If this answer remains meaningful for an impoverished or common law phenomenon, does it still hold for a saturated phenomenon? In fact, the situation in this case becomes



much different. In face of saturation, the “I” most certainly experiences the disagreement between the at least potential phenomenon and the subjective conditions of its experience; consequently, the “I” cannot constitute an object therein. But this failure to objectivize in no way implies that absolutely nothing appears here: intuitive saturation, precisely inasmuch as it is invisible, intolerable, and absolute (unconditioned), imposes itself in the capacity of a phenomenon that is exceptional by excess, not by defect. The saturated phenomenon refuses to let itself be looked at as an object, precisely because it appears with a multiple and indescribable excess that suspends any effort at constitution. To define the saturated phenomenon as a non-objective or, more exactly, non-objectivizable object, in no way indicates a refuge in the irrational or the arbitrary; this definition refers to one of its distinctive properties: although exemplarily visible, it nevertheless cannot be looked at. We here take “to look at”—*re-garder*—literally: *re-garder* exactly reproduces *in-tueri* and must therefore be understood on the basis of *tueri, garder*—but in the sense of “to keep an eye on. . .,” “to keep half an eye on. . .,” “to have (to keep) in sight. . .” *Regarder* therefore implies being able to keep the visible that is seen under the control of the one who is seeing and, consequently, a voyeur. And it is certainly not by chance that Descartes entrusts the *intuitus* with maintaining in evidence what the ego reduces to the status of *objectum*. To define the saturated phenomenon as incapable of being looked at [*ir-regardable*] amounts to envisaging the possibility where a phenomenon would impose itself with such a surfeit of intuition that it could neither be reduced to the conditions of experience, and thus to the “I” who sets them, nor, all the same, forgo appearing.

Under what figure would it appear then? It appears in spite of and in disagreement with the conditions of possibility of experience—by imposing an impossible experience (if not already an experience of the impossible). Of the saturated phenomenon there would be only a counter-experience. Confronted with the saturated phenomenon, the “I” cannot not see it, but neither can it look at it as its object. It has the eye to see it,

but not to look after it [*pour le garder*]. What, then, does this eye without a look [*cet oeil sans regard*] actually see? It sees the overabundance of intuitive givenness, not, however, as such, but as blurred by the overly short lens, the overly restricted aperture, the overly narrow frame that receives it—or rather, that no longer accommodates it. The eye apperceives not so much the appearance of the saturated phenomenon as the blur, the fog, and the overexposure that it imposes on its normal conditions of experience. The eye sees not so much another spectacle as its own naked impotence to constitute anything at all. It sees nothing distinctly, but clearly experiences its impotence before the unmeasuredness of the visible, and thus above all a perturbation of the visible, the noise of a poorly received message, the obfuscation of finitude. Through sight, it receives a pure givenness, precisely because it no longer discerns any objectivizable given therein.

Let us call this phenomenological extremity a paradox. The paradox not only suspends the phenomenon’s relation of subjection to the “I,” it inverts that relation. Far from being able to constitute this phenomenon, the “I” experiences itself as constituted by it. It is constituted and no longer constituting because it no longer has at its disposal any dominant point of view over the intuition that overwhelms it; in space, the saturated phenomenon engulfs it with its intuitive flood; in time, it precedes it through an interpellation that is always already there. The “I” loses its anteriority and finds itself, so to speak, deprived [*destitué*] of the duties of constitution, and thus itself constituted: a “me” rather than an “I.” It is clear that on the basis of the saturated phenomenon we meet here with what we have thematized elsewhere under the name of the subject on its last appeal—the *interloqué*.<sup>43</sup> When the “I” finds itself, instead of the constituting “I” that it remained in face of common law phenomena, constituted by a saturated phenomenon, it can identify itself as such only by admitting the precedence of such a phenomenon over itself. This reversal leaves it *interloqué*, essentially surprised by the more original event that detaches it from itself.

Thus, the phenomenon is no longer reduced to the "I" that would look at it. Incapable of being looked at, it proves irreducible. There is no drift or turn here, even "theological," but, on the contrary, an accounting for the fact that in certain cases of givenness the excess of intuition may no longer satisfy the conditions of ordinary experience; and that the pure event that occurs cannot be constituted as an object and leaves the durable trace of its opening only in the "I/me" that finds itself, almost in spite of itself, constituted by what it receives. The constituting subject is succeeded by the constituted witness. As a constituted witness, the subject remains the worker of truth, but no longer its producer.

### VIII

In order to introduce the concept of the saturated phenomenon into phenomenology, we have just described it as *invisible* (unforeseeable) according to quantity, unbearable according to quality, but also unconditioned (absolved from any horizon) according to relation, and irreducible to the "I" (incapable of being looked at) according to modality. These four characteristics imply the term for term reversal of all the rubrics under which Kant classifies the principles and thus the phenomena that these determine. However, in relation to Husserl, these new characteristics are organized in a more complex way; the first two—the *invisible* and the unbearable—offer no difficulty *de jure* for the "principle of all principles," for what intuition gives can quantitatively and qualitatively exceed the scope of the gaze; it is sufficient that intuition actually give it. The case is not the same for the last two characteristics: the "principle of all principles" presupposes the horizon and the constituting "I" as two unquestioned presuppositions of anything that would be constituted in general as a phenomenon; but the saturated phenomenon, inasmuch as it is unconditioned by a horizon and irreducible to an "I," makes a claim to a possibility that is freed from these two conditions; it therefore contradicts and exceeds the "principle of all principles." Husserl, who nonetheless surpassed the Kantian metaphysics of the phenomenon, must himself be surpassed in order to reach the possibility of the saturated phenomenon. Even and especially with

the "principle of all principles," Husserl maintains a twofold reserve toward possibility. Nevertheless, this reserve of Husserl toward possibility can prove to be a reserve of phenomenology itself—which still maintains a reserve of possibility, in order itself to be surpassed toward a possibility without reserve. Because it gives itself without condition or restraint, the saturated phenomenon offers the paradigm of the phenomenon without reserve. Thus, in the guiding thread of the saturated phenomenon, phenomenology finds its ultimate possibility: not only the possibility that surpasses actuality, but the possibility that surpasses the very conditions of possibility, the possibility of unconditioned possibility—in other words, the possibility of the impossible, the saturated phenomenon.

The saturated phenomenon must not be understood as a limit case, an exceptional, vaguely irrational—in short, a "mystical"—case of phenomenality. It indicates on the contrary the coherent and conceptual completion of the most operative definition of the phenomenon: it alone truly appears as itself, of itself and starting from itself,<sup>44</sup> since it alone appears without the limits of a horizon and without the reduction to an "I." We will therefore call this appearance that is purely of itself and starting from itself, this phenomenon that does not subject its possibility to any preliminary determination, a revelation. And—we insist on this—here it is purely and simply a matter of the phenomenon taken in its fullest meaning.

Moreover, the history of philosophy has a long-standing knowledge of such saturated phenomena. One could go so far as to maintain that none of the decisive metaphysicians has avoided the description of one or more saturated phenomena, even at the price of a head-on contradiction of his own presuppositions. Among many fairly obvious examples, let us simply call to mind Descartes and Kant.

a) Descartes, who everywhere else reduces the phenomenon to the idea and the idea to the object, nevertheless thinks the idea of infinity as a saturated phenomenon. According to quantity, the idea of infinity is not obtained by summation or successive synthesis, but *tota simul*; thus, the gaze (*intueri*) becomes the surprise of admiration

(*admirari*).<sup>45</sup> According to quality, it admits no finite degree, but a *maximum*: *maxime clara et distincta, maxime vera*.<sup>46</sup> According to relation, it maintains no analogy with any idea at all: *nihil univoce*; indeed, it exceeds every horizon since it remains incomprehensible, capable only of being touched by thought: *attinam quomodolibet cogitatione*.<sup>47</sup> According to modality, far from letting itself be led back to a constituting "I," it comprehends the "I" without letting itself be comprehended by it: *non tam capere quam a ipsa capi*,<sup>48</sup> such that perhaps even the *ego* could also be interpreted at times as one who is called [*un interpellé*]. But furthermore, would it not suffice to translate "idea of infinity" word for word by "saturated phenomenon" in order to establish our conclusion?

b) Kant furnishes an example of the saturated phenomenon that is all the more significant insofar as it does not concern, as does Descartes', rational theology; in fact, it is a question of the sublime. We relied above on the "aesthetic idea" to challenge the principle of the shortage of intuition and to introduce the possibility of a saturation. In fact, already with the doctrine of the sublime we are dealing with a saturated phenomenon. Indeed, according to quantity, the sublime has neither form nor order, since it is great "beyond all comparison," absolutely and not comparatively (*absolute, schlechthin, bloss*).<sup>49</sup> According to quality, it contradicts taste as a "negative pleasure" and it provokes a "feeling of inadequacy," a feeling of "monstrosity."<sup>50</sup> According to relation, it very clearly escapes any analogy and any horizon since it literally represents "unlimitedness" (*Unbegrenztheit*).<sup>51</sup> According to modality, finally, far from agreeing with our power of knowing, "it can seem [*erscheinen mag*] in its form to contradict the purpose [*zweckwidrig*] of our faculty of judgment"; the relation of our faculty of judgment to the phenomenon is therefore reversed, to the point that it is the phenomenon that hereafter "looks at" the "I" "in respect."<sup>52</sup> The Kantian sublime would thus permit us to widen the field of application for the concept of the saturated phenomenon.

From here on, we can recapitulate. Phenomena can be classified, according to their increas-

ing intuitive content, in three fundamental domains. a) The phenomena that are deprived of intuition or impoverished in intuitions: formal languages (endowed with categorial intuition by Husserl), mathematical idealities (whose pure intuition is established by Kant). b) The common law phenomena, whose signification (aimed at by intention) can ideally receive an adequate intuitive fulfillment, but that, right at the start and most of the time, do not reach such fulfillment. In these first two domains, the constitution of objects is rendered possible precisely because the shortage of intuition authorizes comprehension, foresight, and reproduction. c) There remain, finally, the saturated phenomena, which an excess of intuition shields from objective constitution. Conveniently, we can distinguish two types. 1) First, pure historical events: by definition non-repeatable, they occur most often without having been foreseen; since through a surfeit of intuitive given they escape objectivation, their intelligibility excludes comprehension and demands that one move on to hermeneutics;<sup>53</sup> intuitive saturation surpasses a single horizon and imposes multiple hermeneutics within several horizons; finally, the pure historical event not only occurs to its witness without the latter comprehending it (the non-constituting "I"), but itself, in return, comprehends the "I" (the constituted "I"): the "I" is comprehended on the basis of the event that occurs to it in the very measure that the "I" itself does not comprehend the event. Pure events offer a type of saturated phenomenon that is historical and thus communal and in principle communicable. 2) Such is not always the case for the second type, the phenomena of revelation. Let me repeat that by revelation I here intend a strictly phenomenological concept: an appearance that is purely of itself and starting from itself, which does not subject its possibility to any preliminary determination. Such revealed phenomena occur principally in three domains. First the picture as a spectacle that, due to excess of intuition, cannot be constituted but still can be looked at (the idol). Next, a particular face that I love, which has become invisible not only because it dazzles me, but above all because in it I want to look and can look only at its invisible gaze weighing on mine

(the icon). Finally, theophany, where the surfeit of intuition leads to the paradox that an invisible gaze visibly envisages me and loves me. And it is here that the question of the possibility of a phenomenology of religion would be posed in terms that are not new (for it is only a matter of pushing the phenomenological intention to its end), but simple.

In every case, recognizing the saturated phenomena comes down to thinking seriously *aliquid quo majus cogitari nequit*—seriously, which means as a final possibility of phenomenology.<sup>54,55</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

1. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, respectively A218/B265, A220/B267, and A219/B266.
2. G. Leibniz, *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace*, 7, ed. A. Robinet (Paris, 1954), p. 45.
3. *Nouveaux Essais*, IV, II, 84, *Die philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C. Gerhardt, vol. 5, p. 355.
4. Ep. CXXXIII to Des Bosses, ed. cit., vol. 2, p. 506.
5. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen I*, §24, *Husserliana*, vol. III, p. 52; Eng. trans. (modified) F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p. 44.
6. On this point see Michel Henry, "Quatre principes de la phenomenologie," *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale* (1991), n. 1.
7. *Ideen I*, §83, p. 201, Eng. trans., p. 197, modified. The connection made here by Husserl between the horizon of lived-experiences and the Kantian idea will assume all of its importance below. Will it be objected that the horizon is defined solely by the lack of intuition? Undoubtedly not, since signification, even without intuition, is given as such.
8. *Ibid.*, § 82, p. 200, Eng. trans., p. 196, modified. See also Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, §99, *Hua*. XVII, p. 257.
9. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §7, 10th ed. (Tübingen, 1963), p. 38.
10. Edmund Husserl, *Idee der Phänomenologie*, *Hua*. II, p. 14; Eng. trans. W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), p. 11. See *idem*, *Logische Untersuchungen*, III, §3: "Appearances [*Erscheinungen*] in the sense of objects appearing [*erscheinenden*] as such, but also in respect of phenomena as the experiences in which the phenomenal things appear"; and *V*, 2: "We cannot too sharply stress the equivocation that allows us to characterize as a phenomenon [*Erscheinung*] not only the lived-experience in which the appearing [*des Erscheinen*] of the object consists . . . but also the object appearing [*erscheinende*] as such" (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1901), vol. 2, pp. 231 and 349; Eng. trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 439 and 538; modified.
11. *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §37, vol. 3, p. 118; Eng. trans., p. 762 (modified).
12. *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, § 37, vol. 3, p. 116; Eng. trans. p. 761. See p. 118, Eng. trans. p. 762.
13. *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §39, loc. cit., vol. 3, respectively, pp. 122 and 123; Eng. trans. pp. 765, 766, modified.
14. "Ideale Fülle für eine Intention," §39, p. 123, Eng. trans. p. 766; "Ideal der letzten Erfüllung," the title of §37, p. 118, Eng. trans. p. 761; "Das Ideal der Adäquation," the title of Chapter V, p. 115, Eng. trans. p. 760.
15. "It is obvious that reason, in achieving its purpose, that, namely, of representing the necessary complete determination of things, does not presuppose the existence of an essence [*nicht die Existenz eines solchen Wesen . . . voraussetze*] that corresponds to this ideal, but only the idea of such an essence, and this only for the purpose of denying from an unconditioned totality of complete determination the conditioned totality, that is, the totality of the limited" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A577/B606; Eng. trans. Norman Kemp Smith, modified). This definition of the ideal by Kant—the unconditioned but non-existent totality that allows reason to determine the conditioned but existent limitation—covers fairly exactly the Husserlian ideal of fulfillment: unconditioned and complete, but not actualized, equality, in relation and comparison to which is measured the meaning [*visée*] that is actualized but intuitively impoverished. The difference has to do with the fact that for Kant the ideal of reason coincides strictly with God whereas Husserl will have to wait for the final developments of his teleology of spirit in order to identify the ideal of fulfillment with God. See, as well as the classic work of A. Ales Belo, *Husserl. Sul problema di Dio* (Rome, 1985), the texts that are gathered and commented on by J. Benoist, "Husserl: au-delà de l'ontothéologie," *Les Etudes philosophiques* (1991).

16. *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §§40 and 63, vol. 3, pp. 131 and 192; Eng. trans., pp. 775 and 825 (modified). Heidegger too speaks of “ein Überschuss an Intentionen,” *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, §6, *G.A.* 20, p. 77–119.
17. Descartes had clearly indicated that the privilege of the mathematical type of object (and therefore phenomenon) is due to its “*purum et simplex*” character, which presupposes nothing that experience renders uncertain (*Regulae ad directionem ingenii* II, AT X, 365, 16ff.); this privilege of certitude is paid for with an equal poverty of intuitive given, of “matter,” such that it procures at one and the same time a real content and an irreducible uncertainty. This is also why the *intuitus* ensures certitude only for objects that are without matter (and impoverished in intuition, if not purely formal) like mathematical idealities, or for objects that are quasi tautological (and therefore impoverished in intuition), like “*uniusquisque intueri se existere, se cogitare*” (see *ibid.*, III, 368, 21ff. and the commentary in my *Sur l'ontologie grise de Descartes* [Paris, 1975, <sup>2</sup>1981], §6, pp. 41–43 and §7, pp. 49–53). One of the reasons for the progressive abandonment of *intuitus* by Descartes after 1627–1628 is undoubtedly found here: an object is known all the more certainly insofar as it requires a lesser intuitive fulfillment and content.
18. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen*, §§50–54. We should stress that appresentation —“the surplus [*Überschuss*] in perception of what is not authentically perceived in it”—intervenes not only in order to know another, but already with the knowledge of the worldly object (§55, *Hua.* I, p. 151). Descartes also admits that adequate knowledge remains impossible not only for the idea of infinity (AT VII, 368, 1–3), but also for that of any object whatsoever, however limited it may be: “*conceptu rerum adaequato, qualem nemo habet, non modo de infinito, sed nec forte etiam de ulla alia re quantumvis parva*” (AT VII, 365, 3–5).
19. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A58/B82.
20. *Ibid.*, A51/B76.
21. *Ibid.*, A50/B74, A92/B125.
22. *Ibid.*, A239/B298, then A95 and A253.
23. *Ibid.*, A247/B304.
24. That which can be aimed at, meant or intended; from *viser*, to aim at [Tr.].
25. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A327/B383 (*notwendig*), and A339/B397 (*unvermeidlich Schein*). Stéphane Mallarmé, respectively, *Variations sur un sujet* and *Prose pour des* *Esseintes*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. H. Mondor (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), pp. 361 and 56.
26. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A290-2/B347-9; see A220/B268 and A163/B204. See G. Granel, “*le nihil privatum en son sens kantien*,” *Philosophie*, no. 14 (1987), reprinted in his *Ecrits logiques et politiques* (Paris, Galilée, 1990).
27. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §57, note 1, *Ak. A.*, vol. 5, p. 342, Eng. trans. Werner S. Pluher (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987); modified.
28. *Ibid.*, §49, p. 314, Eng. trans., p. 182; modified.—One should not object that the aesthetic idea is here called a “representation of the imagination” and is not related to intuition since, a few lines lower, intuition is purely and simply assimilated to the “representation of the imagination” (Begriff, dem keine Anschauung [*Vorstellung der Einbildungskraft*] adäquat sein kann) (*ibid.*). There are other confirmations of this elsewhere: “*die Einbildungskraft, als Vermögen der Anschauung*” (§39, p. 292); “*eine Anschauung (der Einbildungskraft)*” (§57, note 1, p. 342). Moreover, there is nothing surprising in this, since already in 1787, the second edition of the first *Critique* explicitly specified this tie: “Imagination is the power of representing in intuition an object that is not itself present. Now, since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination, by virtue of the subjective condition under which alone it can give to the concepts of understanding a corresponding intuition, belongs to *sensibility*” (§ 24, B151).
29. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §57, note 1, twice “*inexponible Vorstellung*,” *ibid.*, p. 342ff. For the positive use of this rare term, see the “*exponible Urteile*,” in *Logik*, §31, *Ak. A.* vol. IX, p. 109.
30. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A163/B204.
31. René Descartes, *Passions de l'ame*, §73, AT XI, 383, 7–10. Cf. §78: “one stops one’s attention on the first image of the objects that have presented themselves, without calling for any other knowledge of them” (*ibid.*, 383, 14–17).
32. B. Spinoza, *Ethica* III, appendix, definition IV.
33. Paul Claudel, *Tête d’or, Théâtre*, vol. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 210. Glory weighs: the Hebrew says this with one word. Obviously, we are here extremely close to the works of J.-L. Chrétien on *L’inoublable et l’inespéré* (Paris, 1991).
34. Plato, *Republic*, 515c and 517a.—The term μαρμαρυγή originally designated vibration (for example, that of the feet of dancers, *Odyssey*, VIII, 265), and then the vibration of overheated air, and thus mirage and bedazzlement.

35. Plato, *Republic*, 517bc and 518a.
36. *S'éprouve (et se prouve)* [Trans.]
37. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A177/B220 and A180/B222.
38. *Ibid.*, A177/B220 and A179/B222. See also A665/B693.
39. *Ibid.*, A177/B220 and A182/B224.
40. It would be necessary to develop here some privileged examples: the plurality of accounts, of literary genres, of testimonies, and of hermeneutics of the same event (the multiple accounts of the crossing of the Red Sea, the irreducible plurality of the Gospels) clearly indicates that a saturated phenomenon is at issue. But the doctrine of the four senses of Scripture, assigning a plurality of different and compossible senses, proves that even a text can sometimes (in the case of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, although in essentially divergent senses) appear as a saturated phenomenon. This goes as well for texts that are not (directly) religious: thus, it is clear that the irreconcilable plurality of literary treatments of single themes (thus dramatic models, the very notion of literary imitation, etc.), even of constantly renewed interpretations and stagings of standard works, points to saturated phenomena.
41. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A74/B100, A219/B266 and A234/B287.
42. *Ibid.*, A225/B273 and A220/B267.
43. See "Le sujet en dernier appel," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (1991).
44. "Das Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende," Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 7, p. 31, 12. See "das an ihm selbst Offenbare von ihm selbst her sehen lassen," *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, §2, *G.A.* 20 (Frankfort a/M., 1979), p. 117. The "von ihm selbst her" indeed indicates an appearance "of itself" in the strict sense of "starting from itself."
45. *AT* VII, respectively 371, 25 and 52, 15.—Infinity is never potential but always *actu*. 47, 19.
46. *Ibid.*, 46, 8, 12.
47. Respectively: *nihil . . . univoce illi et nobis convenire* (*ibid.*, 137, 22; cf. 433, 5–6 or *Principia Philosophiae* I, §51); *atingere* (*AT*, VII, 139, 12; cf. 52, 5 and 46, 21).
48. *AT* VII, 114, 6–7. This is why here, and here alone, *intueri* is equivalent to *adorare*.
49. *Kritik der Urteilsraft*, respectively §25, p. 48; *Formlosigkeit*, §24, p. 247; *Unordnung*, §23, p. 246; "über alle Vergleichung" and *schlechthin*, §25, p. 248 (and §26, p. 251).
50. *Ibid.*, respectively §23, p. 245; *Gefühl der Unangemessenheit*, §26, p. 252; *Ungeheur*, §26, p. 253..
51. *Ibid.*, *Unbegräntheit*, §23 p. 244. Cf. "keine angemessene Darstellung" (p. 245).
52. *Ibid.*, §23, p. 245. Cf. *subjektive Unzweckmässigkeit*, §26, p. 252; *Widerstreit* of the subjective end, §27, p. 258. Respect (*Achtung*) comes in at §27, p. 257. Here we follow P. Lacoue-Labarthe, "La vérité sublime," in *Du sublime* (Paris, 1988).
53. Such is the objective of Paul Ricoeur, particularly with *Temps et récit* III, *le temps raconté* (Paris, 1985). Our analyses quite obviously owe much to his decisive works.
54. See our study on an exemplary case of the saturated phenomenon, the argument of Saint Anselm, wrongly called "ontological," "L'argument relève-t-il de l'ontologie," *Questions cartésiennes* (Paris, 1991), also printed in *Archivio di Filosofia* (1990).
55. This text has profited from several helpful readings. I wish to thank in particular B. Besnier, N. Depraz, and D. Franck for their remarks.

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