

Two Nights and the Records of a Sensitive Medium

It is not strange that one's consciousness can be enveloped in serious uneasiness or neurosis as it is gradually burdened by the weight and obligations caused by unresolved issues, as the consciousness has never been cut off since birth and continues to exist faintly even when one is asleep. If one suffers from such a phenomenon, positively speaking, perhaps is probably someone with a strict or extremely sincere personality. When such symptoms, which can be categorized as a disease, become chronic beyond control, the patient often experiences a suicidal impulse.

Such a death wish would be connected to the hope to end consciousness, but is more relevant to entering a state of despair, in which one specifically hopes to die but cannot. As a thinker once said in his insightful essay, "a man in despair cannot die in the same sense that the body dies of disease, because death due to despair is endlessly transformed into life," despair struggling with death is life, and regardless of whether the person concerned is in despair, feels perhaps has overcome it, actually dies or lives, it there is even the smallest relevance with eternity, then it means the person currently in agony "cannot overcome himself."

Though the sign of death is not always clear, since it definitely gives pain, it can surely be distinguished. Amidst the excessiveness of death, if one wants to live dauntlessly without making trouble, perhaps must calm down his/her neurosis and give up the uneasiness. It is, however, uneasiness that takes a person close to death, and brings himself back to a transition to life (Of course we cannot say that anyone has lost his/her soul, but usually people turn away toward somewhere safe before they can assume such tenacity). Since this is not only a seed, but exists scattered wherever one hopes to live or die, if the uneasiness urged someone to look and act in the direction of himself, it is the obsession and fear that investigate it further so that it may continue in a certain way. Who can say to someone, "only you are unheimlich"?

To give another example, an artist looks into a stranger's old photographs, which leads her to travel far away in search of the places or persons in the pictures. The photographs spontaneously talked to her. They specifically were surrounding contents concerning a certain death, and the traveler (regardless of that fact) ultimately confirmed throughout the trip that they was the contents existed carried the colors of death. The original characteristics of the photograph are that it shows the tragic and the utopian simultaneously. The tragic is the confirmation of a certain death, and the utopian is about the imaginarily experience and the yearning for it.

Of course we can consider the idea that empathy is spontaneous more comprehensively. This traveler actually testifies that she had fell into such worries and recalls the method of projection mentioned by Sartre concerning adventure. In other words, this is assuming that the irreversibility of time is the feeling of adventure, considering that adventure is intriguing or that a certain experience is an adventure, and is similar to the principle of the association of ideas, which was how Hume justified causality. That is to say, if it is possible to say that believing in the principle of universality is in fact made possible by expectation or faith testified by continuous experience, the tension of the traveler tracking and searching for the contents of the photographs can be understood as consisting of a certain projection process. This explanation, however, while it is the method by which her tension is evoked, can also serve as a reason for dissolving the tension at any given time, if the examples of consistent contents are eliminated.

Even if we allow such a delusion in the dimension of psychological resolution of tension, the experience concerning the photographs is strictly linked to death, thereby fundamentally transcending such judgments. Photographs bring an empathy with the experience of death not according to the viewer's will or ability to empathize, but according to the involuntary characteristic of the photograph itself. As in the case of everyone's past or memories, the act of looking at and thinking about photographs seems to

lack something direct. What the photograph indicates ceases to exist ever since the photograph comes into existence. Because the contents shown by the photograph is instant, and lingers in it like a flick, not belonging to anywhere, the attempt to feel everything there once more is futile. With regard to such disappointment, Roland Barthes, who studied the sadness of the photograph, said he could recognize, but could not recover.

Gazing at such answerlessness is another confrontation with the state of despair. The decisive conclusion of this is "death," but it is an experience of eternal death that cannot die. A photograph remains in the moment of the person who is taking it and being taken. It is spread out in the space of thoughts of the thinker and is expanded in his/her imagination, but since its grounds are weak and confined to the non-existent, the state of the photograph, which has no place to return, is tragic. But for the very same reason, the tragedy of the photograph experiences surprisingly, because the powerlessness and despair of the situation where nothing can be done in gazing at the photograph requests something that belongs to eternally in a religious dimension. In other words, it is a request for spirit and dignity. As part of the tragedy, the utopian aspect is never discovered but only demanded as a justification. The artist, who is someone lingering in an intermediate state, unable to belong to anywhere, stands in the places of tragedy and utopia at the same time, lingering, unable to extinguish her own consciousness, as she makes the same request every time. She joyfully continues to reflect on the experience of death.