

# Of “Inner Experience” by Georges Bataille : How Can It be Understood from a Viewpoint of Autopoiesis Theory

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## **Introduction What is 'Inner Experience'?**

The concept of 'Inner experience' by Georges Bataille is an attempt to grasp, from the 'inner' point of view, a moment in which our thought and bodies which are inseparable from the environment work. This point of view presents a challenge to traditional historicism, positivism and functionalism, all of which describe life only from the outer point of view. In life we are continually forming (constructing) meaning and communicating it (to be accurate, forming meaning is communication). So 'inner experience' is a form of 'communication' and it suggests an expansion of traditional concepts of communication because it includes not only the realm of thought on which traditional theories focus but also the realm of a body and the environment which surrounds it. The concept also includes the way 'the other' appears to us ('the other' includes not only the other person but also oneself, the past, the environment, etc; it is what makes our 'communication' possible). In this thesis I will analyse the significance of 'inner experience' by chiefly interpreting it from point of view of life system studies which regards life as a system which exists inseparably from its environment (for a living being, the environment is a kind of the other). This will enable us to think about many problems in the present day.

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First, I will explain what 'inner experience' is through the terms used by Bataille. 'Inner experience' is a moment of 'exchange' in which one accords with a 'force' which makes his/her life and the universe possible in the realm of 'un-knowing' which transcends one's ordinary state of being subject to rational self and, thorough this, the other which takes form as an individual, the past or death is revealed to him/her. Bataille not only calls this 'exchange', but also 'chance', 'practice of ecstasy in the face of death', etc (although these don't mean the completely same things). Akihito Morishima gives some specific examples of it as follows:

'Sovereignty is unprincipled dissipation of force in a moment, the sacred that has fear and fascination which transcends individuals, a sacrifice that opens the finite to the unknown, infinite quality, activity of eroticism in which people feel the unity of existence by taking off their clothes which symbolise themselves as they are separated from each other, ecstasy that appears as if it tramples everything that gives value judgments in everyday life justice and bottomless loud laughter whose object is oneself as an isolated being.....' (Akihito Morishima *Antonin Artaud and Schizophrenia* P297)

The motive power of 'inner experience' is libido in psychoanalytic terms (here, this is not limited to

the sexual instinct) which is essential for human beings and is 'the force' or 'the essence of the world' which enables our lives and communities (societies) to exist and this 'force' provides us with excessive energy the extent of which is more than is needed for keeping and preserving our lives in everyday life and, when the energy's intensity has risen, 'inner experience' can occur as its purposeless loss. So 'inner experience' and the will for it can be said to be essential for human existence. The desire to accord with 'the force' is 'will for chance' in Bataille's term and he affirms human existence by this attitude. M. Leiris expresses this as 'the insatiate thirst to be out of any kind of law and oneself'. This can also be said to be thirst after 'communication' because what is outside oneself is the other. Bataille says as follows;

'.....[T]here's no truth when people look at each other as if they're separate individuals. Truth starts with conversations, shared laughter, friendship and sex, and it only happens *going from one person to another*. .....[T]he world doesn't resemble a separate or circumscribed being but *what goes from one person to another* when we laugh or make love. When I think this is the way things are, immensity opens and I'm lost.' (*Guilty* P44-45)

This means that, in 'communication' with the other ('inner experience'), one feels that the 'truth' of the world or life is revealed. (The impression of one's instantly gaining an insight into 'truth' without using rational inference is 'déjà-vu' in Bataille's terms.) Bataille seems to think that continuation of the dynamic process which includes otherness is the principle of the universe and the essential state of human existence (and also communities). Whilst they are understood as the unitary 'essence of the universe' by the alchemical principle, the adopted methodology for explanation of it is dualism which comes mostly from Manichean/Gnostic tradition, and also Hegelian dialectic<sup>1</sup>(However, there is no arrival point like Hegelian 'absolute knowledge' in Bataille's thought). That is, these apparently conflicting concepts are used for explanation: reason/emotion (affect), being (an individual who is separated and limited)/existence itself (unlimited 'nothingness'), knowing/unknowing, restrictions/liberty, good/sin, a segmented human being/a whole human being, life/death, work/play (wager), taboo/transgression, the torment ('questions which ask for knowing')/ecstasy, project/loss, etc. The former concepts are what is in the realm of 'the possible' and latter are in that of 'the impossible'. Also, the former is the state where 'force' is subjected to or weakened by reason and the latter is that where 'force' is excessive or plentiful. According to Bataille, a totality [the impossible] is offered by our work [the possible] not as a goal but as the inevitable result of it. (*On Nietzsche* P xxviii) This is because they are two different sides of the same 'force', dynamism of the world and life and there is an inseparable relationship between them that defines each other's content. However, because we are in the realm of 'the possible' in everyday life, he explains that we feel 'the impossible' thorough 'the possible'. Such a situation has come to the surface

more clearly in the modern world where 'God is dead'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the pairs of concepts above are two essential sides of the whole of life and, in 'inner experience', conflict between them is overcome. Through 'inner experience', '*the whole of life is lightened clearly in consciousness*' (Bataille). The whole of life which has accorded with 'the essence of the universe' is what is unitary. The rare moment where contradictions are overcome is 'transparency' or 'simplicity' in Bataille's terms, and one has a sense of 'a whole human being' by transcending the human state which is fragmented by various purposes.

'[Luck] is transparency or the place where opacity is resolved. .... Transparency isn't the abolition of individual isolation but transcends it. It is not a *state* of theoretical or fundamental unity, but a chance that occurs in risk.' (*On Nietzsche* P73)

'Inner experience' is also expressed by P. Klossowski as an experience of simulacrum<sup>3</sup> of death (*a debate of sin*). Death is the realm of unity where one is not fragmented as an individual and it also is the other which one can never reach and only can catch a glimpse of – so it is 'not a *state* of unity' but revelation like a flash of lightning or a moment of ecstasy. One 'communicates' with the individual other (a victim in a sacrifice, one's love in eroticism, etc.) in this realm of 'death'; that of 'un-knowing'. According to Bataille,

"'Communication" only takes place *between two people who risk themselves*, each lacerated and suspended, perched atop a common nothingness.' (*On Nietzsche* P20-21)

'There is no longer subject-object, but a "yawning gap" between the one and the other and, in the gap, the subject, the object are dissolved; there is passage, communication, but not from one to the other: *the one and the other* have lost their separate existence.' (*Inner Experience* P59)

Here, Bataille describes a sense of unity or identification with the other in 'inner experience'. What makes this possible is the fact that people who are perched atop the realm of 'being' and accord with 'the force' have no sense of the subject as individuals. At this moment, one feels that the other, the world and oneself are penetrated by the same, limitless 'force'. We can say that the concept of 'inner experience' expresses our essential state that our lives are made possible by 'the force'.

## **Chapter1 'Inner experience' and life system theory; an attempt to interpret 'inner experience' from a viewpoint of the autopoiesis theory**

Life system theory treats life as a system which exists inseparably from the environment (the other)

and it is illuminating to consider it in relation to Bataille's theory of inner experience. In this thesis, I presuppose, for the sake of convenience, that a 'life system' is made up of a 'mental system', which represents the realm of mind, and a 'physical system', the realm of a body, following the argument of Toru Nishigaki in his book *Fundamental Informatics* (2004). The centre of life system studies is the 'autopoiesis' theory proposed in the 1970s by Chilean biological philosophers Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. This theory was put forward as a model of the life system and 'autopoiesis' is a coinage made from two Greek words 'auto' and 'poiesis' meaning 'self' and 'becoming' respectively. Maturana and Varela use this word to present the original characteristics of the life system. Hideo Kawamoto, the introducer of the concept of 'autopoiesis' to Japan, suggests that it consists of two main characteristics. (Kawamoto, section of 'systems', included in *Jiten-tetugaku-no-ki*)

First, a system includes a mechanism which, once set up, continues working by itself and through the continuation forms itself and creates a border separating itself from others (= 'autopoiesis'). This is an extension of self-organisation theory concerning the forming of matter. Self-organisation means that the circulation of a process of formation connects to a subsequent process of formation as a condition without which the next one cannot begin. (An example is the formation of crystals.) 'Autopoiesis' occurs through this circulation of a process. In addition, the working of such a system is independent of the intention and purpose of the system. That is, there is only the meaningless and purposeless working of a system, a continuation of activities of self-forming.

Second, the inside/outside of a system and the input/output of information which correspond to the inside/outside do not exist from the viewpoint of a system itself because the continuous working of one system constantly forms a system itself and simultaneously forms its border. That is, we can say that 'for a life system, the stimulus which is given from the outside is equal to the sway [variation] which is formed inside, therefore there is no distinction between reality and fantasy'. (Nishigaki, 2004, P21) For a life system, everything is virtual and every event is considered from a respect of the meaning it has for the self (system). In other words, every event is considered from the point of view of how meaning forms within and is given by a system and how the system makes use of it. The working of a system itself is not directed towards a meaning that is to be achieved but meaning is formed by the working of the system.

I will interpret 'inner experience' against a backdrop of life system theory because it appears to offer a perspective that helps to illuminate its significance. There are several similarities between the two ideas as follows:

First, neither idea assumes a rational subject but is based on the operation of 'life' itself. The moment of 'inner experience', as has already been mentioned, is a purposeless loss that results from a surplus of energy. The concept of 'autopoiesis' expresses, like 'inner experience', a moment of 'the force' taking form and working. This is also a moment of the ceaseless transfiguration of the self which means 'throwing into risk' by Bataille or a life system's formation of the self.

Second, they both adopt an 'inner' point of view of 'life' for analysing this operation. This means that both theories enable us to analyse communication in a way that allows for a more universal viewpoint than is possible with theories which assume and focus on the rational subject. This is because 'inner experience' and life system theory treat 'information' as a correlative concept which is inseparable from the activity of life and so communication can be shown to be a process of forming meaning in a broader sense of the word, whereas the theories which assume a rational subject treat 'information' as an substantial concept (an entity in itself) which presupposes input and output ('inside' and 'outside') and a causal relation between them. (I will treat this question in detail in Chapter 3.) What both 'inner experience' and life system theory treat is 'passage, communication, but not from one to the other [= not communication of 'information' as a concept as an entity]'. (Bataille, *Inner Experience* P59)

Third, they both analyse the formation of meaning by focusing not only on the realm of consciousness but also on that of matter and the environment. A Living thing is inseparable from matter (a body) and the environment (= 'the other') which surrounds the body of the self and forms meaning by means of the former and in relation to the latter. As it relates to the way meaning is formed, 'inner experience' focuses on emotion (fear, love, etc.) which is inseparable from the body and the relationship with 'the other' (the other person, death, the world, etc) rather than on the realm of rational consciousness. Conventional concepts of communication think meaning formation occurs only in a rational way. This sort of meaning is what can be expressed by language while, in 'inner experience', meaning is formed as emotional responses and interaction with 'the other' and such a meaning transcends what can be expressed in language through the exercise of rationality. Here, emotion and 'the other' are also meanings formed in 'inner experience'. For a living thing to form meaning, its body and a relation between the self and 'the other' are necessary. Readers may think of it as confusing that 'the other' is a meaning formed in relation to 'the other'. However, the nature of formation of meaning is tautological. This is the essential state of formation of meaning. (I will treat this again in Chapter 3. Refer to footnote number 18). Life system theory explains that the self and its boundary are formed by a system (which has matter, i.e. its body) which simultaneously results in the formation of 'the other' (i.e. what is not the self; the environment, the other living thing exists there, etc) in a mental system. In the case of a human being, a life system ceaselessly creates the self (a new body by division in a physical system, identity in a mental system) and its other. So, for a life system 'the other' is always 'the other for the self' and it is always what is formed; in the concept of 'inner experience' or life system theory, meaning formed inseparably from matter (a body) is 'the other' as a simulacrum. It is revealed in 'inner experience' (and also we can say that it occurs to a life system). For instance, for a life system, the new self formed every moment is one of 'the other' which appears to the old self.

Fourth, they do not differentiate the subject from the object (subjectivity/objectivity) or the inside

from the outside. That is, the position they both uphold is not realism but an understanding of reality as being what emerges from a relationship between the self and the other. As I have already mentioned, everything is virtual for a life system and 'the other' exists only as a simulacrum (not an entity but what is formed by a relationship); this 'other' is not an entity captured by the subject (the self) and which exists objectively outside it, but is relational to the formation of the self. For a life system the world (the self and 'the other') is what is constantly being formed by the life system itself and not what exists independently of or outside the self. Similarly, 'the other' which is revealed to us in a moment of 'inner experience' (with the impression of 'déjà-vu') is a simulacrum formed by relation to the self.

From the similarities above, we can say that Bataille deals with formation of meaning which is not limited to the realm of reason by the concept of 'inner experience'. He adopts a point of view of life which is inseparable from a body, the environment, and the other. This formation of meaning is the very 'communication' of us, living things. Communication is not an exchange of meanings which are regarded as physical entities, but a living thing's forming meanings in relation to the other. The existence of a living thing is made possible by a process of ceaseless 'communication'. So, I can also say that the concept of 'inner experience' can be interpreted as it treats the way a life system functions, i.e. the way we exist. That is, this is the point at which Bataille's theory of inner experience and life system theory converge and reveal the way we exist.

The concept of 'inner experience' by Bataille tends to be interpreted in a limited range of fields such as that of literature or the history of thought. However, to interpret the concept against a backdrop of life system theory enables us to re-position it in a more general field and recognize the value of its rich suggestion of the quality of true 'modernity' (I will discuss this later) and the way life is lived.

## **Chapter 2 Thinkers who analyse 'Inner experience' or the way life system exists, from various viewpoints**

There are many other thinkers and artists who have explored 'communication' in similar ways to Bataille's idea of 'inner experience' and which are also related to the idea of a life system. In this chapter I will consider four such writers (Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin and Friedrich Nietzsche) in order to illuminate and take further my argument.

Meaning as we are discussing it is not what is formed by rational inference but what can not be captured by the realm of reason and is formed in a realm which transcends it; meaning as we are discussing are affect and 'the other' (what is not the self). The intensity of 'the force' by which meaning is formed through communication means the degree of it to which an organism (a living thing) feels, such as rise and depression of it. In every day life, reason predominates over and

controls 'the force' because it offers a convenient way of maintaining life (however, in fact, reason is also only made possible as an operation of 'the force'). When this 'force' becomes excessive and exuberant, 'inner experience' occurs as loss. Here 'inner experience' is an example of 'communication' of a human being's life system as the most intense form of affect. In this moment, reason which ordinarily distinguishes the self from the other (i.e. a sense of rational self) disappears. Klossowski describes 'inner experience' as an experience of the simulacrum of death. Death here refers to the disappearance of individuality. Here the self feels that it completely accords and sympathises with its 'other'.

As I have argued in chapter 1, there is no distinction between inner/outer or subjectivity/objectivity in a life system. If I explain by using the words of subjectivity/objectivity, I can say that meaning (or 'the other') formed in 'communication' is completely 'subjective'. An organism forms 'the other' (for example, the world) in relation to itself (and at the moment it simultaneously forms itself). In this sense, the world does not exist separately from organisms. Such formation like this is 'communication' as it is treated in this thesis and it is inseparable from the experience of an organism (and affect accompanies this formation of meaning).

Bataille and the four writers mentioned above, however, unavoidably had to use language when they argued for such 'communication'. By so doing they also unavoidably had to observe and describe it from an 'objective' (or 'outer') point of view largely within the framework of rational thinking. Because of this, these thinkers come to have rather different viewpoints of description in spite of their analysing the same thing (another reason for it is their experiences are individual). In Chapter 2, I will distinguish and position, for convenience, their points of view as three – consciousness, the body and value – on the basis of characteristics of the viewpoints focused in their arguments, and interpret 'inner experience' by means of such arguments. (Refer to appendix 1.)

### **Viewpoint 1. Mental system**

We have seen in Chapter One how a life system can be separated for convenience into mental and physical forms. In viewpoint 1, I will focus on the mental system, (i.e. the realm of consciousness and mind) and consider issues raised by Barthes and Benjamin.

From the viewpoint of a mental system, I would describe 'Inner experience' as what working of a life system which transcends language appears on the realm of consciousness as a vivid image. This vivid image is what 'force' is transformed, interpreted and taken form as 'the other' by our consciousness because 'the other' is not what exists outside a life system but is what the self forms, and it is 'the force' that makes the system possible. The essence of a life system is constant 'communication', i.e. formation of meaning by 'force' as motive power and it also is the ceaseless

appearance of 'the other' to the self ('the other' is meaning constantly in the process of formation). 'Inner experience' is also a sense of unity with the 'other' formed this way on the realm of consciousness.

To be more accurate, 'inner experience' is the movement of a life system, the formation of meaning ('communication') and is what makes us intensely conscious of this movement of 'the force' itself, at the most extreme point (In every day life, we ceaselessly form meaning at every level of 'the force' through the mental/physical system but this rarely comes to be conscious. In addition, it is not made conscious by an intention).

In viewpoint 1, I will first take up and consider Barthes' experience as a concrete example of 'inner experience' with the intention of making the nature of 'inner experience' clearer in concrete way and compare it with the thought of Benjamin in a more abstract dimension. By showing the characteristics of the formation of meaning at the core of 'inner experience', we will find that it has significance as a critique<sup>4</sup> of the conventional concepts of communication; historicism and its near-related doctrine, positivism.

### **R. Barthes**

Roland Barthes analyses such an experience as it tore open every day life and made 'life' itself (i.e. the operation of a life system made possible by 'the force') vividly appear in a sense of unordinaryness from a viewpoint of 'communication' with the departed through a photograph. To be specific, it is an experience related to a photograph of Barthes' deceased mother which he treated as the core of his book, *Camera Lucida* (1980). First, I will outline and consider it.

When he was putting photographs of his deceased mother in order, he encountered a photograph which he felt vividly showed 'the essence of his mother' or his 'very mother'. He calls it 'the Winter Garden Photograph', in which his mother stands in a conservatory when she was a child. He received a revelation, which transcended common sense ideas of time and space, of 'the essence of his mother' ( his mother's 'life' itself) embodied by the girl in the photograph. I think his experience is analogous with what Bataille called 'inner experience'. His experience can be understood as appearance of 'the other' (his mother) which transcends the rational sense of life/death, time and space. It is also transformation of the self i.e. forming meaning ('the essence of his mother' or 'the other') which is inseparable from the appearance. At this moment, he transcended his rational subject, threw his identity into 'risk', in the sense in which Bataille used the word, and experienced a sense of unity with his mother who appeared to him with a vivid sense of reality. I can say that he felt a sense of unity under 'the force' he shared with his mother ('the force' is what everything - living things, the system of the universe, etc. - shares and is the motive power which makes it possible for them to exist). 'The essence of his mother' which he found is the same as 'the force' (i.e. 'being') which is the simulacrum of death we encounter in 'inner experience'. To be accurate, 'the essence of his mother' is

what 'being' has transformed or embodied as an individual (or an 'existence'). It is because what can be taken by a photograph is a particular person and never 'being', just as one can exist only as an individual ('becoming') who is separated from others in this world.

A photograph ties in with a sense of death (here, 'death' means a photograph's cutting out and fixing a living object as an image and not metonymy of the realm of 'unknowing') and Barthes says that what overcomes this sense of death is 'extreme love' (Barthes, P12). His act which gives his mother life again by generating meaning of 'the essence of his mother' in himself and invest it in the 'dead' girl in the photograph is inseparable from a personal feeling( emotion ), love. He argues that the essence of an image exists outside itself – it exists within the viewer. That is, the meaning of an image(here, 'the Winter Garden Photograph') is not what exists 'outside' life and is found by it but is what is invented (inseparably from affect, such as love) by a 'life system' which has a body (this applies not only to images but also to any object). This meaning is peculiar to the subject forming it. (That is why Barthes did not insert 'the Winter Garden Photograph' in his book.)<sup>5</sup>

I have had a similar experience with a photograph of a Japanese poet, Chuya Nakahara (1907 - 1937)which was taken in the year prior to his death. (Refer to appendix 4.) At the moment of being drawn into it through transcending the rational subject, I also felt that I had found 'the essence of Chuya'. It is the simulacrum of death (here, this means metonymy of the realm of 'non-knowledge'; 'being') as well as 'the essence of his mother' by Barthes, and it seemed to be Chuya's anguish at life. I would be able to say that it is loneliness as a necessary condition for our life (i.e. to be separated from others and can never completely reach and understand what they are; others who are independent of our forming and putting meaning on them and exist objectively). I instantly sympathised with the anguish and forgot my identity. (A real sympathy with the other is equal to a sense of collapse of one's identity.) This was my first 'encounter' with Chuya and, when I had been reading his works afterwards, I found that the anguish and loneliness were actually the motive power of his writing of poetry that can be found as the basis and theme of his work.

This shows the important characteristic of 'inner experience'. It involves intense emotions and a sense that one has found instantly 'the essence' (essential meaning) of things without rational inference.

Forming meaning is an endless process, a ceaseless chain reaction occurring through operations of both a mental system and a physical system, which are what constitute a life system. Some kind of matter is needed for formation of meaning and it is, besides a body (physical system) which makes the formation possible as its medium, signs such as a language or a photograph which are the 'object' of the formation. Matter inevitably intervenes in a process of forming meaning, so I can say that the formation of meaning occurs indirectly through matter (it is a familiar experimental fact that this matter or indirectness sometimes causes misunderstanding).

In 'inner experience', the matter which mediates the formation of meaning is felt to be transparent

and there is a sense that one can find meaning clearly, directly and instantly. In this respect I can say that 'inner experience' is particular and rarely occurs (this is why Bataille called it 'chance'). This is revelation of 'the essence' that appears not through reason. It is aroused, by some 'object' (matter), of forming meaning ('communication') which instantly penetrates us. Bataille explains it by a feeling of 'déjà vu'.

'[The moments of bliss] correspond to the untroubled transparence of *theopathic* states. .... "déjà vu" (a feeling of being penetrable from every direction, but also incomprehensibility) defines the *theopathic* state.' ( On Nietzsche P64 )

What is presupposed here in 'theopathy' is not transcendent God but 'being'. 'Being' is the movement of 'the force' itself which makes our lives or the world possible, so a sense of fusing with it gives us a feeling of revelation of 'the essence'. Barthes calls his own experience which has the nature of 'inner experience', 'experience of intensity' (Barthes, 1980, P77). This is because it is an experience of 'the force' in which 'the force' is interpreted as intense emotion (for example, love) and 'the other' (formed meaning, here, 'the essence of mother') which appears to Barthes. 'Inner experience' is experienced only as intensity of emotion with a sense of unshakeable confidence that what has revealed is 'the essence', though there are no rational reasons for this. This experience of intensity is peculiar to the person concerned and no other person can share it as wholly the same thing and understand it completely from an 'objective' stand point. However, for the person concerned, the emotion which appears and 'the essence' revealed in the experience are vivid, sensible realities (this is easy to understand if one thinks of his/her experience of love, as Barthes took up in his book).

At the moment of 'inner experience', one is also aware of a feeling of time which is different from that of common – time which passes linearly from the past to present and to the future, and is thought as what has the same quality of space; every moment has the same quality and is empty -- which is assumed by the rational subject. While this ordinary sense of time is similar to that in a program to which a machine is subject, the unordinary sense of time is, I can say, based on experiences of a life system. It has a quality of 'the other'.

What enables or triggers such 'inner experience' is a photograph's quality of illusoriness, what Barthes call the 'madness' of photography. In a historicist sense of time, his deceased mother belongs to a past which never rolls back and is subject to the present. However, what transcended the sense of time and occurred to the present time as the other is 'the essence of his mother' (= *«la vérité folle»* ) (P113 ). A photograph is enough, in the realm of reason, to satisfy him that his mother is a reality *«of what-has-been»* <sup>6</sup> (P77) (a past subject to the present), and simultaneously she appears to him, in a realm which transcends reason, as a reality(truth) of the present time. This quality of having double meanings which makes us feel a life which emerges in death is the essence of a photograph (*noeme*),

or the 'madness' of photography.

When Barthes expresses attraction of such photograph as '*advenience*' and says '[It] allows me to make Photography exist' (P19), he refers to the 'madness' of photography and the appearance of 'the other' (this is equal to transformation of the self and formation of meaning) which is enabled by the 'madness'. Distinguishing time that occurs like this ('the past' which occurs through a photograph) from a 'memory' (the past which is subject to conventional sense of time) he says:

'Not only is the Photograph never, in essence, a memory (whose grammatical expression would be the perfect tense [the past which connects to the other past], whereas the tense of the Photograph is the aorist [the absolute past which does not connect to the other past]), but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory.' (Barthes, 1980, P91)

'The aorist' (the absolute past) which occurs to the present in a realm which transcends reason is not the past which is positioned by causality (context) in the conventional sense of time which heads in one direction – in this meaning, it has no connection with the past. 'The past' which possesses the quality of 'the other' is related to 'History' about which Barthes writes;

'[T]he life of someone whose existence has somewhat preceded our own encloses in its particularity the very tension of History, its division. ....As a living soul, I am the very contrary of History, I am what belies it, destroys it for the sake of my own history (...). That is what the time when my mother was alive *before me* is – History (...). No anamnesis could ever make me glimpse this time starting from myself (this is the definition of anamnesis).' ( P65 )

Barthes' word is a criticism of traditional views of history and what he emphasises is the quality of 'the other' of history. In traditional historicism, history has been considered as being connected to the self (i.e. considered as, in a way, what belongs to the self and does not have the quality of 'the other') – here, history is linear time connected to the self in the present. However, from Barthes says I can imagine that the range of the present in which the self lives is not 'history' but 'the past' which occurs to the present as, so to speak, the future <sup>7</sup> (the other) – that is why Barthes says '[n]o anamnesis could ever make me glimpse this time starting from myself'. 'History' is constituted by 'to explode as a pure event' (Richardson, *The look of Colette Peignot*, P204, in Japanese edition), i.e. 'communication'. In this way, for a life system which continues forming the self and 'the other' in every moment as a process of constant formation of meaning, 'the past' is what is a priori, because it is 'the other' which is ceaselessly formed and appears toward the self. For the same reason, 'the past' is also the environment for a life system (the environment is also an example of 'the other'). I can say that we live in close relation to 'the past', but in a different way to that in which historicism conceives it. What appears in our consciousness at the time of 'inner experience' that occurs through a photograph is a

sense of time or of 'History' where 'the past' as other occurs. 'The past' here is an example of formed meaning in 'inner experience'. So, I can say that we, ceaselessly 'communicating' and changing, are truly 'historical' beings<sup>8</sup>. The concept of 'inner experience' which presents an example of 'communication' – constant change of the self and occurrence of 'the other' – in the highest point of the intensity of emotion has a true 'modernity' and generality.

## **W. Benjamin**

I would like now to look further at the formation of meaning by means of Walter Benjamin's thought. I will continue taking up 'the past' as an example of meaning formed in 'inner experience' because the way in which Barthes treated the past appears to me to be similar to Benjamin's theory of history.

What is Benjamin's theory of history? It is based on our concrete (individual) experiences or life process and its object is 'the world where human beings live and die concretely (individually)' (Hitoshi Imamura, 2000, P12). It is argument which considers the way our (or life systems') experiences exist, including our experience of time. Its characteristic is to understand conceptually the world constituted by 'history' through 'images', and Benjamin calls it historical materialism. It is distinguished from historical materialism in Marxism in that historical materialism is based on historicism.

According to Imamura, "materialism' in Benjamin's terms is 'a material which has the nature of an 'image'. ..... A concept expresses itself within an 'image'" (P12). An 'image' ('a material which has the nature of an 'image') is individual, concrete 'existence' which has its matter. In the section on Barthes, I took up the question of how matter inevitably intervenes in a process of forming meaning and said that the matter includes signs which work as 'object' of formation of meaning, such as language, a photograph, etc., besides a body (or a physical system) which is a necessary condition of formation of meaning. Here, an 'image' corresponds to the 'object' of the formation of meaning. Some concrete examples of it are the photograph which Barthes treats, a lover's (or a woman's) body in eroticism in Bataille's terms (this is distinguished from a body of the self which is essential for formation of meaning) and, considering my argument in Chapter 3, a 'sign/representamen' in that of C.S. Peirce (we will look at 'sign/representamen' and Peirce in detail in Chapter 3). We construct a concept ( meaning) through such 'images' like these (this is 'communication'). That is, an 'image' works as a window to abstractions or 'the other' formed by the self; 'the past', mother for Barthes, lover for Bataille, etc. (I can say that Bataille, Barthes and Benjamin are 'materialists' in that all of them think an 'object' intervenes in the formation of meaning). In chapter 1, I said that 'the other' is a simulacrum formed in relation to the self, this applies also to a concept as I am treating it here; a concept is not an entity but can only be what is formed by a relationship, too.

Such construction of a concept through an 'image' is the core of the materialistic description of

history by Benjamin and he treats 'history' from this point of view (this is also how 'the other' appears to us). I will view in detail this construction of a concept in relation to 'inner experience' below.

The construction of a concept in such a moment can be likened to what Bataill calls 'inner experience'. This is because what is presupposed in Benjamin's description of history is 'time filled by the presence of the now [Jetztzeit]' (Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, thesis number

) and this 'now' (Jetztzeit) is a moment where 'the past' occurs to the present as the future ('the other'), i.e. 'a moment of danger'. We can say that this is also a moment where an event which had remained latent in the past as positioned in rational time has actualised as a new event in the present. (What mediates this event, namely the a priori past, is a form of matter – for example, we can say that a body latently has potential to remind us of a unity which is the same as the state of death in experiences like sleep or eroticism. Also, a portrait photograph latently has potential to provide us an encounter with a person who is in the photograph.) We can analyse formation of meaning in 'inner experience' by applying Benjamin's idea of construction of a concept to it.

Then, what is the specific similarity between formations of meaning in 'inner experience' and Benjamin's idea of construction of a concept? It is that the way of construction of a concept by Benjamin is equal to 'the hermetic principle [of construction]' (Richardson, 1994, P26) which is one basis of Bataille's thought together with Hegelian dialectic. The idea of construction of a concept by Benjamin is, according to Imamura, monadistic construction which presupposes destruction (shock) and is distinguished from atomistic synthesis which is rational and mechanical. (Imamura, P155 ~ 156) A monad has a structure which is organically constructed. 'A monad is not only a material being but has "life" which causes self-movement'. (Imamura, P153, 157) That is, I can say that a monad is a system which has 'force' as I discussed it in Chapter one. Two monads, i.e. systems construct a concept by 'the force' or desire (an embodied form of 'the force') and simultaneously differences between monads are also constructed in this process. Equally, in the hermetic principle of construction by Bataille, two heterogeneous things (elements) make one composition whose quality transcends addition of qualities of the elements but differences between them do not disappear. In a condition like this, 'the whole of the past exists in and is included in the present', as Benjamin thought. In this respect, I can say that a construction of a concept in 'a moment of danger' by Benjamin is equal to that in 'inner experience' by Bataille. 'Benjamin regards quotation of the past as a historical and ontological necessity of human beings' (Imamura, P140). This idea is similar to Bataille's understanding of how alchemic 'communication' is essential to human beings. The monadic construction of meaning which both of them share is also the way of our life systems' movement, i.e. the way formation of meaning exists.

Bataille also thought time to be what is based on working of a life system, or to be the agency of 'the force' which makes it possible. He positions 'the continuous state of ..... loss' as 'TIME AND ..... CHANCE' and continues. (*On Nietzsche* P130)

'The individual is the mode in which time occurs. But if the individual has no luck .....[he/she has] escaped from every occurrence, confined now to extemporal perspectives. If on the other hand the anguish continues,...the individual has to *rediscover time*. Time or agreement with time. For each given person, chance is "communication" and loss into another person. "Communication" is the "continuity of that loss."' (P130-131)

'In a definitive way, to risk is to bring what didn't exist into being (which is why time is history).'

(P 120)

'Time' as Bataille expresses it here is similar to 'history' in the way in which Barthes and Benjamin both consider it. An individual is born and exists by limitless 'being' taking shape as a limited life. 'Being' is 'the force' (or its movement) and life exists as its constant occurrence. So Bataille says 'The individual is the mode in which time occurs'. In this meaning, time is 'the other' for the old self and its occurrence is change of the self (= 'loss' in Batailles terms). And, the change of the self is the formation of meaning. Bataille calls this 'luck' and 'communication'; 'inner experience'. We construct linear time by our reason in everyday life and do not notice this 'time' ('history') which ceaselessly occurs. This is an attitude of the individual without luck. 'Time' is a symbol of movement of 'the force' which makes our lives possible and has to be discovered by 'luck'. Here, it should be noted that Bataille expresses 'time' as what has to be discovered. In the argument above, we positioned 'time' as an example of meaning which is formed in 'inner experience'. However, the person involved in the experience feels 'time' which has in fact been constructed by him/her as if it is revealed (or discovered) to himself/herself.

The traditional model of forming meaning on the other hand is a model of rational, mechanical atomistic synthesis based on historicism and positivism. It presupposes that time is uni-directional and linear and in which the past is subject to the present and the present subject to the future and this past, present and future are logically related one another and explained by causality. (A rational point of view based on language becomes the ground for a view of history which presupposes progress and in which the future is in the ascendancy, and rational inference supports the idea of causality.) This model is connected to ethics which make the present subject to good as an aim to be achieved in the future and work as favourable to maintain life. The time which it presupposes is homogeneous, empty and linear, like time for a machine. The Shannon=Weaver model in information science and mass communication studies used in USA after World War is a good example of this model. It considers communication of human beings on the basis of input/output of substantial information into/from machine the nature of which is functionalistic and formal-logical.

However, as we have seen, a human being is a 'life system'. Therefore, what exists within him/her

is nothing but the circulation of a process of self-forming in which there is no input or output of information and it does not respond to any purpose. Whilst continuing movements of each element of a 'life system' appear to work for certain purposes when viewed by an observer who is outside the system, in fact they do not result from a process of causation between the elements and they are not functionalistic or 'atomistic'. So the traditional historicist viewpoint and the way it is communicated are, contrary to the models used in different ways by Benjamin, Barthes or Bataille, separate from an individual process of life and consequently can not treat it.

Likewise, a positivist description of history is separate from the experiences of a life system. It tries to collect facts from the past as what they were, in accordance with the functionalist idea that collects elements one by one and arranges them so that an appearance of causation is given to them. Benjamin rejects positivist emotional assimilation into (or sympathy for) the facts of the past. However, his thought was translated as warning against emotional assimilation into a ruler in the past, so that his theory of history is 'often incorrectly interpreted as an attempt to give voice to those who have been left aside by historicism' (Richardson, 2005, P201 (Japanese version)). Rather, it is a warning against positioning by emotional assimilation (sympathy) an event in the past as independent and fixed. To position an event like this presupposes a halt of the movement of a system (to be more accurate, various workings by 'force'). This means separation from the essential state of human existence (it is also connected directly to the transcendent Christian God and the idea of the good (traditional ethics) which is connected to it, both of which met with Bataille's hostility. I will take this point up in detail in Viewpoint 3).

As will be clear from the above, the formation of meaning which characterises 'inner experience' – a model of monadic construction of meaning which can also be read into arguments of Barthes and Benjamin – can be positioned as an objection to a traditional model of atomistic synthesis of meaning based on historicism and positivism. Such a concept of 'communication' – linking together elements of the thought of Barthes and Benjamin with that of Bataille - has a significant critical sense that can be directed against the traditional notion of communication which only takes account of its rational aspect.

## **Viewpoint 2. Physical system**

In viewpoint two, I will focus on the physical system and consider the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche. By doing so the nature of 'inner experience' will become clearer from a body's (matter's) point of view because Nietzsche treated 'inner experience' from the body's point of view. It will be shown that the concept of 'inner experience' has a critical sense against the traditional view of a reason-centred body (a functionalistic body) in communication.

While viewpoint one (critical approach) focuses on formation of meaning in the realm of consciousness (mental system) and on a concept formed there, viewpoint two (clinical approach)

focuses on changes of the self in every moment by treating a body, i.e. matter which inevitably intervene formation of meaning (however, both the viewpoints treat the same 'communication' (and the concept of 'inner experience' which have expressed it the most symbolically) because formation of meaning is equal to change of the self).

## **F. Nietzsche**

I will first take up the concept of 'the eternal return' by Nietzsche (1844-1900) as it was understood by Pierre Klossowski because Klossowski's understanding is very similar to Bataille's).

According to Klossowski, 'the eternal return' is 'the expression of a *becoming* with neither goal nor purpose' (P104) 'which casts the agent that experiences it outside of itself' (P106). This can be applied to 'inner experience' as the person in 'inner experience' also transcends the rational self and heads towards 'the other', but complete reaching to (or understanding) 'the other' is impossible (therefore, a state of complete equilibrium which is the result of having reached 'the other' is also impossible), so that this movement is inevitably repeated endlessly. Relating this to viewpoint one, the past, present and future are all penetrated by one 'force'. Ceaseless occurrence of some meaning ('the other') formed by 'the force's' movement's being transformed (translated) to the present or the self and its endless repetition – this 'communication' is the essential state of human existence as a life system (that is why I can say that 'the past' and 'the future' (= 'the past' occurred to the present) are tautologies (= 'the eternal return')). In this way, I can interpret 'communication' from 'the eternal return's point of view which in turn can be understood from time's point of view (viewpoint 1) in that it expresses the same content as a sense of 'history' as Benjamin discusses it (i.e. that 'the past' occurs at the present as a new event and by so doing the present and the self change).

However, at the same time, when I understand 'the other' which appears to the self as the self itself formed at every moment, I can say that 'the eternal return' is the concept which treats a moment of 'autopoiesis' by a life system (refer to chapter 1), including not only an aspect of a mental system but also that of a physical system. This expresses a repetition (= 'return') of the self-forming process of a life system in every moment, and its circular working.

Looking at a physical system, we generally regard a body as being subject to reason or consciousness (i.e. it is under control of reason). And, just like a sense of the identity of the self in the realm of consciousness, we perceive that a body as one thing penetrating through the past, present and future. This is the functionalistic body as assumed in uni-directed historicist time. A state in which a body is subject to reason works effectively to preserve life. Klossowski calls this consciousness 'the person' (P26), 'the cerebral activity' (P27), 'the self (Moi)' (P29). Such a functionalistic body like this is, so to say, a body synthesised atomistically in which its parts are subject to the brain whereas the idea of 'the eternal return' suggests a body constructed monadically constantly in process of formation (of meaning/the self). In this body there is no centre-margin relation (i.e. this body is not subject to

reason) and each constituent continues the monadic formation of meaning/becoming of the self.

The following quotations from Klossowski show elements of the working of a life system:

‘[T]here is neither subject, nor object, nor will, nor aim, nor meaning – not only at the origin, but for now and always.’ (P38)

‘Within a system of designating fluctuations, there is only a discontinuity between *silence* and *declarations* in the agent.’ (P37)

‘Our depth is governed by a completely different system of designations, for which there is neither outside nor inside.’ (P39)<sup>9</sup>

‘A discontinuity between *silence* and *declarations*’ indicates a moment of formation (or becoming). The idea of ‘the eternal return’ presupposes not a functionalistic body synthesised atomistically but a autopoietic physical system constructed monadically, and what is being treated by the idea is a moment of its working. Here is Bataille making a similar point:

‘We are to the degree that we risk ourselves. If the risk ceases, if I withdraw some aspect to keep it from changing, the resulting regularity will be misleading: I’ll pass from the tragic to the ridiculous.’ (Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, P72)

While a functionalistic body is connected to the transcendent, ‘risk’ in Bataille’s terms is a metaphor of becoming and change, and its constant continuation is a characteristic of a physical system which is ‘tragic’, i.e. ‘Dionysian’ in Nietzsche’s terms.

Klossowski suggests that such an idea of ‘the eternal return’ connects to the ‘will to power’ while being generally regarded as inconsistent with it. I would like to explain this in detail. Klossowski says ‘[T]he Eternal Return lies at the origin of the rises and falls of intensity’ (P104) (i.e. an experience of ‘the force’ (libido)) and such ‘an action due to a relation of forces suppresses the very notion of *cause and effect*’ (P105) (recall that Barthes called his experience ‘experience of intensity [of ‘the force’]’ and this similarly transcends the sort of causality which the realm of reason presupposes). Nietzsche says ‘*the will to power is the primitive form of affect*’ (P101) in a fragment of his writing which Klossowski quotes. In addition, Klossowski positions ‘will to power’ as ‘the basic and innermost thing’ (P111) for life. He argues that ‘the will to power is the term that expresses *force itself*’ (P103) and therefore I can say that both the ideas of ‘will to power’ and ‘the eternal return’ which are generally thought of as being inconsistent with each other express the same thing.

Bataille also shares this idea. According to Takeshi Sakai (his afterword in *On Nietzsche*, Japanese edition), the general opinion at the time Bataille was absorbed in reading Nietzsche's works was that the main idea in Nietzsche's thought was the 'will to power' and this 'power' ('Macht' in German and 'Puissance' in French) means the motive power of reason-based actions useful in keeping and preserving life. By choosing the words 'puissance' and 'power', the translators were situating the meaning near to authority.<sup>10</sup> What is presupposed here is a sense of linear time and causality from which values useful for profit in the future or preservation of life come. In this meaning, the idea of 'will to power' is opposed that of 'the eternal return'. Sakai also argues that Bataille objected to this interpretation of 'will to power' and to the Nazis using it for their justification of power, and on the contrary found the essence of Nietzsche's philosophy to lie in 'force' (as French word) which had been expressed in the idea of 'the eternal return' and such notions like 'death of God', 'play', 'love for fate' and 'tragedy'. That is, he regarded 'Macht' as used by Nietzsche to be the libido which is the motive power of life and the world. This attitude is shown in the subtitle of *On Nietzsche*; 'will to chance'. By this subtitle the basis of which is 'will to power', Bataille interprets 'will to power' as what is similar to the idea of 'the eternal return' (as has already been mentioned, 'luck' or 'inner experience' has close relationship with the idea of 'the eternal return'). Bataille says:

'The *will to power* remains equivocal. In a sense, in it is the will to evil, amounting to the will to *expenditure* or risk (which Nietzsche stressed).' (*On Nietzsche*, P151)

What has taken form as a transformation of such 'force' is an individual<sup>11</sup>. According to Bataille

'Essentially all beings are only one.

They repel each other at the same time that they are one. And in this movement (their essence), fundamental identity is annulled.' (*On Nietzsche*, P72)

Klossowski explains this from the body's point of view. According to him, the body is

'nothing but the *locus* where a group of individuated impulses confront each other so as to produce this interval that constitutes a *human life*, impulses whose sole ambition is to *de-individuate themselves*.' (P26)

'From this point [experience of 'the eternal return'] on, Nietzsche would no longer be concerned with the body as a *property of the self*, but with the body as the locus of impulses, the locus of their confrontation. Since it is a product of the impulses, the body becomes *fortuitous*; ..... its only history is that of the impulses.' (P30)

Consciousness or 'the self ('Moi)' gives identity to such a body changing in every moment, but the identity of 'the self' which is the basis of identity of a body is only a fiction. This is because, according to Klossowski, 'the self' and even 'the other' 'has no...reality except as a pure modification of 'the Self [Soi]' (P33) which 'the force' has taken shape as an individual in a body. That is, opposed to a traditional view of the body, 'the self' is subject to 'force' and to a body which was formed by it (to make a body subject to 'the self' is a strategy to preserve life by life itself (or 'the force')<sup>12</sup>). The way a life system exists is not one that is reason-centred. The idea of 'the eternal return' by Nietzsche enables us to interpret the 'communication' expressed by 'inner experience' from a life system's point of view which includes not only a mental system but also a physical system.

**Viewpoint 3. Value (a viewpoint which is based on individual cases); a criticism against the transcendent (a viewpoint of generality and universality)**

As I mentioned in chapter one, traditionally transcendent values which are apart from the principle of working of a life system (such as God and the idea of goodness in Christianity, etc.) have been generated from a viewpoint based on reason. They are useful to preserve the life of the self but, if one adopts a position that the essence of life is not its preservation but its loss, as Bataille thinks, one can provide a new sense of value (however, note that Bataille did not deny the preservation of life and the realm of reason completely and thought of them as essential to the essence of human existence as it heads towards loss). Here, I would like to think about a sense of value based on the way a life system exists which is suggested by the concept of 'inner experience'.

The trilogy in which Bataille proposed the concept of 'inner experience' is entitled '*la Somme Athéologique*'. 'Athéologique' implies criticism of the way the rational subject exists as s/he generates the transcendent, and Bataille develops his argument on the basis of his own emotions and experiences of 'communication'. His attitude is shown even in his literary style – he was very conscious that he inevitably had to express 'what cannot be expressed' by language, because language is based on reason. All of the thinkers looked at in chapter two adopt a similar attitude to Bataille, but here I would like to focus on Barthes. He calls his approach in '*Camera Lucida*' '*mathesis singularis*' (Barthes, P8). It is an attitude in which he is determined 'never to reduce myself-as-subject, confronting certain photographs, to the disincarnated, disaffected *socius* which science is concerned with' (P74), but simultaneously tries to attain 'a generality which neither reduces nor crushes me' (P18) from its viewpoint of the individual subject ('a generality' here means working of 'the force' which a person and 'the other' (other people, the world, etc.) share and which makes their existence possible).

Such an approach causes a overturning of traditional senses of value. By an approach like this when Bataille treated 'inner experience', he tried to dethrone the transcendent which is separated from

our various and accidental experience and he also tried to overturn values (conventional ethics) connected to the transcendent. According to Takeshi Sakai, this can be said to be a trial to complete the overturning of traditional senses of value started by Nietzsche. Sakai also states that the value of 'inner experience' is not fixed, it exists only in the moment and will disappear in the same moment –Maurice Blanchot said the same thing to Bataille; 'experience itself is authority (but that authority expiates itself)'. (Bataille, *Inner Experience*, P7). (From Takeshi Sakai's afterword in *On Nietzsche*, Japanese edition). 'Inner experience' reminds a person who is subjected to purposes to achieve in everyday life of 'sovereign' values which s/he shares with others ('Sovereignty' is connected to one's feeling in 'inner experience' that 'the other' revealed in the moment is unshakable truth, although the feeling isn't based on reasons). Though it passes away in a moment, it is an experience in which one feels the movement of 'the force' through its intensity (or as a vivid, sensible reality). By this experience, one feels 'the force' = 'being' which makes one's life possible and which enables one to recover vitality (this was also one purpose of sacrificial rituals in ancient communities).

In chapter one, I said that 'for a life system, everything is virtual and every event is considered from a respect of the meaning it has for the self (system)', on the basis of the argument made by Toru Nishigaki, and here I can replace 'meanings' in this word with 'values'. In addition, life systems (or our lives) are topical things; their existences are possible in a very limited realm and period. Bataille's lover, Colette Peignot who had a great influence on his concept of 'inner experience' made much of such a 'topical event' and strongly affirmed our lives (or the way a life system exists) by 'refusing to privilege reasons for living in isolation from the life process' (to privilege like this is typified by ethics in Christianity) (Michael Richardson, *The look of Colette Peignot*, P204 in Japanese edition). We should think about 'value' based on the way life exists which cannot be other than 'topical', and only a point of view based on our own experience is effective in doing so. We cannot approach 'communication' which reveals the meanings ( values) of life to us by means of conventional reason-centred viewpoint.

### **Chapter3. Extension of the concept of communication by 'inner experience'**

#### **A concept which should be extended 1. Information**

I will now take up the concept of 'information'. It is a key concept in communication studies and it is more and more gaining importance in the present day in which society is called an information society. Before relating it to 'inner experience', I would like to explain how the concept of 'information' appeared and has been understood.

Toru Nishigaki states in his *Fundamental Informatics* (P8~9, P11) that: the concept of 'information' first 'appeared in relation to the question of 'observation' in physics' (Nishigaki, P8) at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century against a backdrop of findings of quantum theory by Heisenberg and the

theory of relativity by Einstein. Nishigaki says, 'it was information science which was established in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century that first systematised [the concept] as a study' (P9). The birth of information science which started after World War includes such events as the production of the digital computer by John von Neumann which established the basic structure of computers today (1945), cybernetics by Norbert Wiener and others which looked for a model of the process of information processing in a living body, and proposition of an information model by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver. These developed as information technology in the latter half of 20<sup>th</sup> century and became academic basis of IT today. In addition, the discovery of the double helix model of DNA (1950s) is also included in the birth of information science. It developed afterwards as molecular biology and 'clarified that phenomena like inheritance or evolution are informational phenomena essentially related to genome information' (P11). However, there 'information', which had first appeared as a concept related to life, was separated from meanings formed by a living thing and treated conceptually as an entity, similar to matter or energy. An example of communication studies which presupposes such a view of 'information' are studies on the effect of mass communication which developed mainly in USA after the War. This treats human communication as a form of information processing using the machine as its model. Such a view of information as an entity (it presupposes language information, mechanical signs by some codes, etc) is familiar to us, but it cannot treat communication based on life. 'Inner experience', however, suggests that we return to the view of information as what exists in relation to life as suggested by physics in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. 'Information' is defined inseparably from interpretations (forming meaning = changes of a life system) by a living thing inspired by information.

How can we think about 'information' as a concept related to life? Here, I would like to return to the argument of Barthes and think about 'inner experience' from the point of view of 'information'. In *Camera Lucida* Barthes names what exists in a photograph, rouses emotions and reveals 'truth' to a viewer (revelation is what inspires formation of meaning in the way it 'penetrates' him/her in an instant) 'punctum' or 'sensitive points'.<sup>13</sup> I think that this 'punctum' is 'information' as a concept related to life. For Barthes 'the essence of his mother' was revealed to him by 'punctum' contained in the 'Winter garden photograph' (revelation is a formation of meaning as an autoreferential<sup>14</sup> change of a life system. Here, 'the essence of his mother' is a formed meaning). 'Punctum' puts a halt to the viewer's thought, doubts his/her identity and rouses very personal emotions such as love which 'wound' him/her. That is, it makes one transcend the rational subject and works in a realm which is beyond language (to be accurate, it influences both the realm of reason and a realm which is beyond reason, because they link with each other). It is distinguished by Barthes from what is called 'studium' (which are signs constructed and coded culturally), because it doesn't indicate connotative meanings included in a photograph but makes denotative meanings appear. Here, while connotation has an indirect quality (because it needs some codes to interpret meanings) so acts as the agent of reason,

denotation has a direct quality ('the evidence')(Barthes, P60<sup>15</sup>) – which does not necessarily mean only visual clarity -- and acts on the body or emotions (= irrational, bodily reactions before being expressed in language). The evidence by Barthes is similar to what Bataille calls 'transparency'. When 'punctum' which is 'information' as a concept related life causes our formation of meaning, it simultaneously makes us notice our bodies and emotions.

This is because a body (matter = 'noise' in Shannon's terms) is indispensable to the formation of meaning as a life system is inseparable from a body (matter) (a mental system, physical system and the environment are connected to one another by feedback while constantly form their boundaries). The moment of formation=interpretation of meaning by 'punctum' is 'inner experience' and is the moment of a change of a life system.<sup>16</sup> That is why Barthes uses bodily, emotional expressions to explain the moment such as 'pain', 'wound', 'stick' and 'penetrate', etc. (Bataille also uses bodily, emotional expressions when he explains 'inner experience'). Here, Antonio R. Damasio, a brain scientist, positions emotions as bodily changes which an object inspires in an organism (Damasio *The Feeling of What Happens*, Japanese edition, P26). Emotions are closely related to a body. When the emotions are interpreted and expressed as words in a mental system, i.e. at the level of consciousness, they become concrete feelings; I may say that feelings are emotions in narrower sense of the word (i.e. the formation of meaning in a mental system is also inseparable from formation of feelings). Also, this moment of forming meaning ('inner experience') is the moment of the occurrence of 'the other'. A life system makes 'the other' appear at the same time with continuation of forming meaning/becoming of the self in every moment (The Becoming of the self takes places through connection with 'the other' as it forms a boundary between the self and 'the other'. 'The other' includes, as has already been mentioned, the environment, the self, the other person, 'the past' and so on). A living thing makes use of the environment by its physical system (or actions) and 'the past' by its mental system (or thought), for the working of the life system itself <sup>17</sup> (here, it should be noted that a life system doesn't work (or form meanings in its broader sense) for some purposes. A living thing is made possible by purposeless working of (= formation of meanings by) a system).

In this way, 'information' is not an entity as ordinarily regarded in the present day but what exists in relation to the working of (interpretation of meanings by) a life system.

### **A concept which should be extended 2. Meaning (Value)**

Next I will take up the concept of 'meaning'. Just as 'information' has been considered to be an entity which is received from 'the outside' of a living thing, 'meaning' ordinarily has also been considered to be an entity which is sent out from 'the inside' of a living thing. The psychology of perception as it was established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century proposed a functionalistic model of forming meaning which presupposes 'input' of information (or stimuli) as an entity and corresponding 'output' by the central nervous system. What is presupposed here is 'meaning' as an entity (such as words or

reactions of a body) which corresponds to an object or sign (‘images’). Linguistics at that time shared this model on the basis of reason-centred principle.<sup>18</sup>

However, in a way similar to ‘information’, ‘meaning’ is also, in fact, a concept which is generated in relation between an object (or a sign) and a living thing as its observer (or its interpreter) (as I will discuss in detail later, ‘information’ and ‘meaning’ are closely related to each other). What appears in ‘inner experience’ is also not ‘meaning’ as an entity which is static and fixed, but as a concept related to life which continues changing=becoming. While the former is meaning which presupposes being ‘discovered’ (or perceived) by a living thing, the latter is what is ‘invented’ (or constructed) by an autopoietic living thing in relation to the environment (‘the other’) (‘the other’ stimulates a living thing’s autoreferencial change).

Here, I would like to take up love as a specific example of ‘meaning’ and connect it to ‘inner experience’. It is mentioned and positioned with high importance in works by Bataille or Barthes which treat ‘inner experience’ (or the same experience as it). Love (or emotion) is felt only as intensity, so it is a vivid, sensible reality for us. Bataille states on love as follows;

‘My wish is that in any love of the unknown .....we can, by ousting transcendence, attain such great simplicity as to relate that love to an earthly love, echoing it to infinity.’ (*On Nietzsche*, P71)

What Bataille meant is that desire to accord with ‘the force’ is connected to love towards the (particular) other person. Love towards the (particular) other person (who cannot appear other than as a simulacrum) is ‘private’ (according to Barthes) and through it ‘the eternal share’ (by Colette Peignot) which all of us generally share appears. That is, love is a subjective impression (‘meaning’) of having transcended a boundary of an individual and love comes to exist as a sensible reality in the moment of ‘inner experience’. At the same time, it is force of desire for ‘communication’ (or desire to reach ‘the other’ (= an individual or ‘the force’ symbolised by him/her)). Love is an urge for the other and inspires us to change ourselves.

### **A concept which should be extended 3. Communication**

A presupposition of traditional understandings of ‘information’ and ‘meaning’ is that they are entities, from which it follows that ‘communication’ is sending and getting ‘information’ and sharing the same ‘meaning’ of it between a sender and receiver of it. This applies a pure logical information processing by which machines function to communication by human beings. However, life systems are not machine systems. For life systems, as we have seen there is only autoreferencial change (becoming of the self)=formation of ‘meanings’ in relation to others. This formation of ‘meaning’ is ‘communication’. The concept of ‘inner experience’ expresses a moment of change of this very life system, so it suggests to us expansion of concepts not only of ‘information’ and ‘meaning’ but also, at

the same time, of 'communication'. Here, as a summation of arguments so far, I would like to analyse 'communication' theoretically expressed by 'inner experience'. In so doing I will use the concept of 'abduction' by C.S. Peirce which focused on the interpretation of meanings in a mental system. While a traditional, historical viewpoint corresponds to rational inference drawn from induction and deduction, Bataille's viewpoint based on a life system (or its experiences) is close to 'abduction'.

### **'Interpretation of meaning' from mental system's viewpoint; C.S. Peirce 'abduction'**

Charles Sanders Peirce, an American pragmatism philosopher in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century proposed the concept of 'abduction' as part of a consideration of semiotics. How relevant is such a model of 'abduction' for understanding 'inner experience'? (Refer to Appendix one in the end of the text.)

Referring again to Toru Nishigaki, the outline of 'abduction' can be explained as follows; It is a model of a process of thought by human beings which has been understood as a kind of working of signs and it is expressed by the relation between three elements -- sign (or representamen), object (or referent) which is substituted by sign, and interpretant by which one understands a relation between sign and object (It is a more dynamic model than that of Saussure which analyses the formation of meaning by two elements, signifier and signified). Interpretant is a simulacrum of object formed inside an interpreter. For example, when a doctor diagnoses a disease from indications given by the patient, sign, object and interpretant form a mental image of the disease in the mind of the doctor which enables him to name it. This is what Peirce called 'abduction'.

It has two characteristics. First, an interpretant makes a new interpretant in a way of chain-reaction, so that the process of formation of interpretant (meaning) continues. To be more specific, an interpretant made in the process then plays the role of sign and it generates next interpretant. Next, unlike deduction, 'abduction' often results in forming an incorrect meaning. However, such nature of 'abduction' is the source of creativity in formation of meaning (refer to *Fundamental Informatics*, P32, 52).

For Bataille, 'object' is his lover (in eroticism) or a victim (in sacrificial ritual), 'sign' is the body of his lover or the sacrificial ritual itself, and interpretant is the lover as a simulacrum, 'the force' ('being'), emotions, etc. Considering Barthes' experience, I can say that object is his mother, sign is the 'winter garden photograph' and interpretant is 'the essence of his mother'. The Object is 'the other' indicated by sign. The Sign is an 'image' in Benjamin's terms which works as mirror, i.e. it becomes a 'window to the abstract'. Examples are signs like photographs, language, and so on (signs are necessarily matter). Simultaneously, a sign is also a matter (noise<sup>19</sup>) or body which makes formation of meaning possible. Interpretant is generated through 'image' and it is 'meaning' for a life system.

When Barthes explains 'punctum' (= 'information') as follows, he is mentioning, I can say, occurrence of interpretant in 'abduction';

‘However lightning-like it may be, the *punctum* has, more or less potentially, a power of expansion. This power is often metonymic.’ (Barthes, P45)

‘Meaning’ always occurs as ‘the other’ to the self because formation of ‘meaning’ is equal to change of a living thing itself. This ‘meaning’ becomes a new object = ‘information’ (a new interpretant) and as such the autopoietic process of forming meaning by a life system continues ceaselessly.

In the way like this, ‘abduction’ helps us understand the structure of ‘inner experience’ more clearly.

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<sup>1</sup> Although in some ways Bataille’s relation to Hegel is problematic and needs discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Takeshi Sakai says ‘it is subsistence and accords with ‘the unknown’ in Bataille’s thought around which one makes entities such as the transcendent and “meaning of meaninglessness (= known ‘the unknown’ )” and then one destroys them by risking them ’. ( Sakai, 1996, P70 ) For instance, we can say that Christian believers treat God as the transcendent and mystics of Christianity make “meaning of meaninglessness”, and this means that they stop the dynamism of ‘force’ which is essential to human existence and the universe.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Klossowski treats *simulacrum* as essential thing for human existence and he doesn’t understand it as what destroys human nature, as Jean Baudrillard does. In this thesis, I am taking up *simulacrum* by Klossowski.

<sup>4</sup> Readers may feel a contradiction about my pointing out the significance of ‘inner experience’ here because Bataille argued that ‘inner experience’ is meaningless and has no purpose. Of course the value of individual, momentary ‘inner experience’ is felt only by the concerned person and disappears with the end of experience. However, what I am referring to here is the significance of ‘inner experience’ from the outer point of view, i.e. that of treating it generally, not as the concerned person but as an observer. Given different viewpoints, Bataille’s argument and mine is not in conflict with each other. To observe and describe ‘inner experience’ from outside is necessary not to limit it within Bataille and to open it to people in general, and Bataille could not have written the works *the Somme Athéologique* unless he also believed this.

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<sup>5</sup> The following quotations from Colette Peignot and Bataille are relevant to the way Barthes analyses this photograph.

‘Poetic work is sacred in so far as it is the creation of a topical event, “communication” experienced as *nakedness*. It is violated of itself, a baring, a communication to others of what gives reason to live, but this reason to live “shifts”. (Laure (Colette Peignot), 1995:45)’ (from Richardson, *The look of Colette Peignot* P204 )

‘Probably it [poetry] is a sacrifice whose victims are words’ (Bataille *Inner Experience* (I translated this phrase from Japanese edition))

Our life is composed of a continuance of events as outbursts of topical energy. ‘Communication’ can exist as ‘a topical event’ which is the same our existence as individuals, and it reveals ‘being’ (‘being’) to us. The photograph is a creation of a topical event and has a ‘contaminating quality’ (Richardson); it ‘contaminates’ the inside of the viewer in transgressing its own boundary. We can say that the photograph is a ‘sacrifice’ whose ‘victims’ are a person who is the object of it and a viewer who has fascinated by it.

<sup>6</sup> This is ‘Reference’ of an event of the past (past ‘reality’) which Barthes regards as the essence of a photograph. He says ‘[w]hat I intentionalize in a photograph .....is neither Art, not Communication, it is Reference, which is the founding order of Photography’. (Barthes, 1980, P77) Although he says that he does not intend Communication through a photograph, this does not mean that the experience through a photograph is not ‘communication’ (= ‘inner experience’, ‘exchange’) which is treated in text. It is because ‘inner experience’ can not be intended as it only occurs by accident; besides, a sense of unity with the other (a sense of ‘exchange’) is inevitably a simulacrum.

<sup>7</sup> Barthes says ‘the Photograph.....is *without future* ; in it, no protensity’. (Barthes, 1980, P90) The word ‘*future*’ here is what can be intended, i.e. positioned in historicist sense of time. Therefore, ‘*future*’ here is different from the future as ‘the other’ which I mentioned in the text.

<sup>8</sup> When Barthes says ‘I am the very contrary of History’ in my quotation, he emphasises the quality of ‘the other’ which ‘history’ has, so his word does not conflict with my argument here.

<sup>9</sup> Klossowski afterwards rephrases ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ as unconsciousness and consciousness respectively.

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<sup>10</sup> Just as in French, not the word ‘force’ but ‘power’ was selected as the equivalent of ‘Macht’ in English.

<sup>11</sup> Colette Peignot, a lover of Bataille who inspired him to construct the concept of ‘inner experience’ and shared it with him, regarded ‘communication’ as ‘the sacred’ and stated that it is the ‘infinitely rare moment in which the ‘eternal share’ that each being carries within enters life, finds itself carried off in the universal movement, integrated into this movement, realised’ (Richardson, *The look of Colette Peignot*, the quotation is Colette’s words). (The concept of ‘the sacred’ has no religious meaning and is close to that of ‘un-knowing’ by Bataille)The ‘eternal share’ is ‘the Self’ (Soi) by Klossowski and is also close to ‘the Intractable’ by Barthes (Barthes, P98). Like this, living things shares ‘the force’ with ‘the other’. By the same reason, Bataille expresses an affinity for human beings;

‘You, whoever you are, reading me – take your own chance.

As I do, with all deliberation. Just as, at the moment of writing, I gamble with you.

This chance isn’t yours or mine. It belongs to all humanity, to human light.’ (Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, P90)

<sup>12</sup> The reason why ‘inner experience’ is ‘luck’ is that consciousness ordinarily plays a role in controlling the realm of a body or emotions; ‘inner experience’ is an rare experience in which a mental system which ordinary controls a physical system feels as if it having accorded with the movement of a life system itself, i.e. ‘the force’ which is shown to us by a physical system as a medium as an ‘image’ (= matter which makes formation of meaning possible).

<sup>13</sup> To be accurate, Barthes separates ‘punctum’ into two types; ‘punctum’ as an ‘image’(= matter. It is the ‘detail’ of a photograph, in Barthes terms.) and as what doesn’t have any ‘images’ (= it is not matter). Barthes calls the latter ‘stigmatum’ and states ; ‘[t]his new *punctum*, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the *noem* (“*that-has-been*”), its pure representation’. (Barthes, P96)

<sup>14</sup> An ‘autoreferencial’ change of a life system is an expression of the nature of a life system’s forming meaning like a circulative chain reaction. G. Bateson defined information as ‘a difference by which a living thing generates differences’, and such circulative (reflexive) expression is inevitable when one treats ‘communication’ based on our lives. In chapter 1, I have said, by using ‘autopoiesis’ theory, that

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the way a life system exists is as a constant formation of the self and 'the other', and I have explained the formation as a 'circulation of a process of forming which connects to the next process of forming as a condition necessary before the next one can start'. This is also the explanation of the way 'communication', which has a circulative nature, exists.

<sup>15</sup> Barthes says about the nature of photography that '[b]y nature, the Photograph...has something something tautological about it' (Barthes, P5). This is an explanation of the evidence of photography; it has the nature of transparency which makes not itself but its referent appear.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Richardson speaks about the same thing as 'punctum', (i.e. the power of an image that gives a viewer a revelation, 'contaminating quality' of an image or 'the transformative power of the phantasm') in his paper on photography, *The look of Colette Peignot*, in which his analysis is based on his own experience just as Barthes' in *Camera Lucida*. In this paper, a photograph of Colette which gave a shock to Bataille is taken up (refer to a photograph of Colette Peignot in the end of this thesis).

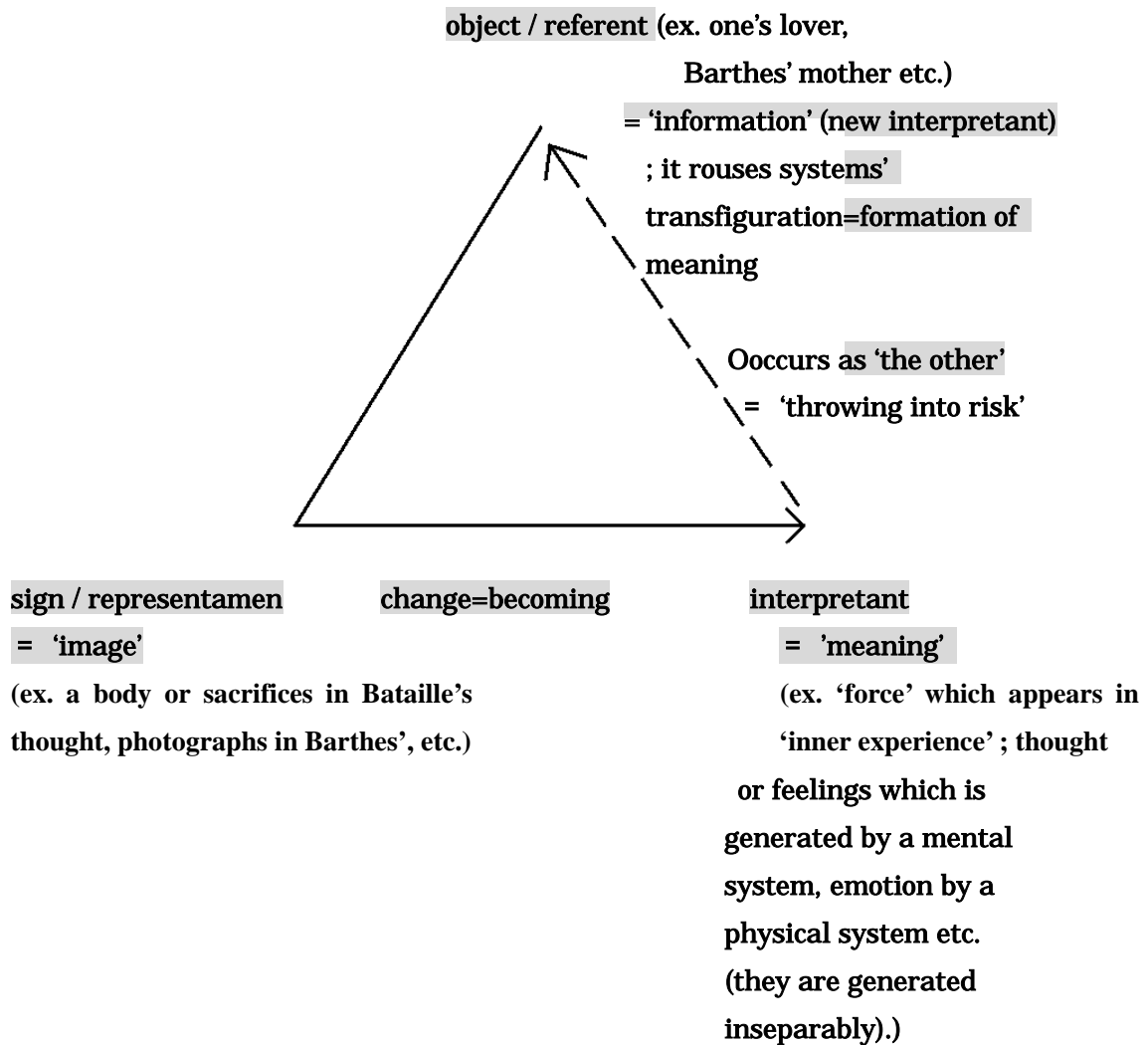
<sup>17</sup> On such occasions as 'the other' which occurs is the self itself, 'the other' is 'Soi' (the Self) and new cells in a physical system, and it is identity (the self or 'Moi') in a mental system.

<sup>18</sup> By following such an ordinary consensus Bataille sometimes expresses the realm of 'un-knowing' as 'meaninglessness'. However, in fact, the realm of 'un-knowing' revealed by a person is a meaning formed by him/her.

<sup>19</sup> Noise is a kind of obstacle which determines (or limits) the direction of forming meaning (so, a body which is particular to a living thing determines the necessary (or natural) 'meanings' for the living thing; by so doing 'Umwelt' (by a German zoologist, Jakob Johann Uexküll) of a living thing is formed). One of progenitors of information science, Claude Elwood Shannon, researched the transmission of information by communication equipment and considered reducing noise as much as possible in the process of transmission. However, this is an issue of treatment of noise and not a negation of it.

## Appendices

### 1. A diagram of 'inner experience' and the principle of working of a life system (This is based on the concept of 'abduction' by C.S. Peirce)



\* Ceaseless continuation of this process (= 'the eternal return') is <sup>a u t o p o i e s i s</sup> working=change=becoming (= autopoiesis) of a life system, and is 'communication' (its motive power is 'the force'.) A sense of accord with it in a mental system is 'inner experience'.

## 2. A Photograph of Chuya Nakahara (1936)



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