

*Struck by the 'abstract' nature of absence; yet it's so painful, lacerating. Which allows me to understand 'abstraction' somewhat better: It is absence and pain, the pain of absence—perhaps therefore love?*

*Mourning Diary, Roland Barthes*

일상은 부재의 추상성이다.

A daily practice quickly permeates our everyday life and transforms into routinization. This “abstract nature of absence” keeps us from living on and surviving within vacant surroundings. The dailiness turns out to be an abstraction of absence – as death has been frightening to us. We are all moving straight toward the end, which is ostensibly seen as an extreme abstract to us, fighting against to face it, yet to overcome and explore this fear of unknown territory.

Since religious belief went into decline in north-western Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century, culture has been replacing scripture and cathedrals – what we call these days a museum, a gallery, a theatre or a bibliothèque. The raw materials that culture has adequately provided through faiths acting as guidance and consolation replaced the belief in religion. This chasm left behind the religion has been filled with different forms and aspects. This nostalgic, eager desire and passion for satisfying the “meaning” of existence have continuously ripped us apart. We long for an abstract loss and absence – the future that has never reached us. This routinization of fulfilment – religious or cultural – became the ritual and worship of the unknown territory.

We are all looking for meaning – a constant search for significance in routinization. We somehow suffer from longing for a forgotten and unrecorded future, eagerly seeking our existential meaning before death.

What life has transcended is a nostalgic future in which we all ache with longing. We yearn after the incompatible abstraction yet live with the absence as presence. Absence is, therefore, the routinization in our dailiness – the death we are persistently confronting.

My optimism over death is based on emotional intelligence. As Alain de Botton said, ‘the knack of our species lies in our capacity to transmit our accumulated knowledge down the generations.’ Modern societies are deeply committed to education, but we selectively educate on specific topics *ONLY*. We need emotional insight and intuition as part of our intelligence. For most of human history, this unitary capacity was handed down by religion – and is now replaced by cultural rituals. However, emotion relies on us, and it comes from us. This emotional education on how to accept our feelings and emotions would eventually apply meaning to our routinization in dailiness. Nothing will ultimately replace emotions – the traumatic nostalgia comforting a sense of normalcy.